

Anna Alcott Pratt Diary (1859-1862)

transcribed and annotated by Ray Angelo
(Jan. 2018)



John Pratt & Anna Alcott Pratt, ca. 1860
photos courtesy of Donna Keeler

Below is a transcription of the diary fragments of Anna Alcott Pratt (1831-1893), the oldest of the four Alcott sisters of "Little Women" fame, at Harvard University's Houghton Library which are online at <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL.HOUGH:11856684> . The diary includes entries from 1859 to 1862 but is primarily from 1861, documenting some of Anna's first year of marriage to John Bridge Pratt (1833-1870) of Concord, Massachusetts. The marriage occurred on May 23, 1860 in Concord, MA at Orchard House, the Alcott home.

Anna is known to have kept a diary for parts of her life prior to 1859. It appears that the only diary she maintained after this is from the year of her death in 1893, also at Harvard University's Houghton Library but not online. Anna's statements near the end of the diary below of her dislike of writing it, the birth of her two children in 1863 and 1865, and particularly the tragic, early death of her beloved husband John in 1870, and its consequences for her with two young children, would understandably account for her discontinuation of the diary.

In her diary Anna includes two poems by her sister Louisa May that appear to be unpublished. See pages {85} and {90} (her numbering).

The transcription below is in chronological order. Some parts of the online manuscript are not in this order.

Text inside of square brackets are editorial. Obvious spelling errors are corrected with square brackets or left intact sometimes to reflect usage of her era. In some cases an asterisk* is applied to words appearing to lack a letter or two or not quite what the word should be, to allow checking for possible mistranscription. Missing punctuation has been added only for clarity. Partial underlining of words is done to reflect the underlining as it appears in the diary. Illegible or uncertain words are indicated in square brackets with a question mark.

There is page numeration in the diary, presumably Anna's, included here in curly brackets {}.

Abbreviations or nicknames used frequently by Anna are:

Abbie, Ab, Abba = Abigail May Alcott

Carrie = Caroline Hayden Pratt

Lizzy, Lizzie = Elizabeth Sewall Alcott

Louy; Lu = Louisa May Alcott

Philo = Philomel Cole

The structure of the diary book is a little confusing, but seems to consist of the elegant gift inscription at one end of the book dated in 1859 with some material from 1859. There is one pair of opposing pages where text on one page is oriented upside down from the text on the opposite page. This appears to be where the end of the 1859 Concord section meets the end of the 1860-1862 Chelsea/East Boston section, or where the unmarried Anna Bronson Alcott portion meets the married Anna Alcott Pratt portion. The online version places the 1859 section upside down at the end. Here the sections are placed in chronological order.

I thank Susan Bailey and Kristi Martin for their assistance and generous encouragement.

[unnumbered first title page or flyleaf, blank on other side]

Anna Bronson Alcott,
from father.
Concord 16 March 1859

[first page unnumbered page with a curly outline pattern drawing, blank on back]

[unnumbered, lined page]

March
1859.

Wednesday 16th.

My 28th birthday. Oh how very old it seems and how I wish it was 18. Where one's years are well spent and one has the consciousness of improvement & growth mentally & morally as well as bodily, birthdays must be happy occasions & seasons of satisfaction & rejoicing, but when like myself one only looks back on the past year as a sort of dream, a year wherein much has been left undone & but little accomplished of value to myself or others, it is but a sad, unsatisfactory day.

And yet the last year has been the most eventful of my life, filled with an entirely new experience, much happiness & many, many [text simply omitted, no page torn out]

I've felt for the first time in my life the joyful consciousness that I was truly loved by a truly good man, one that with all my heart I can love & honor, one who loves me for myself alone, & with an unselfish, gentle, patient affection such as I never thought to waken in any human heart. A man in whom I can trust without fear, in whose principles I have perfect faith, in whose large, warm, loving heart my own restless soul can find repose.

Thank God for this greatest blessing of my life.

[unnumbered first title page or flyleaf, blank on other side]

Anna B. Pratt
Chelsea
1860

[apparent unnumbered first page, a lined paged, blank on back]

Chelsea 1860
&
East Boston 1861

{1.}

JLP [handwritten at an angle in the upper left corner, possibly Anna's daughter-in-law, Jessica Lillian Pratt (1862-1934) who might have reviewed the diary after Anna's death; the initial "J" appears on every written page in the upper left-hand corner after this page]

August 1860.

Wednesday 15th.

Three months today since I became John's wife, three blessed happy months, full of love & peace & promise for the future.

It sometimes seems to me like a dream, and it is hard to realize that I am a wife, no longer the same Annie as in the old home days that seem now so far away. I have always known I should be happy in this new relation, especially with John who is uncommonly endowed with those qualities which beautify a house, and is so strongly attached to me that he could not be otherwise than kind.

But I did not think I should be so entirely tranquil, so peaceful & content, so full of a quiet happiness that for many years I have not known. My life now tho' more uneventful, secluded & lonely than ever before is so full of interest & delight that the long days pass pleasantly but & I forget to long for anything more exciting.

My little house, my work, books & John's return at night keep my hands & mind employed, and I find the hours too short for all I have to do.

{2}

I believe one source of all this content arises from the peaceful atmosphere around me, and the unusual harmony that prevails in this family [likely the family of John's grandparents in Chelsea], where all is so gentle & loving that it seems as tho' one of my favorite saying[s] had really come to pass, that "I was sure a family could live without contention or disagreement."

In a household like my father's where poverty & trial & disappointment have been continually trying the tempers & hearts, very quick tempers, very warm hearts, there has necessarily been much disquiet & great clashing of wills, & tho' we have always dearly loved & gladly labored for each other, there has been a want of that harmony which is the great charm of family life.

Here it is found in perfection and has a blessed effect upon me, & together with abundant love lavished on me & the never failing delight of John's presence continue to make married life truly happy.

Perhaps three months has hardly given me a chance to judge, but I think it has, & believe my feeling will not ~~judge~~ change. I have been growing more & more happy with each day, & love my husband far better than on that lovely morning three months ago when we promised to belong to one another.

{3}

That seemed like another beautiful dream & is still so fresh in my mind that I will here put my recollections. It will be pleasant to look upon.

In old times when I used to build castles in the air, a wedding scene always found a place among my pictures, and I used to imagine myself exceedingly abashed & flustered enacting the part of bride. Far different was the reality & to me so much more beautiful that all my fairy castles fell before it.

I never remember feeling more calm and serene than on that bright May morning, the last of my maiden life, and the tranquility that then descended upon me has so seemed a part of my wedding that it has clung to me ever since.

I didn't feel in the least as tho' something great was about to happen and went about my household duties as usual, even washing the dishes in so matter of fact a manner that I was surprised at myself. I was very happy & constantly thinking "I am going away with John.", that was all.

{4}

Louisa had adorned the house with wreaths & flowers, and never seemed more beautiful to me.

About 10 o'clock the few friends whom we had invited begun to assemble & poor mother to look sad, for now all began to realize that it was to be.

Hoping to be married in the evening I had prepared a very simple white dress meaning to look like a bride, but on deciding it should be in the morning & knowing myself to be neither young nor pretty, I laid it aside as unsuitable & wore my riding dress of silvery grey, & Louy placed in my hair & upon my bosom, sprays of lilies of the valley [Convallaria majalis].

I felt very young and happy, and when John came to me for a few moments alone & taking me in his arms, looked down in my face saying with such an indescribable glance, "Annie are you happy" it was almost impossible to answer I felt so very full of happiness. He told me how hopeful he felt, how tranquil and full of love, and we went down among our friends at peace with one another & all the world, feeling that no ceremony could make us more married than we already were.

{5}

[first four names of next paragraph underlined with thick mark, and first sentence preceded and concluded by two diagonal strokes by same thick marker, probably by a later person]

Mr. & Mrs. Emerson, Mr. Thoreau, Sanborn & the two families comprised our bridal party and gathered in a friendly circle about us as we stood together beneath an arch of lilies, hand in hand, and Uncle [Reverend Samuel Joseph May (1797-1871), an older brother of Anna's mother (Abigail May) and included in Anna's wedding gift list as "Uncle May", officiated the marriage] said a few sweet simple words, that made us one.

His heart was in them and tears came to all the eyes that looked so kindly upon us, while poor mother who had bravely borne up until now gave way and sobbed in her corner as if Annie were not the happiest girl in the world.

I was in a dream, the lovely day, the bright May sunshine stealing in upon the sweet flowers & wreaths, & loving faces, the influence of the kind hearts around one, Uncle's gentle voice, and the touch of the hand that held mine so firmly yet so fondly, all around seemed so beautiful that altho' my heart bent fast and the tears came to my eyes, I did not feel like Annie. John looked like an angel, fair, innocent, with such loving eyes that I could not look at them but only hold his hand, and thought - He is my husband.

{6}

Then everybody kissed me, wished me joy, looked all manner of kind things and ate the wedding cake & drank the wedding wine.

My dear family all very red about the eyes and with such sadly happy faces that my heart felt uncomfortably big, hovered about me full of anxious affection. [next sentence enclosed between two pairs of thick, diagonal marks, probably by later person as above] We danced on the lawn under the Elm, we said loving things in out of the way corners, we ate the wedding dinner, and then the carriage came and I began to wake up & think "I am going away." Tearful faces kissed me goodbye, loving hands held mine as if they could not let them go, and amid such plentiful affection as even the most beautiful bride in the world could [no words follow] I drove away from my dear home.

very quietly we came to our little married home, we two alone, and peacefully we sat this summer evening with the moon looking down upon us, not more serene than were our hearts, for we felt that we belonged to one another, that henceforth thro' joy or sorrow, life and death, nothing could part us.

A happier wedding day a woman c'd not ask.

{7}

January
1861

Tuesday 1st

This first day of the new year I am resolved to begin my journal & try to keep it faithfully thro' the coming year this first year of my married life.

I didn't think so long a time would pas since I last wrote, I am sorry so many happy days have gone without any record, for there have been so many dark hours in my life that I wish now the bright ones should all be recorded that my children may sometime know what a happy wife their mother has been.

I mailed three months before I wrote a word in my diary that I might be sure of my own feelings before I put them upon paper, & I then wrote as I felt, happy & content, meaning to continue each day to do so. But like many other good resolutions it came to nothing & here the New Year finds me with nothing to show for 1860.

I mean to do better in future, & so live that I need be ashamed to place herein nothing that I do or think of so. "To keep my life honest by keeping my diary so."

{8}

I left my dear husband to spend New Year's Day with mother & when I found how delighted she was & how very happy it has made the day to her, I was thankful that I made the effort to come.

It has been a quiet day with but few callers & few presents, but nevertheless happy, & I never remember feeling more strongly how dearly they all love me here at home. Father gave me Patmore's new book "Faithful Forever" [Faithful Forever by Coventry Patmore, 1860] with the following note - "Dear Annie, I herewith send you Faithful Forever. It is the simplest & sweetest celebration of the friendship of whose pleasures you & yours so largely partake & so richly deserve. May it survive many coming New Year's days as fresh & fair as this, & conduct you beyond all times & dates - yrs [yours] & his forever, yr [your] Father"

I had various small presents, & Mrs. Hawthorne [Sophia Peabody Hawthorne (1809-1871), wife of Nathaniel Hawthorne] sent father & mother a German bread plate of wood carved round the border with wheat ears, & to Louy a handsome gold pen as the most appropriate offering to an authoress, while John carved her a ring, & New Year's day was made happy to her by these remembrances & tokens of kind feeling.

{9}

The new year opens most beautifully to me with all my dear ones in good health, & each busy & happy in their own peculiar way, Father with his school duties, books & newspapers, Lu, her quiet room & writing, Abbie earning her living pleasantly among kind friends & the gaity so congenial to her fun loving nature. Mother is rather lonely & finds her kitchen & workbasket tiresome at times, but is well, happy in her children's success & happiness, & finding much comfort & rest in a home of her own.

And myself - I am so happy, so content, so dearly loved, & feeling myself of so much use & value in the world that I can hardly express how beautiful my life is to me. I am well, busy, & free from all the troubles that have hitherto oppressed me, my only trial is the separation from "my family" & that is so softened by the love & tenderness of my dear husband that it can hardly be called a trial.

He is all that is good, so patient, so tender, so loving, so intent on making me happy, & supplying to me the place of those whom I have left for his sake, that I

sometimes think he is the best of men. He is surely the best of husbands. Heaven bless him.

{10}

We are pleasantly situated in the family of Cap't Cole [Captain Morrill Cole (ca. 1801- ca. 1877) who lived on Trenton St. in East Boston, near Marion Street], where we have a sunny little room & where surrounded by my books, pictures, & work I pass the days so busily & happily that time never hangs heavily on my hands.

John is in a situation quite suited to his taste acting a clerk, book keeper, & business man in the office of an Iron Foundry [Central Iron Foundry on Marion Street in East Boston about 500 yards from where John and Anna lived], where the trust reposed in him & the interest taken in him by his employers [foundry owners Edwin Dyer and James Gurney] lightens his labor, & makes it almost a pleasure to him.

He is most happy in his occupation, his home & his wife, & his face wears a peaceful look that tells of a good conscience, & a heart at rest, making me daily thankful that I help make it so.

We are most blessed together, our habits, tastes & inclinations being much alike, & the great love we have for one another smoothing over the rough places & lightening our labors & our trials, as only a strong, pure affection can do. Each has grown to be a need to the other, & we are never so happy as when quietly seated in our little room busy together.

What it may ever be so is my greatest hope & my earnest prayer.

{11}

"I never would sully my faith

By the Least selfishness or sin

Whatever in his sight I seem

I'd really be"

"Angel in the House" [Coventry Patmore, 1854]

"Nor let soft slumber close my eyes,

Before I've recollected thrice

The train of action thro' the day.

Where have my chose out their way?

What have I learned, where e're I've been,

From all I've heard, from all I've seen?

What know I more that's worth knowing?

What have I done that's worth the doing?

What have I sought that I should shun?

What duty have I left undone?

Or into what new follies run?
These self inquiries are the road
That leads to virtue, & to God."

- Watts [Rev. Isaac Watts (1674-1748), from his Improvement of the Mind (1743), the poem sometimes named "Self-Inquiry"]

I begin the year with these resolutions, & the hope that I may be strong enough to keep them.

{12} [numbered, but blank page]

{13}

Wednesday 9th Jan'y. 1861

I'm once more settled in my own little home, one room, small, plain & humble, but to me the most beautiful place in the world, filled with my own little things, bright, neat, & cosy, & everything needful for my comfort. John dines at home & we have much time together, so I seldom feel lonely, & find so many things to do that I don't have much leisure to grumble.

I intend to devote some hours each day to writing & study, tho judging from my past experience in virtuous efforts of the same kind, I'm somewhat fearful I shan't carry out my plans as well as I ought to.

I returned Friday from Concord to spend "Fast" with John & since then I've found so many things to put in order, & so much running about to do that I've tried in vain to begin my "plan" & untill today my journal has lain untouched. Nothing has happened however worthy of record, & the only interesting thing I've done has been to read, & make a short epitome of the history of "Francis First" [of France (1494-1547)] which I've enjoyed exceedingly. History has been always ~~my~~ a most attractive study & I hope to pursue it more thoroughly. I begin with Louis XII [of France (1462-1515)], & mean to read down to the present Emperor [Napoleon III (1808-1873)] if possible, & by making

{14}

a short record of what I read, endeavor to fix it upon my mind, that it may be of some use beside the mere pleasure of reading it.

["May Alcott" written and underlined diagonally at the beginning of this next paragraph]

I received yesterday a beautiful letter from Abbie [underlined in a different thick pen] expressing much satisfaction with her new home & giving a pleasant account of her home & duties.

I am so glad for her in this world of hard work & rough places & is a good thing to find congenial labor, & feel that while you are profitably employed y'r better nature is not suffering o being wronged.

Much of my money earning work has been so embittered by the consciousness that it was not the work for me & tho' my hands were busy & useful, my heart & mind were suffering, that I'm afraid it has never done me much good, & I'm so thankful that Abbie is differently constituted, less sensitive, more able to fight her own way amid all kind of troubles without losing her own peace of mind. She is a good brave girl, & I'm hoping much from this new experience.

I heard today from home that poor mother had a sick turn which much alarmed them all, & tho' there is now no danger, it caused me some hours of homesickness & had I been rich enough, I should have gone home immediately.

{15}

Thursday 10th [January 1861]

I went early to Boston to see Carrie ["Pratt" inserted in different pen; this would be Caroline Pratt (1836-1866), sister of John Pratt], & do some errands for Louisa. & tho' it was a snowy day I had a pleasant trip over with John. I took a car to save time, & found Carrie still absorbed in her new dress, which I helped her finish, and had some talk meanwhile with the cousins there [probably Alvin Adams Jr. (1834-1863) and Waldo Adams (1836-1892), sons of Maria Pratt's sister, who married the wealthy Alvin Hoar Adams] neither of whom do I especially love or respect, but try to be clever to, in accordance with John's opinion that "one can always do some good to everybody".

I dined & spent the PM at Mary's [probably Mary Robie Sewall, daughter of Anna's mother's cousin or her sister-in-law, also named Mary] until 3^o when I trotted about in search of trimmings & ribbons for dear Lu, & tried hard to get off her bundle before night, but shopping so uncertain business, & at 4^o the bundle wasn't ready, so I consoled myself by going to the Wright's [probably Elizur Wright (1804-1885) and his wife Susan (1810-1875) whose daughter Mary married a son of cousin of Anna's mother] where I passed an hour very pleasantly.

In the evening I read in "The Initials*" [novel by Baroness Jemima von Tautphoeus, 1850], a tale of German life, very sweetly told. I also got from the library for useful reading, Life of Margerite d' Angoulime [The Life of Marguerite D'Angoulême, by Martha Walker Robinson, 1854], sister of Francis I [also known as Marguerite of Navarre]. I anticipate much pleasure in reading it, for much as I dislike the so called "useful" books, history is especially fascinating to me, especially all matters pertaining to kings & queens.

{16}

Friday 11th [January 1861]

I intended to have accomplished a good deal in the way of reading this morning, but fall into conversation with Philo Cole [Philomel J. Cole (1836-1909), wife of Milford J. Cole (1835-1900), son of Morrill Cole, from whom Anna and John rented a room in the house with all the Coles] & wasted an hour of my precious time & then to make matters worse finding it too late to begin early I wasted another hour in reading a novel, consequently my History didn't get opened until noon & my morning's work didn't amount to much.

I also spent a lazy afternoon for I did nothing but read an intriguing novel, & because I felt a little stupid & head achey I indulged in lying upon my bed thoroughly enjoying myself, for I can imagine nothing more splendid than a soft bed & a nice book & if I hadn't a "virtuous" idea that it was wasting time I'm afraid I should often indulge. But I seldom do, & only when I can find a good excuse do I read without sewing or doing something useful at the same time.

I sewed diligently all the evening hours & had a good time with John. I found time for a few more chapters of the The Initials, and having brought the heroine into the pleasing predicament of stand'g by while her lover blew his brains out, I thought it about time to shut my book & go to bed.

{17}

Saturday 12th [January 1861]

Whether I dreamed of the dead lover or what disturbed my mind I don't know, but I waked up suddenly with a dreadful pain on my head which made me feel so dreadfully that I wouldn't rest till I'd told John & he cuddled a little to take away the ache. I therefore woke this morning feeling decidedly sick, & consequently spent another rather lazy day, finishing my book & reading the history of Marguerite of Navarre, which I find very interesting, & containing beside the life of the Queen little histories of many persons eminent either for their talents or virtues. She was much better woman than I had imagined and her influence over Francis I, both uncommon & beautiful, while all her efforts to improve herself, & encourage men of learning were especially praiseworthy at a court where little beside beauty & pleasure engaged all other minds & heads.

She seemed to devote her life to the good of her brother whom she adored with very womanly devotion & her letters to him during his imprisonment in Spain are among the most beautiful I ever read.

Her life seems like a romance & is quite as interesting as a novel giving me a different impression of her than I had received in other histories, making her much better, & I hope it is true.

{18}

Sunday 13th [January 1861]

This being my lazy day when no work or sewing is required I spent it as I usually do spend my Sundays in reading, & had a good time finishing "Marguerite of Navarre" & writing notes therefrom.

After supper we spent an hour with the family chatting & having a very stupid time, for if there is any one thing I do dislike, it is having to talk with people I do not care for. [most likely a visit John's cousins in Boston, Alvin and Waldo Adams]. I don't think I am unsocial, & I'm sure I feel most kindly towards every one & w'd put myself to much inconvenience to oblige them, but their society does n't afford me least satisfaction & I n'd much rather be alone. If I really love a person, it is quite the reverse, for I want them constantly & mourn their absence in the most foolish manner possible. I can never have them enough, or do enough for them & my mind & heart are full of them continually.

I wish I knew if this is right, for it is so a part of my nature that I should feel much troubled if it were wrong.

John & I had a cosy evening together writing & drawing, & finished up with one of our old talks which made the time pass so swiftly that it was 11 ½ before we thought of it. It made me happy tho'.

{19}

Monday 14th [January 1861]

I did my enormous wash consisting of 4 pairs of stockings & handkerchiefs & a pair of sleeves, & then feeling that my household duties were accomplished, I sat down to my literary duties which have for me a charm & interest that merely domestic pursuits never had. Another weak spot in my "natur" for according to wise women, a house & its orderly keeping ought to be my greatest delight, but alas, alas, owing to a father whose beloved head is forever in the clouds, & a dear mother whose love of books & early education prevented from early learning to bake & scrub, I did not inherit that blessed disposition that riseth not above pots and pans, & I detest cooking stoves, wash tubs & scrubbing brushes as much as ever did the veriest blue stocking in the land. I love to work but not to delve.

I took a run towards night to the [post] office hoping I might find there a letter from home, but nothing came & I trotted back again feeling a little bit homesick, but comforting myself with the thought that it w'd come tomorrow & then I should be glad of the delay.

I sewed in the evening & read, Miss Stuckney made us a little call, but as I don't especially fancy her I didn't enjoy her visit much which was I suppose highly wicked.

{20}

Tuesday 15th [January 1861]

I spent an hour cleaning my room & fussing about & at nine settled myself down to my writing.

It was a stormy dismal day & the walking altogether too bad for going out, so I laid out plenty of work for myself & endeavored to spend a useful day.

I work until dinner time on my epitome of Marguerite in which I'm much interested, & read History all the afternoon sewing meantime on an old shirt for "my spouse".

I received a nice letter from home enclosing one from Ab. She seems very happy tho' I am haunted by the idea that she is a little homesick. I don't know why I should think so for she does n't complain, only says "I've just got Annie's letter which did my heart good for tho' I am not homesick I feel cut off from 'my family' & like to see they haven't forgotten me."

They were well, mother much nicely, tho' it is so cold up there that Lu says "We three mull along wearing our nightcaps to keep us warm all day like three old witches" which I've no doubt is a good picture of their dress for certainly my family do excel in getting outlandish dresses.

In the evening I read in Louis XIV [(1638-1715, king of France)], & agree with the author that he was the most selfish of men.

{21}

Wednesday 16th [January 1861]

Another stormy day which kept me in the house & gave me nothing interesting to put into my journal, so I think I will copy herein some lines of J.[ames] R.[ussell] Lowell's which are the most beautiful upon the subject that I ever read. T'is a description of winter.

I was going to copy such a lovely bit of poetry but find I've not left half enough room & so must let it go, like many other grand plans that I make & behold come to nothing. However having quite set my heart upon seeing some verses here I will put a sweet little poem of Leigh Hunt's which I've always admired, it is so very "winning"

Jenny kissed me when we met,
Jumping from the chair she sat in;
Time, you thief, who love to get
Sweets into your list, put that in.
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad;
Say that health & wealth have missed me;

Say I'm growing old, but add —
Jenny kissed me!

["Jenny Kissed Me", Leigh Hunt, in November 1838 issue of Monthly Chronicle]

{22}

Thursday 17th [January 1861]

I cleaned my vast apartment & having scrubbed out every nook & corner with praiseworthy vigor I wrote a long letter home to mother & Lu, took a nice walk to the P.O. to post it, & then settled myself to have a delicious afternoon of reading when in walked Philo Cole who feeling blue had come in to be cheered up for she likes my yarns, & I pity her because I think she is out of her sphere, & suffers a good deal from loneliness & want of sympathy.

So I talked or rather let her talk all the afternoon and I think she enjoyed herself very much, so I ought not to regret my book. We talked Anti Slavery, Reform & all sorts of things & I find her well informed, & sensible & a really good girl I believe tho rather too self satisfied & complacent to quite suit my taste, for I prefer bashful people who don't think much of themselves.

Poor Philo is affectionate & demonstrative & has the misfortune to be married to a perfect bear of a husband [Milford J. Cole, who owned a grocery in Haymarket in Boston, while living in East Boston] who tho' good-hearted is so rough, unsympathizing & grumpy that I should think she'd be perfectly miserable. However that's none of my business, & I think she loves him dearly.

In the evening I read Memoirs Sully [Memoirs of the Duke of Sully (Maximilien de Béthune (1559-1641), published in 1817], prime minister to Henry IV [(1553-1610), a king of France], & found it very queer & curious.

{23}

Friday 18th [January 1861]

I spent my morning quiddling about doing odd jobs until almost dinner time, & did but little in the studying or writing line.

In the afternoon I went to Boston for the first time in a week, & after a pleasant walk to the P.O. with John I went to the Library & got Prescott's Charles V ["The Emperor's Life After His Abdication", by William Hickling Prescott, 1856, appendix to William Robertson's History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, 1769; Charles V (1500-1558) was a Holy Roman Emperor], having read so much of him in Francis I that I felt a great desire to hear more of his personal history. I don't like him tho' I can hardly

help admiring his perseverance & will & a certain determination that made him one of the greatest kings of his country [primarily the Spanish Empire] & age.

I went to Mary's & spent the time in mending old clothes for cousin Thomas [unknown, but apparently not Anna's or John's cousin]. They seemed very cosy & happy there, & we had a good deal of laughing & nonsense as is usual when three girls get together.

After tea I went with John to call on Mrs. Baker & passed quite a pleasant evening listening to the yarns she is so fond of spinning, & enjoying seeing John so happy for she loves him, & that always makes him happy. We had a grand walk home in a hard snow storm getting wet & cold & hungry but I've no doubt it did us both good.

{24}

Saturday 18th [January 1861]

I passed as all my days have passed of late in sewing, reading, writing & taking a walk for duty's sake for of all the things in the world I dislike walking & only go out because I must. I read Wilkie Collins' [(1824-1889)] "Queen of the Hearts" [collection of ten short stories published in 1859] one of the most interesting books I've read in a long time. I finished Charles V & have now no history on hand & so feel quite free to enjoy my book of stories & taking my sewing for the sake of feeling useful I did enjoy my book amazingly.

My week has been a very quiet one spent mostly in my own little room, absorbed in my own little affairs, a very pleasant tho' perhaps not a very beautiful way of passing the time, but I enjoy it best.

I've done several good things this week tho' I don't intend to tell what they are, only I like to be reminded by my journal that I have done a good thing & this week I made a very great sacrifice of feeling, & did something that I don't approve myself, (that is my judgment don't) to please John, & I shall wait with some impatience to see which of us is right.

I did it without his knowledge tho'.

{25}

Sunday 19th [January 1861]

This was an especially pleasant day to me, for both John & I were in a happy mood & everything went pleasantly. We read & talked & loved one another dearly all day.

I didn't enjoy my evening at all for we had to be down in the parlor with the family & I never like that, for they are not congenial to me & I am uncomfortable among them. I

hardly know what I ought to do for I find this dislike to society is growing upon me rapidly, & the time that is not spent in our own room is to me all lost time.

I hate to go anywhere, to see anybody & only want to stay at home & have John all I can get him.

People don't interest me, and beyond my own family I don't care to see or know anyone.

I wish I knew whether it is a wrong feeling for I find it troubles John, and so I ought to try & get rid of it all I can, but it will be hard work.

Several traits in my character are unfortunate for poor John who is so social & jolly I wish I'd be more like him in that respect.

{26}

Monday 21st [January 1861]

I worked all the morning & was just sitting down to my writing when Carrie arrived to ask me to go to Chelsea with her. I especially dislike going to Chelsea & I was tired & didn't feel at all like going anywhere.

But it would have looked very unkind to refuse poor Carrie, so I went & had quite a nice walk over the bridge, saw grandpa & grandma (John Bridge (1783-1870) & Rebecca Bridge (1787-1865), parents of John Pratt's mother), & hurried back to dinner. I was very cross all the afternoon & didn't feel happy nor good, but I got a nice book & tried to forget my uncomfortable thoughts. I also made a good resolution & hope I may be able to keep it.

In the evening I went to the skating field & looked on while John & the young ladies skated & I tried to think it was splendid fun & enjoy myself highly, but if the plain truth must be told, I tho't it was rather poor sport & my precious nose was so cold I longed to go home.

At last much to my joy my amiable spouse announced his intention to go home, & or rather to the office to do a little job of writing, so I went with him & had a nice time working in his big books & playing [to] be useful.

I had a pleasant letter from home today, all well & Louy satisfied & pleased with her new dress, which news made me very glad for she seldom has new things.

{27}

Tuesday 22nd [January 1861]

The great event of the day was a visit to Mrs. Baker, John & I being invited to tea there with Carrie who was to spend the day.

So I determined to go knowing John w'd enjoy it & thinking he w'd like to see his wife look nice, put on my new silk gown, his Christmas present to me, & tried to put on with it a cheerful happy face that he might not feel that I went merely to please him.

I did several errand, went to the library for a book, & arrived at 5 PM at the house & presented myself before good little Mrs. Baker.

She seemed glad to see me, & after being kissed & scolded at for being late I took out my sewing (of course) & went to work in the most virtuous manner. Uncle Sam Hall (Samuel Hall (1815-1907), married Harriet Bridge (1816-1851), a sister of John Pratt's mother) soon arrived & not long after John, looking in spite of his shabby coat & big hands, the picture of health, good nature & a "gentleman", & I longed to fly at him & give him a good kiss on his dear good old face.

We talked & the old folks told tales of their young days & amused me very much by an account of their first ball when they were 18 ys old, & went at one oclock in the afternoon & danced till 4 the next morning, having a

{28}

supper & two fiddles just like the old folks.

Their dances were called the Cradle Company's & the account of the flutter & excitement on the grand occasion struck us as especially funny, for they began to prepare five weeks before hand, the managers having arrived at the mature age of 13 & 14, & having the privilege of choosing first among the ladies for their partner for the evening, 7 Uncle Sam said he remembered how he struggled to pluck up courage to ask the lady of his heart to go, & after walking two miles to her home paused in a little hollow near by to "brighten up" & rehearse his invitation speech.

I have but few such recollections connected with my childhood tho' it was a very happy one full of enjoyment & fun, & now at the age of 29 can say I never danced at a ball.

Thinking of these things & of my quiet, lonely life just now, John & I fell to talking, & he wants me very much to make friends more, & try to have more interest in people about me, lest by & bye I shall be entirely without friend.

I don't feel the need of them now, my mother, father, sisters & husband are enough for all my needs, & beyond them I don't care, they absorb all the love I have in me which is more than most people have, & I've not much left for any one else. However, I will try for dear John's sake to be more social.

{29}

Wednesday 23rd [January 1861]

Not feeling very smart today & having no history to read, by way of being useful, I gave my room a good fixing, & wrote my journal, which with a letter y^p Lu filled my morning very comfortably.

I got yesterday "Never too late to mend" [It is Never Too Late to Mend, novel by British writer Charles Reade, 1856] which I've not read for several years, but remember reading then with great interest, so when I began my afternoon by reading that, of course I didn't do much else. I don't especially admire Reade's style, but he certainly understands people & I never read of any female characters so entirely natural as his, that is, so like real girls, shy, managing, affected, full of arts & airs & graces, clever, good hearted & loving sometimes but seldom free from affectation of some kind. I hardly know among all the girls I've ever known, one perfectly sincere truthful natural girl. It is sad, but it's true.

And then Reade's good men ain't too good. They all have their faults and interest from the very fact that they are so natural, so like people you know yourself. I think the perfect never failing pious characters in a book seldom interest us as much as the faulty ones, partly because we never see them in real life.

In the evening I sewed, read & had some pleasant talk with John who seemed very happy & loving.

{30}

Thursday 24th [January 1861]

I couldn't settle down this morning to anything useful until I had finished the first volume of "Never too late _ _ _" & got Hawes [character in the novel] disposed of & poor Robinson [character in the novel] happy again, so I devoted my morning to them & read on & on with increasing interest till it was done, & still not satisfied I sighed & lamented because I hadn't got the other volume.

It is a wonderful book, full of instruction & to me especially nice because it makes me feel.

In the afternoon I wrote a long letter to dear Lu and included one I'd just received from Abbie, dear little soul How I do long to see her, for tho' she seem very happy I know she misses us & longs for home.

She speaks of giving satisfaction in her teaching & management of her pupils & I've no doubt the Dr. is satisfied with her for she is a brilliant girl well able to make her own way and do anything she undertakes. I've great confidence in Abbie.

I made Philo a little call about dusk & gossiped till tea time making her happy in her lonely room, and so getting some satisfaction myself tho' I didn't want to go.

I sewed as usual in the evening and John read aloud to me the doings of the Anti-Slavery Meetings. I wish I were sure their well meant honest fearless efforts were always wise.

{31}

Friday 25th [January 1861]

After writing up my journal I began a letter to Abbie for I'm sure it w'd please her very much to get another from me soon, and I've too often felt the want of them myself during my homesick trials abroad not to do my share to present my brave little sister from feeling so to[o].

I read a most interesting book by Miss Benger [Elizabeth Benger (1778-1827)], The Court of Henry II during the period of Mary Stuart's [Mary Queen of Scots (1542-1587)] residence there [Memoirs of the life of Mary Queen of Scots, with anecdotes of the Court of Henry II, during her residence in France, by Miss Benger, first published in 1800], her marriage with his son, & the death of both Henry [Henry II of France (1519-1559)] & Francis [Francis, Duke of Anjou (1555-1584), Henry's son]. It was a portion of her life which I've never known much & I enjoyed it highly. I finished my letter to Abbie & enclosed the last one I had from Louy thinking it w'd please her & I took a run to the P.O, with it after dinner very much pleased because I got a chance to walk part of the way with John. In passing Philo's room on my return she called me begging I'd come in & sit with her, so I laid away my book & my afternoon plans & feeling rather cross went in & listened to her talk, glad to see it made her happy until tea time.

After tea John had to return to the Office, so I went with him & amused myself with the paper & books till 9½ when we had a lovely moonlight walk home together & went to bed two happy old creatures.

{32}

Saturday 26th [January 1861]

This morning I got out my German books and laid a plan to finish the translation of Schiller's Joan d'Arc [Die Jungfrau von Orleans, an 1801 play by Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805)] which I began 5 or 6 yrs ago, & suddenly gave up in the most interesting part. I believe I shall now try to complete it.

I went to Boston in the afternoon, & really enjoyed my walk the day was so mild. I got home from the library the second volume of "Never too late [to mend] ..." & could hardly refrain from reading it in the street such was my haste to be at it. But I went to Mary's [Mary Robie Sewall or Mary (Wright) Sewall] & the Wrights finding every one well & glad to see me which is always a happy thought. I found the Stern's at Chestnut St. [not in 1860 Boston city directory] & the house being full of company I didn't stay long but posted off to Avery St. where I had a pleasant call, for queer as that family are there is something congenial about them to me & I always like to go there, probably

because they all like me. I read in my book all the way home, & all the evening, taking it with me to the Office where John had a job to do & kindly took me with him, so I had a good time.

I had a present of a pair of skates from him today which pleased me very much & I mean to do my best to learn, it would gratify him - dear soul.

{33}

Sunday 27th [January 1861]

I didn't do much today but read my book & be clever to John who was in his Sunday mood & beautiful as an angel all day long. Sundays are days of peace to us, & I think we are the happiest of beings.

"Our love is not a fading, earthly flower.
Its winged seed dropped down from Paradise,
And, nursed by day & night, by sun & shower,
Doth momentarily to fresher beauty rise:
To us the leafless autumn is not bare,
Nor winter's rattling boughs lack lusty green.
Our summer hearts make summer's fulness, where
No leaf, or bud, or blossom may be seen:
For nature's life in love's deep life doth lie.
Love, - whose forgetfulness is beauty's death,
Whose mystic key these cells of Thou & I
 Into the infinite freedom openeth,
 And makes the body's dark & narrow grate,
 The wide-flung leaves of Heaven's [own] palace gate."

Lowell [James Russell Lowell (1819-1891), Sonnet

XXVIII from his "Poems", 1844]

{34}

Monday 28th [January 1861]

This morning I felt very virtuous so I worked a good deal washing & fussing about as people always do when they make a great deal out of nothing.

I then wrote a letter to Fred [Frederick G. Pratt (1831-1905), John's surviving brother] & didn't enjoy it at all for I hate to write letters unless to someone I love, so I had rather hard work of it, & was so fussy about it that I never did anything else till dinner time & even then it was done but laid aside in despair for a lucky moment when I c'd feel like finishing it.

After dinner I walked with John to Chelsea calling at the Harper's & Grandfather's [John Bridge, father of John's mother Maria (Bridge) Pratt], & then home again down to the P.O. where I felt it in my bones there was a letter for me, and to be sure there was a nice "fat letter" from Lu.

I couldn't wait till I got home to read it so I opened it in the street, & how I did enjoy it. I walked along reading & laughing for it was very funny, & then groaning for it was full of mother's sickness, another attack of a very painful tho' not a dangerous trouble & I did long to run home to her and see her dear old face for a minute. I wish I c'd spend a week there & cheer her up a little, but I am afraid I can hardly afford the money just now. However, if I'm needed I shall go if I have to walk on my head.

{35}

I had a nice present today from my dear kind husband who always seems to find out everything I want & then manage some how until I have it.

I've long wished for a box with lock & key in which to stow safely away all my treasures, a little private treasure box where all my love letters & precious things might be hidden away. And today John brought me home such a beauty, black walnut with a mysterious little key to turn jealously upon my treasures. So in the evening I amused myself by fixing it & such a funny collection of things, so like me who save every absurd thing that has been touched by beloved hands, withered flowers given I don't even remember whose, locks of hair, scraps of writing, queer pictures, all sorts of funny things nearly each one having some little story of its own, & precious for some sweet remembrance lingering about it. I couldn't help thinking if each little flower, or note could tell its history, what a volume of romance would then unfold & so my mind went back to those old times, & I fell to thinking them all over.

Very sweet they were, full of romance & beauty, but as far as happiness is concerned, my present life is far greater now & I would not willingly go back.

{36}

Tuesday 29 [January 1861]

I borrowed the nicest of books & employed myself all the morning making extracts for my historical collection.

I copied a list of all the Kings of England, Scotland, Germany, France, & Spain, & intend to read the lives of all of them that I can get. I was so bound up in dates & names that my morning passed without any writing or reading, & at dinner time I'd only accomplished 12 pages of historical treasures.

After dinner I went to the Post Office & tho' it snowed hard, & I got wet, & didn't enjoy it at all, I have no doubt it did me a deal of good. I invited Philo to go, thinking it would gratify her, but I think enjoy best going alone.

I read in Kenilworth [1821 novel by Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832)] having only read it a dozen times already, but it seemed just as good as ever, and I was happy as I could be over it. One never tires of Scott. In the evening John worked on his sewing & I admired, & read, & talked Charades with the young ladies who think of getting up some & want my aid. I'm not good at such things, but it is theatrical, so I shall try.

{37}

Wednesday 30th [January 1861]

I took tea & spent the evening at Aunt Anne ["(Adams)" inserted with a carot; Anne Rebecca Adams (1800-1882), sister of John's mother, who married the wealthy Alvin Adams (1804-1877), founder of the Adams Express Company], but didn't enjoy myself much, and was very glad when the time came to go home. I don't particularly enjoy going there & don't much like any of the people or find there can ever be much sympathy between us.

I tried to talk & be pleasant for John's sake, but I watched the clock & was delighted when the hand pointed to nine. They were all very kind & Frankie [most likely Helen Frances Adams (1845-1922), daughter of Alvin and Anne Adams, labeled "Helen Frank Adams" in a family photo album] played a good deal which I liked for I don't often hear any music & love it dearly.

I wrote a good long letter home today, it being the only thing I can very well do to help the lonely people there to find much fun in their present quiet life. All the Alcotts have a passion for letters, & I think there are but few families who have so many. In looking back to my life at home years ago I can't help thinking it a very happy one, with three sisters to join all my doings & mother always ready to sympathize in everything we did. Now all is changed the 4 sisters all separated, dear Lizzie in Heaven, Annie married, Louy at home, Abbie at the West, all so changed in three short years.

{38}

Friday Feb. 1st 1861

I did nothing very important all day, but at night John brought me tidings of a sleigh ride to which we were invited, & tho' with my usual wickedness I didn't wish to go, I did go & had such a funny time that I must put some record of it here. Dyer & Gurney [Edwin Dyer and James Gurney, foundry owners] John's employers were invited by the

proprietor of a dairy farm in Winthrop to come during the sleighing & bring their friends to see his house, little wife & little baby, in all of which he no doubt takes much pride.

Ignorant of what the entertainment was to be but anxious to accept the invitation D. & G. asked about a dozen friends, & getting a big sleigh with tandem team, started off about 7 o'ock [o'clock].

{39}

[blank page, but numbered]

{40}

Monday 4th [February 1861]

I busied myself with my extensive household duties a good while this morning, & then wrote to mother Pratt (Maria (Bridge) Pratt (1806-1891), John's mother) who loves letters, & is rather lonely this winter with all her children away from home. So I tried to write a loving, jolly letter, knowing how often a few lines from a friend may brighten a whole day for us.

In the afternoon I went to Boston to the library (of course) & got Commines Memoirs of Louis XI [Mémoires by Philippe de Commines (1447- ca.1511) first published in 1524 in Paris] which tho' it may be a very nice book doesn't look very interesting yet & I am afraid my courage will give out before it is half [finished].

I called at the Wright's, & went to Molly's where I f'd a roomful of people, & therefore didn't especially enjoy myself, tho' I had some pleasant talk about books with Lizzy Sterns whom I always like very much.

Mary seemed tired & worried with so much care & company & I longed to help her, but she is one of those unlucky people who a[re] never ready for anything & it is almost impossible to do much to aid her.

I had a delightful walk home & in the evening read "Queechy"[1852 novel by Susan Warner (1819-1885)]. It is a good sensible book tho' the heroine cries too much and is too perfect, but on the whole I think I like it.

{41}

Tuesday 5th [February 1861]

I woke very early & rose about 6 to see John off to Boston an hour sooner than usual, which tho' no doubt an excellent thing & in time productive of rosy cheeks & good temper, has always the effect of making me very cross & uncomfortable all day owing to the wickedness of my nature & passion I have for late hours. I like to sit up till midnight &

be in bed till noon. My "Lord & Master" prefers going to bed at sunset & rising at dawn, so we compromise the matter by retiring usually about 9, & getting up at 7 which does very well.

I found time to write up my journal which has been somewhat neglected of late, & read a little in my History.

After dinner I went my usual walk to the Post Office & was well paid by a letter from mother, Lu & Abbie, all well & busy and full of affection for Mrs. J.[ohn] B.[ridge] Pratt. So I felt at rest and went home much comforted for having thought of them more than usual lately & imagined something was the matter. I was relieved to find that all was right.

I finished Queechy & began "The Wide wide world" [The Wide, Wide World, 1850 first novel of Susan Warner] by the same author & much better I think. John dined in town, so I didn't have quite so pleasant a day as usual. I miss seeing him the hour at noon.

{42}

Wednesday 6th [February 1861]

I found my "Commines" proved rather a dull book, but full of notes concerning Kings & famous people of that time which I read carefully & copied.

John brought me a letter of 18 pages from Abby Holden telling me what I wanted to know about Abbie Alcott's success at the Asylum [State Idiot Asylum in Syracuse, NY where Abbie briefly taught art as a form of therapy]. I asked her candid opinion and was so pleased with it that I will place a few lines of it here. She says

"If I had written you after May had been here a week only my idea would have been very different from what it is now. You were very wise to not ask for my opinion till after a month's acquaintance, for the Alcotts being unlike the generality of people, it takes time to form a correct idea of their character. Now she seems to me like another being, ladylike, affectionate, modest, simple in her manners, interested in everything about her, likes the children & the school, is ready & willing to do anything for anybody, & tho' fond of fun, can be sober, thoughtful & very companionable.

The Dr. & Mrs. W.[ilbur] both like her, think her an amiable, engaging girl with something very agreeable about her. She Dr. likes in the school & in the family, and you may rest assured that she has made a good & lasting impression". This makes me very happy, dear little W[?] Heaven bless her.

{43}

Thursday 7th [February 1861]

I spent my whole day in letter writing, & dispatched a good long letter to Abbie, & dear mother which I hope will gratify them all as much as I intend it to for I repeated Abby Holden's kind words which would I know gratify mother, and encourage Abbie. I read in "Wide wide world" which would be a "real" good story if it were not quite so pious. Not that I dislike piety of the right kind, that which shows itself in loving words, unselfish deeds, and unrepining submission to what must be, but when a child of 10 yrs talks constantly of being "washed in the blood of the lamb", having a new heart & seeking Grace, it seems rather unnatural. Then to pray on every occasion, read the Bible in preference to all other books, & weep bitterly if any one asks her if she is a "Christian" or "expects to be saved" seems to me hardly childlike & simple enough. Aside from this the book is charming, & y skipping the moral talks I found much pleasure in reading it.

In the evening John taught me "Cribbage" & I puzzled my stupid brains over that most mysterious of games with some success, & I think with a few more lessons I may learn. I wish to very much, John is so fond of it.

{44}

Friday 8th [February 1861]

[t] was an awfully cold day & the faces that appeared at the breakfast table were funny enough, so red, blue peaked & cross. The house was cold & every body groaning.

However one jolly spirit among us set the rest laughing & soon we were as good natured as possible all but poor Plymton [sic] who being somewhat of a "baby bunting" is easily made wretched by a little discomfort & sat crouching over the fire. I felt quite proud of my brave rosy John who without ever turning up his coat collar went merrily off as if the bitter cold were mere fun.

I made up a jolly fire in my little stove, & I spent the morning writing, & trying to get interested in "Commune", & after patiently wading thro' any quantity of stupid pages came at last upon just what I wanted, an account of Louis XI, his character, & personal habits, & read dilligently in it until dinner time. I spent the P.M. in sewing & read'g, beginning "Peveril of the Peak" [longest novel of Sir Walter Scott, 1822], a good old book that I have not read for many years. I played Cribbage in the eve. & had the satisfaction of beating John, tho' I didn't feel very grand as I had plenty of help, and all the fun.

Miss Stickney made us a call, but that didn't add much to my pleasure for I don't like her.

{45}

Saturday 9th [February 1861]

I thought when I began this journal that I should make it entertaining, but I think it is a very stupid book, my life is so uneventful there are but few entertaining facts to place here[e], & John & I live so happy & peacefully together that I never have any scenes to relate, no history of quarrels & reconciliations to spin long yarns about, and nothing exciting to enliven this prosy matter of fact pages with. I went to Boston in the afternoon & got from the library Michelet's French History [History of France by Jules Michelet (1798-1874), English translation of first two volumes first published in 1844] thinking I might find therein some account of the kings whose histories are not written separately, either from their never having done anything worth writing about or because their reigns were too short & uneventful to make an interesting story. I was pleased enough to get such a big book, promising so much & I spent the evening reading it.

I went to Mary's & got a box of figs for mother, some oranges & dates, thinking as she is not well it would please her to get a nice parcel of goodies. I was disappointed because I didn't receive more things & came home full of regret at not having more money to spend & planning all the nice things I'd send her if only I had the means.

I should like for once to have all the money I c'd spend just to see how it would seem.

{46}

Monday 11th [February 1861]

The day was so bright & beautiful that it seemed like Spring, & made me long for the country & so I opened my window to play it was summer & could almost imagine that the birds were singing & smelled the grass & flowers.

Such days always make me discontented with winter & the dull weather which follows seems duller than ever for I don't really love winter very well and welcome the summer with perfect delight.

I cleaned my room & being a somewhat fussy body it kept me busy all the morning, working as if I had the cares of a large family on my hands.

I read all the afternoon in "Peveril of the Peak" sewing at the same time & accomplishing a good deal. My hands have always had so much to do that they are always more comfortable to be a[t] work, & I enjoy a book twice as well if I have my sewing too. I braved the mud & puddles at night, & took a run to the [Post] Office, but got no letter for my pains, tho' I had a nice walk, & met John.

In the evening we played cribbage & I beat him again & think I begin to see thru' the game & like it principally for the pleasure of pegging with the fascinating little board. I never play that I don't think of "Dick Swiveller & the Marchioness" [characters in Charles Dickens "The Old Curiosity Shop" first published as a book in 1841, here possibly referring to an illustration in that first edition where the two characters are playing cribbage]



Dick Swiveller & the Marchioness
from the original publication of
Charles Dickens' "The Old Curiosity
Shop"

{47}

Tuesday 12th [February 1861]

That we might not be too sure of Spring yesterday's sunshine was followed by a rainstorm, & when I rose this morning I found it dark & gloomy and warm & uncomfortable as one could desire. But I happened to have a nice book, a job of sewing to finish, my Journal & a letter to write, & so I didn't care for the weather. John made me very happy yesterday by taking the half filled basket for mother, & buying oranges, & tea, sent it full, to surprise her at night. Philo very kindly added a box of figs [Philomel Cole's husband owning a grocery] & I kept thinking all the morning how pleased the dear folks in Concord were feeling, undoing their treasures, & reading the letter which I took care should be among the goodies, for I doubt if all the eatables in the land would give them any pleasure unless there was a line from Annie among them. Any arrival is so welcome at a lonely country house, & mother is always so gratified with any remembrance from those she loves, that I know last evening was a perfect jubilee with her & only wish I could have been there to see.

I had an uncommonly pleasant afternoon for John staid at home having a job of copying to do, & so I helped some[?] & we had a "real" good time.

{48}

In the evening Mrs. Cole had a little part & what with the dancing, supper music and flirting, the young folks had quite a gay time. I didn't go having no taste for such things, and being conscious of my own inability to shine or even play the agreeable on such occasions. But I enjoyed peeping at the company & watching the various doings from my quiet corner, tho I found it hard to understand how people can enjoy anything so silly & noisy. I love fun, but such nonsense as folk talk, such flirting & absurd chattering I can't find to be fun. John however seemed to enjoy himself & danced as if he loved it, & I couldn't help wishing he had more opportunities for jollity of some kind. He is naturally

more lively & social than I and tho' well content & very happy with his quiet life, he enjoys gaiety very much. I wish I could be more like him in this respect, he w'd enjoy so much more if I tho't I was happy too.

He took pains to bring me up a nice waiter [i.e., small tray] of goodies at supper time & made me two calls during the evening & was as kind & attentive to me as if I were the greatest lady in the land [probably intending "land"] & as young & pretty as any of the gay girls down stairs, dear old soul he does love me so much no man c'd be more devoted & loving than he is to his homely old wife.

I was quite proud of him he looked so handsome & good.

{49}

Wednesday 13th [February 1861]

As usual after a party everybody was late, sleeping & used up & I among the rest being awake till last, not suiting my simple habits, & the cake, nuts, raisins & other goodies eaten at midnight not being conducive to quiet sleep & a bright awakening.

However I did my ironing & wrote my journal, & then finished out my morning by gossiping with Philo over the great event, the day after a party being usually good for anything else, & the part itself being deprived of half its charm to girls unless they can compare notes after it's all over.

I walked after dinner to the P.O. & was disappointed at finding nothing, for I was sure there must be a letter from home. As John hadn't returned from Boston I went to the Ferry & after waiting three boats I had the satisfaction of seeing my "lord & master" arrive, & produce from his pocket two fat letters for me, a splendid long one from Abbie & another from mother. I read them over half a dozen times & felt particularly happy about dear Abby who seems so very much interested in her duties & so very happy in all about her. Mother seems rather lonely & sad, & I wrote immediately to her promising to come home for a week very soon, & enclosed Abby's letter to cheer her up. I'm afraid she is not happy this winter, & I worry about her a good deal.

{50}

Thursday 14th [February 1861]

I was pleasantly surprised this morning by a visit from Eliza Wells & Sophy Bond, & spent a very jolly hour gossiping together. I haven't seen them for a long time & we had many things to say to one another, so altho usually I don't enjoy company or callers at all, I did have quite a good time.

After dinner I went to Boston with John, & spent most of the afternoon walking with him. I got from the library Henry 4th by Abbot [History of Henry the Fourth: king of

France and Navarre by John S. C. Abbott (1805-1877), 1856], & the second vol. of Michelet [History of France, see above] which I find very interesting. I went to Mary's tho' as usual my visit didn't amount to much. I like to look in there often and see how all is going on, tho' there is never much to induce one to stop, & my calls are never very long. I had a jolly walk with my "man" & met Uncle Sam Hall [see above] with whom we chatted a few minutes & came home two very happy people.

I immediately fell upon Henry IV & found it so very entertaining that I read steadily till John came home but after supper as he didn't ~~play~~ feel very smart I laid my book away and played Cribbage with him & beat. It is a funny exciting game & the only game of cards in which I can feel much interested. I don't like cards.

{51}

Friday 15th [February 1861]

I happened to discover in an old number of "Littell" [Littell's Living Age, a magazine published 1844-1941, possibly volume 45 (April-June 1855) in which an article on Lady Blessington appeared] a most interesting account of Lady Blessington [Marguerite Gardiner (1789-1849), Irish novelist, journalist and literary hostess], & I c'd do nothing else until I had read it all thro'.

[the rest of this page blank]

{52}

Sunday 17th [February 1861]

I never have much to write about Sunday for it is a blissful lazy day in which I do but little & nothing worth relating, but it is the happiest day in the week to me.

This however was not so pleasant as my Sunday usually is for John went to Boston to hear Wendell Phillips [(1811-1884), abolitionist, orator and attorney] on Progress. We seldom separate on this day & always take great care that nothing shall interfere with our being together, & I had hard work to make him go. But it was a great occasion, & he was anxious to hear Mr. P., so after having twice decided to go & twice resolved to stay at home lest I should be lonely, he at last "yielded to my prayers" & went. I felt lonely enough & w'd have given a good deal to have had him back again, but I knew it was best he should go, so I amused myself reading and dozing till his return. The rest of the day I read in some old "Harpers" [Harper's Magazine (1850 - present)] & "Michelet" all about the reign of Charles 6th [of France (1368-1422)] & found much to interest me. What a pity such a king with the elements of so much goodness and opportunities for so

much that was great & good should have led such a miserable life & died such a wretched being.

It seems as if kings & queens all over the world were the most miserable of beings, & I'm thankful I was not born in a palace. (Finished letters to Abbie, & A.[bby] Holden [asterisk in corner of page, no closed parenthesis])

{53}

Monday 18th [February 1861]

After doing my usual Monday work I settled down to my writing & reading, & busied myself very happily in arranging my historical collection (how grand that sounds considering it applies to a few sheets of notes and names)

My reading happened to be the reign of Charles 7 [of France (1403-1461)] & I found the most pleasing account of Joan d'Arc [(1412-1431)] I have ever met with. Many historians picture her as an ignorant impostor or a very miserable know-nothing who made a great fuss & deserved the punishment she met with. Michelet represents her as I think she really was, an innocent modest girl full of faith, & by inspiring others gave them the courage & hope which was all they needed to win the victory.

Her life always seemed to me a sad but beautiful poem, & I never tire of reading it.

I spent the P.M. in sewing & reading "The Pirate" [1822 novel by Sir Walter Scott]. It is one of the first novels I ever read, & I distinctly remember years ago, when I was about 9 yrs old that mother coming from town one day brought home three novels. The first except Edgeworth's [Anglo-Irish author, Maria Edgeworth (1768-1849)] that we had never seen. The Pirate, Kenilworth [1821 novel of Scott], & The Abbot [1820 novel of Scott], three of Scott's best, upon which Lu & I fed, & never rested till they were done when we wished for more, & the taste then awakened has never yet been satisfied & to read is our highest delight.

{54}

Tuesday 19th [February 1861]

John waked me early & we lay a long while peacefully chatting & loving one another. This little time in the morning is the sweetest in the day to me, for John always wakes up so loving & happy & his first movement is to kiss me & say some nice foolish little thing which makes me happy too, so that if the beginning of a day were to determine its events, every day w'd be full of sunshine & goodluck, for we always begin it beautifully.

I ironed, put my room to rights, wrote my Journal, read 10 pages of history, finished an abstract of Henry 4th & wrote a letter home, when considering my morning not utterly wasted, I proceeded to rest until ___ after dinner.

I sewed very busily all the afternoon & evening & finished up with a game of Cribbage in which I was uncommonly lucky as usual which is I guess the reason I like the game so well. I accomplished a good deal today & began to think boarding is not utterly lazy work, for tho' I don't earn money, or do much hand-work, I am always busy and feel pretty well satisfied with my work each day. I am better off in every way that I ever was before in my life and am thankful whenever I think of my happy lot.

{55}

Wednesday 20th [February 1861]

I spent a very busy day sewing, fixing up my old clothes & setting a good many stitches that have been waiting some time for my reading fit to subside. However I did my sewing with "The Pirate" open before me & finished it as well as the work. It was stormy & I didn't take any walk, had no letter, nothing happened, it was as dull & uneventful [a] day as could well be, but nevertheless an uncommonly pleasant one to me for several little things that happened made me very happy.

It takes very little to do that, a loving word, a thoughtful act, or affectionate look from John makes me happy for a whole day, & small things that some would soon forget, linger round me for a long time. My friends, my books, my work & my health are all I want in this world, & I don't think that is wishing for too much where there are so many things to be desired. Of course I have longings for the theatre music, & neater clothes sometimes, but those 4 are the only needfuls, & I can be very happy without the others.

"He that is down need fear no fall. He that is low no pride.

He that is humble ever shall have God to be his guide."

John Bunyan [English writer and Puritan preacher (1628-1688), from his Pilgrim's Progress (1678)]

{56}

Saturday 23 [February 1861]

Intending to go home on Monday for a visit of a week I spent all this morning in clearing up all my extensive domain, and arranging everything to be handy for John during my absence. I want very much to go to Concord for I have never quite learned to live without "my family" & tho' I'm very seldom homesick, I often long inexpressibly for the "dear folks at home". So I'm looking forward to my visit as something delightful & should be sadly disappointed should anything happen to prevent my going. Still the very

tho't of leaving John for a whole week seems perfectly dreadful, & I can hardly resolve to go, & so between the two my heart has been in rather a topsy turvy condition for the last few days, & won't get settled till I'm fairly off.

I went to Chelsea in the afternoon calling at Mr. Harper's & Grandfather Bridge's (John Bridge, father of John's mother Maria Pratt) where I had quite a pleasant time, the old people being uncommonly cheery & bright. I was surprised in the evening by a long letter from dear Ab, which was as usual bright and happy, assuring me of her comfort & content in her new situation where I think she is much beloved & respected, & the influences around her are healthful.

{57}

Sunday 24 [February 1861]

Knowing from sad experience that my Sunday never amounts to much in the way of work unless I begin it "sensibly", I sat down early in a very moral frame of mind & wrote my journal. Then feeling at rest as regarding that important duty, I devoted my self to John & had a good time.

Intending to go to Concord tomorrow, I did more about my things than usual, putting away & fx'ng all ready for the great event tomorrow, but I also read a good deal & at night John & I had a nice talk together. One of our old fashioned times which seem so sweet & beautiful still, tho' we have been married nearly a year. I have always been told that the romance & sentiment of lovers soon wore off after they were married, & that they soon settled down into matter of fact friends. We haven't found it so, & I think John is much more like a lover than ever in our "loving days". Nothing could be more devoted & gallant than his treatment of me, and whenever I say "My are you so much more loving now" his answer always is "Because dear, I love you more."

I'm glad it is so. It promises so much for the future.

{58}

Monday 25th [February 1861]

I rose very early & put my domain in apple pie order, arranged all comfortably for John during my absence, & at ten o'clock went down into the lower regions to say goodbye. Philo kissed me saying "do come back soon". Mary murmured something about "too bad & going away" & Sarah gave me a hearty smack crying out with tears in her good natured eyes "Oh bless your dear little heart, don't be long gone".

Oh dear tho't I as I walked away, it is well worth the going if only to call out such kind feelings, & should have enjoyed a good cry myself.

John went with me to the depot, & his face looked so long that I immediately began to feel better & chuckled in my wicked heart that everybody felt so bad at my going away & I marched along as proud as a peacock. I didn't cry when I said "goodbye" to John tho' I wanted to awfully, but looked very brave, & started for home with my heart as "big as a bushel." Father met me at the depot smiling like the dear old angel he is. Mother rushed to the door the moment I came in sight, & Lu came flying out over the lawn & hugging me tight, bore me in triumph into the house. Truly it was a welcome after my own heart & four happier souls than our own it w'd be hard to find.

{59}

March 5th 1861

Tuesday 5th

I returned yesterday from Concord after a very pleasant visit of a week. Mother came with me to pass a few days at Molly's and John who came up on Saturday to pass Sunday, so we had a nice ride down & I didn't leave mother till I saw her safely established at Molly's for I was beset by the fear that she would go right back the moment she was left alone.

At noon I came home very glad to get here & when I saw the faces that greeted me looking so delighted I was so pleased I hardly knew what to do. So I eat my dinner, spun yarns about my Concord doings and made myself as agreeable as I could to pay them for being so glad to see me.

I passed the P.M. in putting things to rights for I was most distracted at the moment of dust and out of place of everything in my room, for tho' John is very neat, I am very fussy about all my duds & rather pride myself upon keeping my room in the best possible trim. A chair in the wrong place or a spec on the carpet disturbs me, so I found plenty to do & finished up my scrubbing by taking a warm bath myself, & sleeping soundly until dark.

{60}

My visit home has been extremely pleasant & the principal event a grand Masquerade at the Town Hall given by Sanborn [Franklin B. Sanborn (1831-1917), journalist, author, reformer] to his scholars & the young folks of the town.

[rest of the page blank]

{61}

[blank page]

{62}

[blank page]

{63}

Tuesday 12th [March 1861]

Sewing & letter writing has absorbed all my spare time since I returned, & my poor journal has been rather neglected. I always disliked keeping a diary, & am very apt to defer the writing it rather than any other duty, so tho' I am especially anxious to keep it faithfully, I find I always neglect it in a most shiftless manner.

I have this week been reading "Queens of England" [Lives of the Queens of England, 12 volumes, 1840-1848] by Agnes Strickland [English historical writer and poet (1796-1874)] & found it so very interesting that I can hardly bear to leave it. I've made an epitome of the life of Katharine of Aragon [or "Catharine" (1485-1536), English queen], & thought of her more than most any one else for several days. Elizabeth of York [(1466-1503), English queen], Anne Boleyn [(ca. 1501-1536), English queen], Jane Seymour [(ca. 1508-1537), English queen] I also read with much interest finding more romance than any novel that c'd well be devised, & more attractive because true.

Mary Sewall [Mary Robie Sewall (1829-1879), daughter of Anna's mother's cousin, Thomas Robie Sewall (1792-1864)] & Mary Wright [Mary (Wright) Sewall (1838-1879), who married in December 1860 Joseph S. Sewall (1827-1917), brother of Thomas Robie Sewall] surprised me by a call & spent an hour expressing much satisfaction at my little home & seeming to enjoy their short visit very much.

I spent the P.M. reading my History & sewing. I began this week with a resolution to be very industrious, accomplish a great deal, so I kept myself very busy all day. Received a letter from home enclosing one from Ab.

Spent the evening helping John on his books, & then we finished up with a game of Cribbage which I beat.

{64}

Wednesday 13th [March 1861]

I woke this morning to find it storming but I had such a nice loving time with John that I didn't mind the weather. When I am happy all weather is pleasant to me. I sat down early to my studying, wrote my journal first to make sure of it, made an epitome of

the life of Anne Boleyn, & read the history of Katherine Howard [or "Catherine", queen of England, lived (1523-1542)]. This kept me busy till dinner time.

In the afternoon tho' it was very stormy. I went to Boston, & really enjoyed splashing along in the rain & mud. I went to the Hospital and called on Lucy ["Dr. Sewall" inserted in another hand using a carot; Lucy Ellen Sewall (1837-1890), physician and feminist, daughter of Anna's mother's cousin Samuel Edmund Sewall (1799-1888)], but finding her busy with a patient I didn't stop long. She wanted me to come & sew for her & I being quite ready to earn an honest penny promised to go on Saturday.

I made a call on Mary May [either Mary (Goddard) May (1787-1882) an aunt of Anna's mother, or the daughter of that aunt, Mary Goddard May (1824-1914) who did not marry until 1865] & talked very fast for an hour about every conceivable thing much to her delight, but I was very glad to come away, & hurried home right glad to get there for there's no place like it.

I received a basket of goodies from mother with some nice letters which made me very happy. I heard also from Abby ["May Alcott" written above in another hand and "Abby" underlined in that pen] the very best of news, that she is reengaged until Aug. at which success she is so delighted that she said "she wanted to cry". Dr. W.[ilbur] expresses great satisfaction & appreciation with her teaching, character & everything. How glad I am for the child.

{65}

Thursday 14th [March 1861]

I was so absorbed in reading the life of Catherine Parr [(1512-1548), queen of England] that I didn't do so much in the way of Writing, but read most all the morning. Miss [Agnes] Strickland has a happy faculty of combining instruction with entertainment, & unlike many historians, she avoids burdening one with dates and political facts & gives the personal history, the trials, sorrows, & triumphs* of the person of whom she writes, which is what I read to find out. I have rarely enjoyed a book more & the two novels I planned to read as lie neglected still.

I spent the afternoon as usual in sewing, that never failing service of womankind the world over, & a blessed invention for quieting troubled nerves, & easing the heartache, for I think poor woman often sews away many pains & troubles of both the body & mind, stitch stitch stitch being a gentle tranquilizer.

In the evening Miss Stickney came in to see us & tho' I was very sorry to see her I played what Lu w'd call "the hypocrite" & was as kind as I could be, played cribbage, bestowed my best apple upon her and tried to make her enjoy her evening, for poor girl she has very little fun. Miss Kimble & her sister also came for an hour & we had quite a little party. I like much better to be alone.

{66}

Friday 15th [March 1861]

I answered Abbie's letter this morning that she might feel encouraged by our pleasure in her success. She has tried so hard, worked so faithfully & succeeded so very well in filling a difficult situation that I do think she deserves great credit, & I wanted to tell her so, for friendly praise never hurt any one, & Abbie is especially sensitive & anxious for the approval of her family. Dear child I hope she may be spared the troubles that have made Louy & I old so young [underlining in a thicker pen than the words], & that her life may be a long & happy one. I thought much of her today & of dear Lizzy for yesterday was the anniversary of her death, the first death in the family, three years ago. It seems harder now to think of it [illegible short word inserted] then & I can hardly bear the thought of never again seeing her sweet kind face & hearing that gentle voice never raised in anger to any living soul. She was the most fit to die of any of us, & I know she is very happy, but it is a sad loss*, & home has never seemed quite like home since she left it. This is always a sad day for mother & father & I wrote them a nice letter, enclosing Abbie's, & sent it yesterday & cheer them up, the news from Ab. will make them so happy.

{67}

Birthday – March 1861 [in thick writing at the very top of the page]

Saturday 16th

My 30th birthday, & like all such days rather sad to me for I have a perfect horror of growing old & each year after one is thirty makes one feel so very old. I'm really no older than I was 10 years ago, much younger & happier than I was [underlining in thick stroke] then in heart & feeling, but still I am not at all satisfied that this should be my 30th birthday.

These days have always been in our family days of great rejoicing & solemn presentations. What Thanksgiving & Christmas are to most people, birthdays have been to us. [underlining in thick stroke]

Such mysterious preparations & important faces, such whispering, & shuffling away of treasures if the happy one happened to appear unsuspectedly, kept the house in commotion for a week beforehand, & I remember how I used to live on the hopes of that day, & go importantly swelling about at the tho't of being the object of so much mystery & splendor. And then when the morning arrived with what extra ease I always dressed myself, how tremendously loving every body was, how angelic Louisa seemed postponing all her quarrels in a virtuous manner till after the birthday (which meant to her presenting

her own gift with a flourish [underlining in a thick stroke], & how all waited impatiently for the solemn moment to arrive

{68}

for mother always arranged some little ceremony to give importance to the very small presents, mostly homemade pincushions, journals, books, queer nameless* articles over which time & labor had been lovingly spent by all the dear ones who always have shown me such tender affection, Louisa usually gave vent to her feelings in some funny verses, & made some offering of astounding magnificence which she always took pains to inform us was original in form, design & execution. [underlining in a thick stroke]

Oh how well I can recollect my heart beat as I unrolled my treasures one after another, & satisfied the faces about me, so anxiously watching mine for the effect which they know w'd surely show itself in a good cry, and then he hugs & kisses ("happy birthdays", & the strange feeling that possesses me all the day that it was a different, more splendid day than any other in the whole year.

In my journal of 1841. [underlining in thick stroke] I find this account of my tenth birthday, 20 long years ago at "Concordia".

"Today was my birthday, & I received useful presents. Mother gave me a hairbrush, Louisa give me a tooth brush & a hair band, Lizzy a little box with some money in it, & baby [Abigail] was dressed in her short clothes (the 1st time) & she crowned me "I was ten years old"

{69}

The account of Lizzie's 7th birthday [underlining is in a thick stroke] is more in our usual style of proceeding, and is the only one I find in my old Journal. It was June 24th, 1842 & father was absent in England.

"Today was Lizzy's birthday, she was seven yr's old. In the evening we had a small party, we had the cornbarn fixed up with green boughs & curtains and at 8 o'clock we marched in there, & eat supper, and mother wrote a toast upon which we eat our cake. I will write the toast her[e] in my journal

Father dear
We wish you hear [here]
To see how gay
On this birthday
 We are
With Flowers rare
And children fair
We've met to eat

In cornbarn neat
Our simple treat
Nuts, figs, & cake
Oh may I give
Each day I live
Some promise sure
While love endure
What I shall nearer Heaven
Be than here at seven."

Rather rude poetry but to us it was splendid & placed in our journals with pride. Mother was to us the greatest poetess of the age, & thro' all our diaries & letters of that period her "poems" as we called them are largely sprinkled. She always has 4 ardent admirers of all she did.

{70}

I must write one more which was at the time very beautiful, & the remembrance of which has [always?] lingered about all dear Lizzie's birthdays ever since.

She was the "little angel in the house" [underline in thick stroke] & her birthday coming in the lovely month of June was always a season of great rejoicing.

"June 24th 1848

This was Lizzie's birthday. I rose before five o'clock & went [with] mother Wm. [William Lane (1832-?), son of Charles Lane] & Louisa to the woods where we fixed a little pine tree in the ground & hung up all the presents on it, & I made a wreath of oak leaves for all of us. After breakfast we all marched to the wood. Mr. Lane [Charles Lane (1800-1870), transcendentalist and abolitionist, a founder with Amos B. Alcott of Fruitlands]] took his fiddle with him & we sang first. Then father read a parable & the following ode which he wrote himself. Then he asked us what flower we would give Lizzy on her birthday. I said a rose, the emblem of love, father also chose a rose. Louisa said a lily of the valley [Convallaria majalis] meaning innocence. Mother said she should give us a forget me not [Myosotis sp.], the emblem of remembrance, Christy said, the trailing arbutus [Epigaea repens] or perseverance. Mr. Lane gave her a piece of moss, humility. Lizzy looked at her presents and seemed very much pleased. Mother gave her a silk

{71}

thread balloon. I a fan. Louisa a pincushion. Wm. a book, & Abbie a little pitcher. Mr. Lane wrote some lines of poetry."

The lines & also father's are very beautiful but too long to place here. The day was one of the loveliest I remember, & the occasion one I can never forget.

I was at that time 12 yrs old, & then first began to realize our situation, our poverty & the hardships which mother was enduring, & then I began to grow older in mind & heart very rapidly.

Great trials came upon us, separation & sorrow, & altho until 1858 no death came to part us forever, yet all other troubles seemed to descend upon us.

Birthdays became sad days, we were often far apart & the little ceremonies & solemnities gradually passed away, but still we always write to one another, think of the happy times that have gone, & send loving words & thoughts to make it still a Day "different from other days".

Thus my 30th birthday is spent in separation from all my sisters, father & mother, no solemn presentation, no birthday cake, no wonderful gifts, but it is nevertheless a very happy one. For in John my husband I have all these, & the faithful, tender love that is now my choicest birthday gift.

{72}

He gave me today a cribbage board made by himself with most distracting little pegs, & a nice place in the bottom for keeping the cards, altogether such a very neat little affair that it delighted me, & I was as much pleased as if I had received the most splendid thing in Boston for the dear fellow took so much pains to make it.

I spent the morning writing & reading & enjoyed it even more than usual. In the P.M. I did my quantity of sewing while Philo talked, finding me a very attentive listener, for I find she enjoys talking herself much better than having me talk, so as I like to please folks I let her chatter & have a nice time.

I took a run toward night & enjoyed the lovely air and beautiful sunset. Nature never seems more beautiful than when having turned the world upside down, & stormed & blustered awhile, she suddenly gets over her passion & smiles out serene & lovely. It storms hard all the night & thru' the morning, but at noon the sun broke out & shone brightly while the air became so springlike, it was a joy to breathe it.

John devoted his evening to me in honor of the day & we played Cribbage until 11 ½ flirting meanwhile like unmarried people, which I must confess I like.

{73}

Sunday 17th [March 1861]

I found much pleasure this morning in reading the lives of the old painters Rubens [Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640)], Rembrandt [(1606-1669)], & Van Dyck [Anthony Van Dyck (1599-1641)], & enjoying the dates of their birth & death that I may have some idea of when they all lived.

I can always remember anything much better if I write it down, the very act seems to impress it on my mind.

John was busy with his drawing & we passed a useful morning, rather an unusual thing on Sunday, while I like to devote to doing nothing.

After dinner I read "Fortunes of Nigel" [The Fortunes of Nigel by Sir Walter Scott, 1822], not very interesting but giving me some idea of James I [(1566-1625), king of England] & Charles I [(1600-1649), king of England], Duke of Buckingham [George Villiers (1592-1628)] & the times of that.

Scott blends all his historical facts so beautifully into an interesting story that one learns without being aware of it & in so pleasant a way that we remember without any effort. I like best to study in this way.

The walking was so bad that we didn't go to Chelsea in the evening as usual, but sat in the twilight talking over old times, & feeling very happy in one another, & everything about us.

It was one of the pleasantest Sundays we have spent this long time.

{74}

Monday 18th [March 1861]

Being prevented by the storm on Sat. from going as I promised to sew for Lucy [Dr. Lucy Sewall]. I thought I must go today, so tho' it was awful cold, & I feel especially unlike going, I plucked up courage and started early.

I went to the library, and Mary's [probably Mary Sewall] & did my errand, & then took a car to the Hospital where I arrived at 10 ½, & went to work on a pile of ragged gowns, torn buttonholes, and holy stockings, & worked faithfully till five o'clock, leaving behind me when I left the young lady's wardrobe in better order than it has been before for months, I rather think. Lucy was busied with her stupid medical studies, & I didn't see much of her thro the day, but we rode to town together to do some shopping with my well earned, half-dollar in my pocket beside a gift of ribbon, a little vase (which was broken & destroyed to be thrown away, but I saved it & received it as a present in case I c'd mend it) & a bundle of sewing under my arm w'h will bring me another \$1.00 when finished.

So I felt that my day's work was well worth all the inconvenience & disagreeableness, & I went to bed satisfied.

{75}

Tuesday 19th [March 1861]

I have for several days been quite unhappy about my room because it needed a thorough cleaning, so today there being a charming snowstorm to keep folks away (for

tho' nobody ever comes, I am constantly beset with the idea that every body is coming whenever the sun shines) I went to work, scrubbing & cleaning every nook & corner of my little home till I was satisfied that a cleaner, neater, more tidy little room could hardly be found. Then I put myself in the same order & refreshed my tired body by reading till dinner time.

In the P.M. the day being still too unpleasant for walking especially when there is a large hole in one's boots, I wrote & studied, having a very pleasant & satisfactory time of it.

In the evening I cut out work & John stitched for me upon the machine. We finished up our day's work by sitting in bed playing Cribbage & getting into a jolly fit we fell to laughing & were so jolly that I was afraid something bad would happen, for "wise folks" say that any usual mirthfulness is sure to be followed by some great misfortune. I laughed enough tonight to last a month.

{76}

Wednesday 20th [March 1861]

I sewed all day repairing an old dress & trying to make a shabby thing look exceedingly nice, & feeling rather tidy, I went Mary's to tea.

First however I felt obliged to go & spend my half-dollar which being my own I felt no very economical scruples about spending. So I went to a very cheap store & laid out the enormous sum 3r cts in pins, hook & eyes, thread, soap, & a belt to wear with the renovated dress which I have worn every day for five months. Then feeling in rather an extravagant frame of mind I bought a pair of sleeve buttons costing 10 cts, & which I have long wished to own, & will be just as good to lose as if they cost 1.00.

I reached Mary's about supper-time and Sophy Sterns being there we made quite a party. John came & we tried to have a good time, but it is hard work then to enjoy myself & we were quite ready to come away. The pleasant part of the evening to me was the moonlight walk home with my "lad" & the nice talk together. I never enjoy myself so well anywhere as at home & never go out evenings when I can help it. "There's no place like home."

{77}

Thursday 21st [March 1861]

My unusual dissipation last night rather upset my ideas, and made me so stupid that altho' I tried to be very dilligent this morning, I didn't accomplish much.

However I read [?] a life of Charles II of England [(1630-1685), History of King Charles the Second of England (1849) by Jacob Abbott (1803-1879)] & wrote my

journal, sewed a good deal, & spent on the whole a useful day. Perhaps anyone look'g over my journal would think I led a very useless life, but I do all my hands find to do, & as well as I know how, & it has always seemed to me that if every one did faithfully that which lay around them & employed every moment in some thing useful, it was not wasting their life, no matter how small the occupation might be. I have this winter nothing to do in the way of actual labor, or earning money, so I try to make the day's profitable, by improving myself in the best way I can, keeping my small domain in order, and making John as comfortable as I can, so I don't feel that my time is altogether wasted.

I had a fine letter from Louy today giving an account of the School Exhibition at Concord which it seems was a great occasion & did great credit to its projector A. Bronson Alcott. I will place the programme on the following page.

{78}

[inserted here is a four page printed program entitled "Exhibition of the Schools of Concord at the Town Hall on Saturday, March 16, 1861", i.e., same day as Anna's 30th birthday; notable in the program are readings by the students from Thoreau's Walden, from Hawthorne's work, remarks by Thoreau himself (not specified), by Emerson himself (not specified) and at the beginning by the superintendent (not named, but being Amos Bronson Alcott)]

{79}

All went off splendidly, & to crown the whole proceeding the school presented father with two beautiful books, much to his surprise.

But I will give Lu's description of the presentation.

"Mr. Sanborn rose to announce a recess, but instead of so doing said he was requested to pause a moment for the playing of a little scene not set down in the programme. He beckoned father onto the stage, up went the unsuspecting old dear, & a tall pretty boy stepping out from a herd of children next to him, & looking up straight into his face made a nice simple speech asking him to accept 'Pilgrim's Progress [1678, by John Bunyan] & Herbert's Poems [some compilation of poems of George Herbert (1593-1633)] from the scholars of all the schools as a token of their gratitude, affection & respect, & thanking him for his wise mild & nurturing care of them. I thought father w'd have lost his head, he blushed, his eyes were full of tears, & hugging his books he thanked them for his present so prettily it was a sight to behold, & the sound of applause, a sound — — never heard."

The books are very elegant, & ones that father has long wished to possessed, & I am so glad he has received them in so gratifying a manner. [passage marked off with two prominent diagonal slashes beginning at "Mr. Sanborn" and ending here]

Louisa also received great praise for her poem [printed in the program without attribution] & won quite a little victory over the old fogies, she says.

{80}

[continuing to quote from her sister Louisa's letter; corner of page marked in the upper left corner with three prominent diagonal slashes and large, thick initials appearing to be "N. B" - probably for "nota bene", or "note well", diagonally beneath the three slashes and underlined by one long thick, slash mark]

"This morning Mr. Bull [Ephraim Bull (1806-1895), farmer who created the Concord grape who lived near the Alcotts] came in to say that the second verse about John Brown [(1800-1859), abolitionist] had distracted some people's politics [second verse in the program reads in part: "Here are our future men, Here are John Browns again; ... Yet may the river see Hunt, Hosmer, Flint and Lee {well-known families in Concord} Stand to make Concord hills echo their thunders"] & he thought we'd better omit it.

Father was aghast, for it was the pride of his life since Emerson pronounced it 'excellent very excellent'. Mother was rabid, & denounced the whole town, & I sternly said 'They shall sing every word, or nary song shall they have.' Well we went to the meeting, Mr. Keyes [most likely lawyer, judge and Massachusetts Senator John Shepard Keyes (1821-1910) with a daughter who married Emerson's son Edward] came & said 'Thank you Miss Alcott for y'r fine song Miss Alcott the second verse especially.'

Sanborn [abolitionist Franklin Sanborn identified above] said 'Stand to y'r principles Miss Alcott & let them get the credit of a good thing in spite of themselves.' & when father asked Mr. Emerson's advice about giving it up he said 'No, no it shall be sung, & not only sung but read first & I will read it,' & to my amazement he did it in the face of the whole town. Lord! I felt so grand I c'd have risen & announced my name without a murmur, & didn't Mr. & Mrs. A.B.A, [Amos Bronson Alcott] feel toploftical [humorous colloquialism from top + loft + ical, meaning high and mighty or lofty or elevated]"

Dear Lu I do so love to see her appreciated. She is an uncommon girl & will do great things yet. I'm very proud of my sisters & all their little triumphs & successes are so gratifying to me.

[pages 81 and 82 missing]

{83}

Monday 25th [March 1861]

This morning I did quite a large wash, & it seems like old times when I used to be always grubbing & I can't say that I liked it much.

I spent a good deal of time over my History book finding it so interesting that I did little else till towards night when the sunshine tempted me out for a walk.

I found John at his Office just going out, so we went round to the P.O. together & had a nice walk doing errands & otherwise enjoying ourselves as we always do when together. I sewed, & read an account of Louis Philippe [(1773-1850), a king of France] which settled that period in my head, having been much puzzled concerning the accession of his brothers, & never exactly understanding where Charles X [(1757-1836), a king of France] came from.

[two thick diagonal slash marks preceding the following paragraph]

I received letters from mother, Lu, & Abbie, all well & Ab. bound up in hopeful anticipations for the future. [thick underlining of following] But poor Lu. rather lonely & homesick for her sisters. She tries very hard to do right & be everything to father & mother, who suffer very much from this separation from their children, but Louy's ways & modes of tho't are peculiar & it is hard work to adapt herself to regular habits. Dear soul I long to do something for her.

{84}

Tuesday 26th [March 1861]

I didn't awake this morning in my usual happy frame of mind for I was full of Louy, & restless because I can think of nothing to do for her. She writes me that John Brown's [the executed abolitionist] daughter's are coming to pass the summer with them as boarders, & seems to feel that the additional labor & care will be too much for mother and deprive her of all the leisure she so covets for her writing.

I wish I could be at home this summer to help & cheer them along for they seem to miss me so much & my hands would be so helpful in this busy time.

I know my duty is to stay with my husband & I am sure my heart is with him, but "the family" has for so many years been my especial care & first thought that I can't ride myself of the feeling that I am turning my back wickedly upon them all, & have no business to be so comfortable when they are hard at work.

I practised today to please John who expressed a wish that I w'd play to him sometimes, so I practised over all my old* tunes to be ready when he next asks me.

I read Woodstock, sewed, took a run, played cribbage, petted "my man" who didn't feel very well, & spent a very useful day.

{85}

Wednesdays 27th [March 1861]

My day presented nothing of note even in this very stupid journal, & I will therefore place here some lines by Louisa upon John Brown, the father of the young girls now with us.

December 2^d 1861

[date appears to be the title of the poem since it is given centered above the verses; also note that John Brown was executed on December 2, 1859. This appears to be an unpublished poem of Louisa May Alcott.]

In olden times the legends tell,
Young knights their vigils kept
Besides their arms in chapel dim,
Where saints and warriors slept
With consecrating prayer, and rite,
And loyal vows new sword.
Watching with eager heart and eye
The coming of the dawn,
A nobler chivalry is ours
And born of that dead past.
For finer victories now are won,
On battle fields more vast.
Saint George still fights for Christendom,
Thro' conflicts fierce & hot,
Devout Sir Gyron hies again,
And silver tongued Sir Lancelot

{86}

Aspiring hearts untouched by fear,
Ardent as swords of flame,
Still yearn to serve the wronged of earth
In their great Leader's name.
And gathering here with stedfast souls,
And memories of beloved dust,
They keep with song, and vow, & prayer,
The Vigil of St. John the Just.
Our Elba sends us back a chief,
Greater than came to France,
Whose unseen presence greeting finds

In every kindling glance
Whose power makes silence eloquent,
To rouse the hearts of all
As Roderick Dhu's brave brand uprose
From the heather at his call.
Our saints & heroes gone before
Spent with long Crusade,
Now speak with larger utterance
Than sermon or than raid.
And wiser counsels for the hour
No human lips can give.
For holding life in brave right hand
They taught us how to live.

{87}

April [1861]

Tuesday 2^d

I have not written my journal for a week, partly because I've been busy with some[e] work for Lucy which I was anxious to finish that I might receive the money, & partly because I've been so wrapt up in my history affairs that I couldn't rest till the book I've been fixing was done. I came across an old History containing lists of all the kings, & a short account of each reign, & I wanted it all down in my book, so I've spent a good deal of time over that & enjoyed it very much. I have read this week Abbot's Richard I [(1157-1199), History of Richard I of England (1857) by Jacob Abbott (1803-1879)] & completed my epitomes of Henry 8th's [(1491-1547)] wives. I've also written a long letter home, & received one from Louy very funny & pathetic, but not a word from Abba which makes me rather wonder.

I spent Sat. at the Hospital sewing for Lucy & receiving a deal of advice from her on medical matters, but I don't intend to take it thinking my own common sense will guide me much better. However I had a pleasant day, & we came down town together at night having much "wise" conversation. I also earned \$1.50, & she gave me a beautiful vase as a birthday

{88}

present, beside being very kind & loving to me all day.

I began this week a plan of practising an hour each day to please John who loves music so dearly & is so desirous that I should play to him. I don't enjoy practising much

because I can't play splendidly & it is so vexatious to know how much beautiful music there is in the world, & yet be so unable myself to make any. Still I intend to persevere & do the best I can.

April has begun with a furious wintry snow storm, which is rather disheartening just as Spring seemed opening so beautifully. Today it looks like February, cold, stormy & cheerless & I've spent the time in writing, reading "Heart of Mid Lothian" [Sir Walter Scott novel first published in 1818 as Tales of My Landlord, second series] & sewing on a job that I hope will bring me another \$1.50 on Sat. next. I have a great idea lately of earning money & am so delighted to receive the least bit. It is the only money I take the least satisfaction in spending for I don't like to use John's hard earned pennies, tho' I think it delights him to give them to me. I love pretty things but hate to spend the money for them & having always been poor I can easily go without.

{89}

Wednesday 3rd [April 1861]

Still storming, but all seemed happy enough within occupied with my books & work.

The young ladies spent the afternoon & we talked over matters & things. They are kind clever girls but I do not "take to them" much. I think perhaps one reason why girls are not more attractive may be because I have been so much with Louisa who is so uncommonly interesting & funny that beside her other girls seem commonplace. My sisters are all peculiar, and attractive and so very different from most girls I meet that I miss them, finding none to take their place.

I read Heart of Mid Lothian finding in* more interesting than I had expected, & full of great beauty. Scott's females are with but few exceptions rather stupid I think, his good ladies are so very perfect they don't seem natural, & his lovers too sentimental, but Jeanie Deans is a true woman & I like her above all things. Effie the beauty is a heartless little baggage, & don't deserve Jeanie for a sister.

I played Cribbage in the evening having become enamoured of the game.

{90}

Thursday 4th [April 1861]

I've nothing to put in my journal for today and having come across some lines of Louy's I'll put them here as better than anything I can write. She calls it a nautical gem & 'twas given to Carrie [Caroline Pratt (1836-1866), John's sister whose birthday was November 9] on her birthday.

"Dear Carrie if my ships had come
Across the Atlantic pond
They would have brought a comelier gift
From the promised land beyond.
But not a sail has hove in sight
And stormy winds do blow.
So I am forced to "reefing" my hopes
And "pipe my eye" for woe.
May the new year dawn like this fair day
In the blithest sunshine dressed,
It's close see a bounteous harvest home
And a cheerful star in the West.
I drink your health as a spinster may
In a cup of tea, not wine,
And a prosperous voyage on a quiet sea
To the good ship "Caroline".

{91}

Monday 22nd [April 1861; note that Fort Sumter was fired upon on April 12 starting the Civil War]

I am almost discouraged about my journal for try as I may I can't manage to keep it regularly & I find so much to do that I don't find a spare hour every day just now for writing.

A very pleasant visit home has for a week or two delayed my studying matter, and sewing & moving have fully occupied my time. Louisa returned from Concord with me, & we spent two days in shopping for Abbie who is just now intent on captivating the hearts of the Syracuseans & thinks she must have fine clothes. Louy has almost sewed her dear old fingers off getting the child's things ready, & together we selected many pretty articles for her, & I think she will be what an Alcott never was before, "handsomely attired".

Lu herself is so poor as a rat & I could not help crying when I saw her ragged clothes and shabby things, & immediately on my return set about a plan which has for some time been simmering in my brain. To make up a parcel of underclothes for dear Lu, unknown to her of course, and surprise her with the new things, for she gave all her own things to Ab. when she went away, & 'tis but fair some one should give her something.

{92}

So I made a dress for Lucy & earned \$1.50, which I immediately laid out in cotton & set to work to manufacture some neat unmentionables for her blessed

"understandings". I told Abbie my plan & hope she will send me a little money to buy flannel & stockings that my parcel may be of some value, & now I shall be full of work.

I've engaged some work from Mary [probably Mary Sewall] and shall have two dresses to make for myself which, as I hate to sew, is not the most pleasing prospect, however work is wholesome, so I ought not to complain.

Since my return we have moved into a larger room [apparently still in the same boarding home] with better washing conveniences, & in all respects more desirable. It[s] chief recommendation is a large window looking down the harbor. Fort Independence, Fort Winthrop, Minot's Ledge Lighthouse, Deer Island, Nixes Mate, Long Island with its Light, & all the beauties & wonders of the Ocean are plainly to be seen with John's telescope, & I greatly enjoy it. I've been busy getting settled in this new abode, and hardly remember what I have done this last week except I ~~do~~ know I have been doing with all my might the whole time.

{93}

Tuesday 23rd [April 1861]

I dutifully wrote my journal first to make sure, & then overhauled my stores to see if I had anything available for Lu's bundle, & between rolling & unrolling, planning & fussing, my morning passed quickly away.

At night father came much to my surprise and took tea with me. I was glad enough to see him, and kissed him so heartily that the poor man blushed tho' he liked it I know.

He brought good tiding of all at home & seemed very happy & well. After supper we all went to Boston to Mr. Emerson's lecture which was of course very fine tho' queer like himself.

I especially liked his saying that America was now for the first time a free country, or rather the Northern States were free having become a separate country, & the Slave States has their slaves to themselves, being no longer part of us.

I saw many fine people at the lecture, & it really seemed like old times when we went often to such lectures, those dear old hard working poor times when my life was so hard & anxious.

I received letters from Lu. & Ab. today.

{94}

Thursday 25th [April 1861]

A lovely Spring morning & just the day to have the window open & feel that summer is really coming.

I spent a[n] hour fussing about my little domain as full of business as if I had a large house, & a dozen children.

The rest of the day I passed in letter writing & fixing my work that Lou's bundle might be ready as soon as possible, for that is the great object with me now, & I do so long to have it done & off.

My sewing machine arrived, & a fabulous amount of work was done in the evening, for John took off his coat & went to work as if his life depended upon it, & soon a pile of sewing that would have kept me at work all day lay done.

I got for reading this week Aikin's James I [(1566-1625), king of England; "Memoirs of the court of King James the First" (1823) by Lucy Aikin (1781-1864)] & "Two Years Ago" by Kingsley [1857 novel by Charles Kingsley (1819-1875)], but my work basket is so full I hardly like to spend much time on reading & intend being very industrious for several weeks to come. I've engaged to sew a day or two for Molly, & make a dress for Lucy & shall earn myself a bonnet. There's a deal of pleasure in earning one's own things.

{95}

Friday 24th [April 1861]

Another heavenly day, making one long for the country but instead of picking flowers, & roving sentimentally in the woods, as such days always make me inclined to do, I spent it usefully in sewing. My studying I've laid aside for a week or two until Louy's bundle is ready, & my day was spent in cutting & basting for the machine which did a vast amount of work in the evening.

I received letters from Louy, & Abbie, totally unlike Abbie full of gaiety, delight at her trunk full of new clothes, anticipations of a happy summer, & the happy dreams of young folks. Louy's sober, sad, lonely as herself & it made me sad too for Lu, as the dearest thing in the world to me, & everything touching her in any way affects me. I can do but very little to help or please her, but I am much distressed that she should be so unhappy. Her life affords her so little satisfaction, & she lives so for others that it seems too bad. She is just now feeling very patriotic & wants to go to Washington as a nurse to the soldiers, & I wish she might, she is a fine nurse, and would like it.

{96}

Sunday 28th [April 1861]

I wrote Louy a cheery letter, & John spent the day in draw'g on a plan in which he is much interested, so we had a busy useful day quite unusual but no doubt more satisfying than our usual lazy, comfortably stile* of passing Sunday. I have sometimes

wondered why it is that I who am so uncomfortable industrious all the week & never can feel at all happy unless hurrying & bustling about should on Sunday be so very lazy, liking to do nothing but lounge about and waste the time.

I seldom go to church or dress up or do anything other people do on Sunday, but I think there are few who enjoy it more thoroughly than I do. Perhaps one reason is that John is at home & with me all day being usually in a beautiful mood, for Sunday seems to have a peaceful influence upon his soul, and we are always happy & tranquil. Sunday was the day I first learned that he loved me so dearly, & thro* the two years of our engagement Sunday was* our day, and that may be the reason it has always been so sweet to us.

{97}

May 23rd [1861]

The anniversary of my wedding day one year ago. It seems as if I had been married years altho the past year has been the shortest & happiest[t] I have ever known, & never for a moment have I regretted that I am Annie Pratt. The first is of course the hardest always because one has to learn to understand their husband, get used to his ways & habits, learn to yield & live peacefully, for without peace & love married life must be very hard & yet the most amiable person in the world finds it hard to avoid a little outbreak sometimes.

John and I have never had a quarrel or unkind feelings towards one another. & tho' we have had several talks, & moments of misunderstanding, yet that was long ago, and the last 6 months have been more harmonious than the first.

We have gradually learned each other['s] peculiar weaknesses and by avoiding all topics upon w'h we can't agree, by forgiving one another's faults & loving in spite of them, by trying to be unselfish, respectful, thoughtful, % considerate of each other's wishes, we have in one short year learned to live together in the most perfect harmony without trouble of any kind.

{98}

And this anniversary brings no regret only hope for the future, increased love & respect for my dear husband (the kindest, best & most devoted husband that ever loved, I do believe) & the conviction that my married life will be most happy if I persevere in my good resolutions.

I have from a child had very exalted ideas of domestic life, and hoped I might be so blessed as to win the love of some good man & spend my life in making him happy, and after patiently waiting, just at the time when I most needed him he came in almost every respect the husband I should have chosen as likely to make me happy as a wife.

One year's intimate knowledge of him has shown me that I was not mistaken and that I have found my mate. I find that I have the power to make him perfectly happy and contented, that he loves me more than I ever dared to dream any man could love me and that after touring about the world a good many years we have at length discovered a little haven wherein to rest, bright & warm, full of sunshine, peace and love.

{99}

The opening of our second year finds us poor altho comfortable and situated most pleasantly, remarkably so for people of our means.

John has a salary of \$500 a year and a situation of trust as clerk in an "Iron Foundry" [Central Iron Foundry in East Boston], the proprietors [Edwin Dyer and James Gurney] being kind men interested in him & treating him with confidence & regard. He is most happy in his occupation, we have both excellent health, & a growing affection for one another that helps to smooth over the rough corners. We are both contented and tho our clothes are poor, our amusements few, our purse very light, there is scarcely a day that I do not thank Heaven for my happy lot, for if the heart is at peace, other things are of little moment.

To make this a especial day doubly blessed my Louy came to pass it with me, brings me a bouquet of lilies of the valley, my bridal flower, and mothers journal of the past year containing the account of my wedding, & all that has occurred of family interest. Her note I place on the following page. Dear mother, she never forgets me, and still looks upon me as her first baby.

{100}

[inserted on this page an original letter from Anna's mother, Abby May Alcott (1800-1877)]

22d May / [18]61

My Dear Anna

I had my diary ready for you - meaning Louy should take it down to you - but have thought best to do nothing just yet about things - not having heard from the "Easter friend". Tomorrow is the anniversary of our marriages. Eventful, memorable days. Oh [dear?, my?] Anna - I wish we could have [for fun?] N[Never or Now ?] the 23d together, wishing is of little avail - against wind and tide is hard rowing - Let us hope all things and float down the Streams of time with as little perturbation as possible. "A rule there is above all ~~fluctuations~~ circumstances, a current deep beneath all fluctuations a year ago to-day born" busy we were [a mark here like a question mark or semi-colon] unpacking Uncle's treasury re-packing yours for your future home - it seems like a dream

- Oh my darling it is hard to realize that you belong to any one else than God and me -
all [rejoice?] you are happy - I'll try to be -
Mother

{101}

July 1861
Friday 5th

I returned this morning from Concord when John and I were on Wed. to pass the
4th.

We walked over from Lex[ington] in the cool of the evening having a beautiful
time marching romantically along enjoying the country that seemed so lovely. The air was
full of the sweet smell of hay & clover and[?] & all country beauty, and I felt as if I never
wanted to go back to the dusty city again.

About 10 we arrived at Apple Slump [also known as the Orchard House, where
the Alcotts lived at that time in Concord] & were received with such a welcome as only
Alcotts know how to give. Mother seemed perfectly wild with joy & flew round to set
before us the best the house afforded, while Lu could hardly express her happiness & kept
grabbing me to make sure I was there. Certainly there is nothing so nice as going home.

Thursday morning John went to his father's [Minot Pratt (1805-1878)] to spend the
day, and I stayed with mother. Joe Sewall [Joseph S. Sewall (1827-1917), son of one of
Anna's mother's cousins] and his wife [Mary (Wright) Sewall (1838-1879)] came which
rather interfered with my enjoyment, as I (selfishly of course) wished to have my family all
to myself, however we spent a nice day spinning yarns, sewing and

{102}

strolling about the place. The Pratts made is a 4th July call, and mother got up a delicious
dinner, every body seemed to enjoy themselves & so the day passed too quickly
considering t'was to be the only one.

This morning we left about 6 ock & walked to Lexington - enjoying it very much, so
much that I should have liked to have kept on all the way had not the heat warned us to
expect a fearfully burnt nose, & an omnibus coming along we stepped in and rode to the car
which quickly brought us home. I took a grand bath & slept most of the day by way of
resting which I had fairly earned I think by walking eight long miles.

Philo seemed glad to see us, and I felt that tho' in a boarding house there was
plenty of affection & home feeling about it, and that my lot was cast in pleasant places.

I intend going home again very soon to spend several weeks with mother, & let
Louy go away somewhere for a visit. I hope John will go too & am looking forward with
delight to being in the country.

{103}

Saturday 6th [July 1861]

This journal is a most decided failure & if it were not for mother I think I should be tempted to give it up and not try any longer, for I am so irregular in spite of all my efforts that it is anything but a journal.

However my hurry[?] of work is over soon & I have time, even tho' the inclination is wanting, so perhaps I may do better for the remainder of the summer. I shall make myself no promises, but try.

Today I spent in putting matters to rights, writing, and sewing, I didn't accomplish for the day was very warm, and I felt very lazy, so I loafed round & took life easy.

At night I roamed about in the garden & tried to find something of the country, but I found it, tho' very pleasant, decidedly city like. I sighed for the lawn & elms of Apple Slump.

John quiddled [trifled or wasted time] about his flowers, and I chatted with the girls, & so bedtime came & I found the day hadn't amounted to much.

{104}

Sunday 7th [July 1861]

A long lazy day spent in loafing, fussing at the heat, struggling to get some lemonade, spying down the harbor, & reading History Margaret d'Anjou [(1430-1482), queen of England, probably referring to "The History of Marguerite d'Anjou" (1861) by Jacob Abbott].

At night I grew immensely busy & fell to writing letters, to Abbie, Carrie [Caroline Pratt], Mary [probably unmarried Mary Sewall] & Sarah Pratt [(1833-1879), wife of John's brother Frederick Pratt (1831-1905)], and so after wasting the hours of daylight I sat up till after 10 scribbling. It was a great load off my mind for I hate to write and what with my three weekly letters & my journal I have a hard time of it.

John and I had a good time sitting in the twilight talking over old times & growing sentimental as we are rather fond of doing, a pleasant occupation which never loses its relish.

Two of the young ladies called & much to my disgust neither of them being my sort, but I talked with them & tried to be good, & as they seemed to enjoy themselves I suppose I succeeded.

Being civil is the hardest thing I do, & if the girls in this house knew how little I cared for them, they'd never come near me again. I wonder if I am wrong in feeling so.

{105}

Monday 8th [July 1861]

I intended to do a great deal today, but it was awfully warm, and I could not find courage to do anything but lie about thinking how fortunate I was to be a lady of leisure & able to take my ease while the poor teachers have had to go to their hot school rooms and work all the P.M. I am truly grateful & enjoy beyond measure my comfortable life after so many years of discomfort and weariness.

So I laid & read and enjoyed life as one only can enjoy it this hot weather.

At night as John & I sat in the twilight he seemed so sober I couldn't help teasing to find out the cause, for he is so lighthearted I've rarely seen him "blue". At last it came out. He "felt poor", couldn't take his wife to ride as Miff Cole [grocery owner Milford Cole, husband of Philomel Cole, of the family owning the boarding house] did his, couldn't give her nice dresses & take her round as he might if he only had the money. He didn't seem to care for himself, it was for me he felt badly, and it took a good deal of "loving[?]" to make him feel right, dear old fellow, he provokes himself in every way to get me things, & I don't care for rides or fine dresses at all, & so I told him whereat he felt better, ["& at" missing from torn page] last fell asleep on my breast saying I was his comfort [missing from torn page] love me so dearly I cannot understand it at all.

{106}

Tuesday 9th [July 1861]

It was the hottest day I almost ever remember & so oppressive that I felt unfit for anything & felt afraid I should spend a very useless day if I follow my inclination. So I set to work, wrote my journal and a letter home, mended stockings, repaired a dress, did my weeks sewing and read in Scott's "Monastery" [1820 novel by Sir Walter Scott] keeping very busy all day.

I spent the P.M. with Philo, and she entertained me with an account of a flirtation in her youthful days & read me some interesting letters connected with it. & all in such a simple unaffected manner that it seemed like an interesting story, & I enjoyed it very much. I always had rather a fancy for love stories, & Philo was quite a belle.

Miss Morse called in the evening & asked me all about the Hawthornes, & I spun quite a long yarn upon that interesting subject. I enjoy her society more than any of the girls for she is both sensible and good hearted, much the sort of girl that John and I like, & as she happens to like us we have pleasant time together.

{107}

Wednesday 10th [July 1861]

This made a very happy day by the receipt of a letter from Louisa telling me she was going in a week to the White Mts. [in New Hampshire] to spend a month. Of course she is nearly crazy with delight and full of joyful anticipation for the Mts. are a never failing source of longing for her & it has been the wish of her heart for many summers to get there. And now she is really going, and I am as glad as she is about it, tho' I couldn't help being amused at her settlement of the matter - she says

"I am very happy & of course feel very wicked, sure that the Mts. will fall, all my family die, and I shall rue the day I went as long as I live, still I am going for I'm [a] used up lady & soul & must fill my idea box or shut up shop."

She always seems to feel the moment she is having a good time that she is doing wrong & that her duty in this life consists in doing exactly what she doesn't wish to. This is a blessed chance for her and I am now anxious to go to mother that Lu may feel all right about going.

{unnumbered page but in sequence}

Saturday 13th [July 1861 - First major battle of the Civil War, First Bull Run was on July 11, 1861]

The last few days have been spent in putting things to rights, against I go home doing errands for Louy and settling all my affairs for an absence of a month.

Abbie will soon be at home, but until she comes I shall stay with mother and keep her jolly if I can. I hope & expect that John will be with me part of the time and spend his vacation.

I've been all winter looking forward to this visit anticipating the greater pleasure, & now if John can only be with me, I shall have a good time, tho' I can't help wishing the girls were there too.

In the evening John & I went to the P.O. in search of letters which we didn't find. I am afraid Abbie is sick, for she hasn't written to me for a fortnight or more, and I of course am worried. She is probably full of parties & frolicing* and so forgets the writing, but I do hope we shall hear soon.

John sat with me in the moonlight some time and played the romantic.

{unnumbered page but in sequence}

Sunday 14th [July 1861]

A nice cool day that one could enjoy & we did enjoy it most thoroughly all day long writing, reading & [?]ing, and in the evening sitting together lighted only by the

pleasant dusk and quietly happy. We went early to bed and while John lay sleeping upon my arm with his face near enough for a little kiss now and then. I fell to thinking of the dear folks at home and how I wished I could do something for them. I find I don't at all outgrow my old feelings about them and tho' I'm so contented and happy in my new home, the family cares & [?] still concern me, and all the family plans are so interesting as ever.

I keep thinking about Lu and her summer's happiness, Ab. & her winter's success and imagining* all sorts of things all sorts of things about them, trying to plan what I can do for them and hoping they will sometimes be as happy as I am now. I don't believe I shall ever be weaned* from them even if tho' I should have children of my own. I think "the Family" will always be the same to me as it was when I worked for them as if they were the only thing in the world.

{108 - continuing in sequence in spite of two unnumbered pages in sequence}

Monday 15th [July 1861]

I received a letter from Lu saying she should be in Boston on Wed' next and giving me some errands to do for her before she comes.

So I went to town in the afternoon and for the first time in a long while felt neat for I wore my new bonnet & shawl and felt "all right". Perhaps on this account I enjoyed myself more than usually do in my city trips. I went to South Boston to see Carrie but she was out, & after waiting an hour I returned having a pleasant ride. I got from the library "George 4" [(1762-1830, king of England)] & "Dark hours in History" [Dark Scenes of History, 1849] by James [George Payne Rainford James (1799-1860), novelist & historical writer], containing very interesting sketches of events in History among other[s] the attempt of Perkin Warbeck [1474-1499] to pass for Ed. V [Edward V (1470-ca. 1483), king of England] & his sad failure. I particularly like stories of things of which I constantly hear and want to know about & anything in the shape of a tale fixes itself upon my mind much better than a regular history.

Miss Morse & Miss Bachelor joined the evening with us & we had some pleasant conversation & made plans for a moonlight excursion to Charles Beach [Charles River Beach, a beach in Boston along the Charles River about where the current Esplanade is located].

{109}

Tuesday 16th [July 1861]

On going to the breakfast table this morning I found Mr. Kemble one of our boarders who has been absent a few days to be married, returned with his bride a pale

little girl of 16 who looks as if she ought to be turned out into the fields to browse & make dirt pies instead of being married, and I felt sorry for her, that she should be so foolish. Mr. K. is seemingly a good, kindhearted young man & will no doubt make a clever husband, but the idea of a child hardly out of school being fit to choose a suitable mate for herself is absurd, & I only hope the poor little thing won't be sorry for it.

I wrote my journal, read Perkin Warbeck & sewed, and at night Carrie came to tea.

I had an hour's chat with her and couldn't help feeling sorry that with so much to make her thankful and so many kind friends she should get so little happiness out of her life. She is a good, affectionate girl, but of that unfortunate temperament that can only find happiness in excitement. I pity her, but it is impossible to help those that will not help themselves.

{110}

Wednesday 17th [July 1861]

I went early to the depot with John to meet Louy who wrote me she should come to spend the day for shopping preparatory to starting for the Mts. on Thursday. She looked very nice as she stepped from the cars in her new travelling dress & very happy as she said "Then I knew I should see you two dear old souls standing there".

So we spent the day trotting about together and doing errands, dined & tead at Molly's & then Lu went with me to the car staying beside me till the last minute. We had a very pleasant day, much talk, a great overhauling of clothes & admiring on my part of all the pretty things she had made out of nothing. Her wardrobe is wonderfully nice considering her scanty materials & I felt satisfied. I lent her everything of mine that she w'd take. I gave her my veil, as she had none. I was sorry I c'dn't give her heaps of nice things and plenty of money, but my purse is never overflowing and I have to deny myself the blessed pleasure of giving. Lu seemed very happy and anticipates much from her visit.

{111}

Thursday 18th [July 1861]

A warm day spent in undress and comfort sewing & reading Louis 17 [(1785-1795), younger son of King Louis XVI of France and Marie Antoinette]. I found it exceedingly interesting giving much concerning Marie Antoinette [(1755-1793), queen of France] & Louis 16 [(1754-1793), king of France] that I knew little before. An account of their life in the tower and the infancy of the poor little prince.

I wrote mother a long letter & her answer will decide my going home next week. John not being quite ready to go yet makes me unwilling to go, tho' I wish much to see dear "Marmee" and know I must be needed there. I shall enjoy myself when I'm once off, but it is hard [to] leave my "old man".

I thought of Louisa a good deal today and imagine her on her journey, of all the delight she must feel at the novel sights. I hope she had some adventures which will be produced in some story before long, all the Alcotts enjoy anything in the shape of adventure and things that to many w'd be uncomfortable & troublesome incidents seen thru our romantic spectacles appear most delightfully, interesting.

This happy manner of seeing things adds much to one'

{unnumbered page}

Saturday 20th [July 1861]

[page filled with simple line drawings and scribbles of a child - "A BOX ON A BOX" labeling a drawing of such; "A HOUSE" labeling a drawing of such]

{unnumbered page}

[simple line drawings of a child]

{unnumbered page}

[blank page]

{unnumbered page}

May 28th 1862

The second anniversary of my marriage. Bright, beautiful, serene as those two years two years have been, fitting emblem of my married life, so far without a cloud.

John and I awoke at sunrise & lay talking of that happy morning just two years ago when we promised to love and live together forever. We thought we were as happy then as human hearts could be, but how much happier we are now after time has bound us more closely to one another, and taught us to be each a blessing to the other. No quarrel has dimmed the brightness of our life, no angry words have embittered the sweetness of our intercourse, and the love then so strong is stronger, sweeter, more absorbing, for the mutual sacrifices, the [sentence not completed]

We have both improved, grown in many way[s], and I think it would be impossible for anything now to destroy the harmony & beauty of the tie which binds us each more closely together.

{unnumbered page}

“a love so strong and true – so perfect that neither parting, grief, nor death, have any power over it, Love which makes you feel that once to have possessed it is bliss unutterable – better than anything in the world or out of it, except the love of God.” [from *A Life for a Life* (1859) by Dinah Maria Craik (1826-1887), born Dinah Maria Mulock, English novelist and poet] “Love fit for constant wear and tear able to sink safely down
To the level of every day’s
Most quiet need” [also from Craik’s *A Life for a Life*]

My dreams of happy married life have all been realized, and the years to come look very bright and beautiful, and I am beginning to look forward to having a little home of my own & some little ones to call me mother.

We are hoping for all this and another year will probably make some changes in our life, what I cannot clearly see at present, but I m full of hope. We have each other, are blessed with healthy, strength and love abundant. Surely there is little left to wish for.

{unnumbered page}

Remembering the day mother sent me a lovely bunch of violets and apple blossoms and some lilies of the valley, my “bridal flower” and it brings back so strongly that sweet day when I wore them on my bosom as a bride.

I have adorned my room with them & they say a great deal to me.

{three unnumbered pages}

[pages filled with scribbles and line drawings of a child]

{unnumbered page}

I love my little brother [in Anna’s handwriting; page otherwise blank; clearly referring to Anna’s only two children, Frederick Alcott Pratt (1863-1910) and John Sewall Pratt (1865-1923), later changed to John Sewall Pratt Alcott]

{8 unnumbered pages}

[pages with scribbles, simple line drawings, practice writing and practice arithmetic of a child]

{unnumbered page}

[blank page with pages torn out after it]

{unnumbered page}

Wedding Wardrobe

Dresses	Silk Poplin
	Gray Barege
	Drab Challi
4	Muslins
5	Calicos
	Dressing gown
	Mud gown
2	Shawls
	Water proof cloak
2	Mantles
2	Bonnets
12	pr. Stockings
12	" Drawers
14	" Chemises
8	Nightgowns
2	Corsets
7	pr shoes & rubbers
18	pocket handh.
6	White Shirts
3	Flannel "
1	Moreen
8	Aprons

{unnumbered page}

Wedding Gifts

Uncle May [Rev. Samuel Joseph May (1797-1871)]	\$20
Aunt May [Lucretia (Coffin) May 1793-1865]	20

S. J. May [Samuel J. May (1776-1870), uncle of Anna's Mother]	10
S. E. Sewall [Samuel Edmund Sewall (1799-1888), a cousin of Anna's mother]	25
T. R. Sewall [Thomas Robie Sewall (1792-1864), brother of the preceding]	10
G. W. Higginson [almost certainly Thomas W. Higginson (1823-1911), noted minister and author]	25
Miss Robie [probably Mary Robie Sewall (1829-1879), daughter of Thomas listed above]	25
" May [possibly Anna's cousin, Charlotte Coffin May (1833-1909), or Mary Goddard May (1824-1914) or her sister Abigail Williams May (1829-1888) who were cousins of Anna's mother]	5
Mrs. Shaw [probably Hope (Savage) Shaw (1793-1879), wife of noted jurist and politician, Lemuel Shaw (1781-1861); Anna's father refers to her as a good friend of his mother in an 1839 letter to his mother]	5
	\$ 145

{unnumbered page}

Wedding gifts

A set of furniture	My Husband
" Worktable & What Not	M.R. Sewall [apparently Mary Robie Sewall listed above in money gifts]
Set of Shakespeare	W. D. C. [unknown]
Mosaic breastpin	C. M. Wilkinson [Charlotte May May Wilkinson (1833-1909), a cousin of Anna]
Bronze Watchstand	Father Alcott
Picture of Immortality	Mrs. Sedgwick [unknown]
" Rosa Bonhuer	Henry Bond [Henry May Bond (1836-1864), cousin of Anna]
" Gipsy Mother	" "
Silver sauce spoon	Mrs. C. Wells [unknown]
" Cake basket	Mrs. R.[alph] W.[aldo] Emerson
" Pie knife	Miss Holden [Abby Holden referred to in Anna's diary]
Butter knife	Miss Russell [unknown]
Fruit knife	Mrs. S.[amuel] E.[dmund] Sewall

6 Silver forks	[Harriet Winslow Sewall(1819-1889) " G. W. Bond [Louisa Caroline Greenwood (1810-1891), adopted sister of Anna's mother who married George William Bond (1811-1892)]
" " Spoons	Mother Alcott
2 " Napkin rings	Mr. Sanborn [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn (1831-1917), journalist, author]
Toilet Cushion	Mother Pratt [Maria (Bridge) Pratt (1806- 1891), John's mother]
Scent Bag	Annie Wilbur [unknown]
Tidy	Father Pratt [Minot Pratt (1805-1878), John's father]
Mop	S. J. May & H. Willis [likely Samuel J. May Jr. (1810-1889), cousin of Anna's mother, & Hamilton Willis (1818-1878), a cousin of Anna]
Book & Bookrack	J. R. Abbott [unknown]
Flat Iron	
{unnumbered page}	
A stella shawl	Abbie May [Anna's sister]
Piece of cotton	Mrs. G.W. Bond [identified above]
" " "	" Alvin Adams [Anna Rebecca (Bridge) Adams (1809-1882), an aunt of John]
1 doz. linen handkerchiefs	" Horace Man [likely Mary Tyler Peabody Mann (1806-1887), widow of Horace Mann (1796-1859)]
Silk apron	" " "
2 Chemises	Miss Abby Holden [referred to in Anna's diary]
2 Cravats	" " "
6 Ornamental handkerchiefs	Mrs. David Reed [unknown]
Muslin Set	Miss L. Greele [Louisa May Greele (1827-1903), a cousin of Anna]
Cambric collar	Mrs. David Reed [unknown]
2 Table Cloths	" Waldo Adams [Isabella Hortense (Burnham) Adams (1839-1938), wife of cousin of John]
1 doz. napkins	" " "

2 window curtains	Miss E. Peabody [Elizabeth Peabody (1894-1894), educator]
2 Vases	Mrs. A. Adams [identified above]
Basket of Cake	" Judge Shaw [identified above, wife Lemuel Shaw]
" " "	" N. Brooks [unknown]
3 Bottles Concord Wines	Mr. E. Bull [Ephraim Wales Bull (1806- 1895), farmer who invented Concord grape]
Bouquet of flowers	Mr. & Mrs. Windship [unknown]
" " "	Mr. E. Bull [identified above]
A [nothing listed]	" J. Abbott [unknown]