St. Petersburg April 15th 1849

My dear wife,

Altho it is not certain that this letter will reach Liverpool in time for the first steamer it is certain it will in time for the second. I wrote you by the last steamer from Liverpool and seeing afterward that a vessel to leave South Hampton a day or two later I wrote by her. But whether my letters reach you depends not upon Post Offices with all their shackling and uncertain attendants but upon the winds and the waves. My latest accounts from you and my dear children is your of the 5th of March which is as late as I could expect by the Liverpool steamer and by the Boston steamer I have never received any letters except one from the State Department and that was eleven days older than other letters received here by the same conveyance. You see I am still writing to you from Petersburg and not from Astrakhan or Bokhara as I expected at the date of my last and indeed two or three preceding letters. But the weather for the last several days has been horrible. Not cold but dark misty cloudy and raining for the first time since the 1st of November. Indeed, for the last forty eight hours it may with truth be said that winter is lingering in the lap of spring for it has been snowing without intermission. The weather has become

become so mild, however that it melts as it falls and there is now I think no doubt that the river will be open in three or four weeks. By the last Mail from America I received an official letter from the new Secretary of State (Mr. Clayton) informing me of his appointment, but saying nothing about my being recalled. That however will make no difference. For if I am not at home in the month of June it will be because I am not able to get there. Some of the American papers state that Earl Taylor will not make any appointment of foreign Ministers, till July because there is no provision made by law for their outfit. That is a matter for which I am not responsible, and by which I shall not be governed. Mr. Polk has committed a great fault by the appointment of Hannegan to Berlin. In the first place it was wrong to make the appointment in the last hours of his administration. It was that more than any thing else except the Wilmot and Sedition laws that broke down the administration of the elder Adams. In the next place there was a Minister at Berlin who need not have been transferred to Frankfort because there is no government at Frankfort. In the next place of all the Friends professing to be democrats Hannegan was among Mr. Polk's bitterest enemies especially upon the Oregon question. And last of all he has none of the requisite qualifications for a foreign Minister. But I suppose the real object was to provide for Dreelson by transferring him to Frankfort thereby giving him $9,000 as Mr. Polk had promised Earl Jackson to provide for him. And I have no doubt there was an understanding either express or implied that if the late President would appoint Hannegan that Earl Taylor would not meddle with Dreelson. However it pleases God to make me to return to you and my children I shall care very little what appointments are made or what comments Politics may take, so that the welfare of the country is secured.

Nothing can exceed the dullness and monotony of this place for the last fortnight. The Imperial family which is the main spring to everything here, social & political, is absent. The weather unpleasant in the extreme, all public amusements suspended and the great body of the population and thousands from a distance thronging the churches for the purpose of practising unmeaning or immoral forms in the deepest and profest superstition & ministering to the importance of their Priests and thereby arming with forces for the accomplishment of more extensive and important mischief. Among the rules during the season (the Carnival) of intense religious worship and devotion is that of washing the feet of the Priests by the disciples. The only reflection that can at all reconcile an intelligent and reflecting animal to what daily transpires here is that any religion so far as the affairs of this world are concerned is better than none as it serves to fill up an immense void in the human mind and is the great tie that binds man to the performance of his temporal duties. You complain and no doubt feel deeply your domestic and social privations. I have not taken my meals alone entirely for a month and generally for five months and more frequently in the presence of no one but an intelligent sometimes an outlandish servant. Still I have not succeeded to extend my social relations and absolutely get rid of my Gown the Senating except on business. I have an invitation to dinner with Count Rapelrode this week and shall accept it as there is no other chance to find out what is going on here in the political world unless you associate with public men and not merely them. They publish

nothing in their little two penny news papers and such is the extreme caution with which they conduct public affairs here that the Telegraph by which the Emperor communicates with his Ministers is under ground. Nesselrode the present prime Minister was contemporary with Talleyrand is the oldest and perhaps the most celebrated statesman in Europe. He is not a Napoleon but a Lavalette. The present Emperor is brother to Alexander who perished during the reign of Napoleon and the son of Paul who was murdered in his Palace by those who placed Alexander upon the throne and whose descendants held many of the most important offices under the present Emperor. Gurney has not yet said any thing about meeting me at Liverpool and really there is hardly time now to arrange a plan of movements – still if you inform me in your next letter it will be time enough. At all events you must meet me in New York or Boston so that we may see each other if I come home. I must write to him by this Post, as I do not wish him to think that he is ever out of my thoughts and if I cannot have it so out of my sight. Embrace the children for me and accept for yourself the assurance of a husband's affection.

Yours

Mrs. Anne C. Bagby
Washington

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St. Petersburg April 15th 1849

My dear wife,

Altho it is not certain that this letter will reach Liverpool in time for the first steamer it is certain it will in time for the second. I wrote you by the last steamer from Liverpool and seeing afterward that a vessel to leave South hampton a day or two later I wrote by her. But whether my letters reach you depends not upon Port officers with all their shackling and uncertain attendants, but upon the winds and the waves My latest accounts from you and my dear children is yours of the 5th of March which is at late as I could expect by the New York Steamer, and by the Boston Steamer I have never received any letters except one from the State Department, and that was eleven days older than other letters received here by the same conveyance. You see I am still writing to you from Petersburg and not from Moscow or [Warsaw] as I expected at the date of my last and indeed two or three preceeding letters. But the weather for the last several days has been horrific. Not cold, but dark, mirky, cloudy, and raining for the last forty eight hours it may with truth be said that winter is lingering in the loss of spring, for it has been snowing without intermission. The weather has become

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Nothing can exceed the dullness and monotony of this place for the last fortnight The Imperial family which is the main spring to every thing here, social political of are absent. The weather unpleasant in the extreme, all public amusements suspended and the great body of the population and thousands from a distance thronging the churches for the purpose of ********ing unmeaning **-***** founded in the deepest and grossest superstition or ministering to the importance of their Priests and thereby assuring with ***** or the accomplishment of more extensive and important mischief. Among the rites during the season (the Carnival) of intense religious worship and devotion is that of washing the feet of the Priests by the disciples. The only reflection that can at all reconcile an intelligent and reflecting animal to what daily transpires here is that any religion so far as the affairs of the world are concerned is better than none as it serves to fill up an immense void in the human soul and is the great tie that binds man to the performance even of his temporal duties. You complain and no doubt feel deeply your domestic and social *****. I have not taken any meals alone entirely for a month and generally for five months and most frequently in the presence of no one but an indifferent, sometimes an outlandish servant. Still I have not endeavored to extend my social relations, and absolutely got rid of my Yankee secretary except on business. I have an invitation to dinner with Count Nesselrode this week and shall accept it as there is no other desire to find out what is going on here in the political world unless you associate with public men and not much then. They publish

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A.P. Bagby

Mrs. Ann E. Bagby
Washington