

Washington, May 16th/82.
Mary Alice, David, Emily and Sylvester Cannon,
My dear Children:

I was delighted yesterday by receiving a letter apiece from you, which I thought very sweet and which caused me to feel very tender. As I have not time this morning to write you each a separate letter I write to you jointly, and if it will only give you as much pleasure as yours gave to me I shall be fully satisfied. I had supposed that I would be home before this, if the case in which I was interested should be decided as it has been. But not so; I am still here, and likely to be for a few weeks yet. Somebody is needed here, the brethren at home think, to look after matters and I am thought suitable for this, so I am requested to stay. It is always a pleasure to me to obey counsel and to do as I am told; but it would give me great delight to see you all and to be with you. It would be an easy thing for me to

become homesick if I would let my mind dwell upon you. This would not do, so I do not yield too much to the feeling. I am glad to see from your letters that you are improving. I hope you will continue to take all the pains you can. Now is your time to learn. Sylvester, you write very nicely for a little boy not five years old yet; and Emily, too, for a little girl. It is so nice to be able to read and to write. You can send me any word you wish, and I can read it, and I can write to you my thoughts, and you can read them. This is very convenient when we are so far apart.

I have no doubt that Sister King was glad to see Aunt Emily and you, and I expect you had a pleasant visit. Such trips afford you a nice change; and I am gratified to hear that you feel so well. I expect the house at the farm is lonely sometimes; but you must keep busy, and try and make it as attractive as possible, so that it will always be home to us. Mary Alice, much depends upon

you in this respect. Emily will be apt to take you as her example, and it will depend to a very great extent upon you girls whether the home will be attractive or not. It should be your aim to make it very desirable for David and Sylvester, so that, go where they will, there will be no place that they will prefer to their own home. It would be a cause of sorrow to me to see the boys grow up indifferent about their home and never content to be there. I am sure you, Mary Alice, would ~~not like that~~. You must do what you can to make home so cheerful, pleasant and attractive to them that they will never be ~~lured~~ from it. I know you all can do this one for the other, and I know this is what your beloved mother would desire. And if home is desirable to you, it will be to others, and they will be glad to visit you. This is one of the reasons for my writing as I have about the farm. If you girls cannot be content at home, the boys will also get in the habit of going off, because they may think it lonely. Do not seek for enjoyment and happiness away from home; but always have it at home. Now, I desire

you all to remember this and act upon it. It will be in your power to make the house pleasant for me; but if it is not pleasant for you, it will probably not be so for me. It is for reasons like these that I desire you to learn music, singing, drawing, to speak pieces, to get up nice meals and to learn every thing you can. It would ^{give} me very great joy to see my children accomplished, and at the same time, faithful. ~~Saturday~~ ^{Sunday} ~~Evening~~ ^{Evening}. I shall do my best to have you learn every thing you can, and if you do not acquire knowledge and skill I do not want it to be my fault. David, I shall write to Angus and Hugh in reply to letters received from them, and I shall speak to them about whitewashing the stables and sheds inside of the courtyard and also the fences, ^{help at this} and I would like you and the other boys to do all you can to make every thing look clean and neat about the place. I am glad your arm is better, and I trust it will be straight and strong as ever. Give my love to Aunt Emily and family, to Sister Davy and children, to Uncle John and family. Accept my love to yourselves, my dear ones. The Lord bless you. ^{your loving Father} Geo. D. Cannon