

THE LETTERS OF JULIA SAND

Timeline

- Letter 1 - Admonishment and encouragement to rise to the occasion
- Letter 2 - Sympathy for Arthur's position
- Letter 3 - Caution to stay away from NYC; the soul of the Republican Party; keep Blaine
- Letter 4 - Encouraged by Arthur's actions; names herself Arthur's dwarf; opinions on Grant
- Letter 5 - First expressions of interest in meeting Arthur
- Letter 6 - Arthur's social associations; concern of a 2nd Southern rebellion; Arthur's Cabinet
- Letter 7 - Analyzing Arthur's new Cabinet; exhorting Arthur to bravery and virtue
- Letter 8 - Opposition to the first Chinese Exclusion bill
- Letter 9 - Delight at veto of Chinese Exclusion bill; concern over Arthur's NYC associations
- Letter 10 - Advocates against pardoning a guard who attempted to assassinate Charles Guiteau
- Letter 11 - Admonishment for signing the second Chinese Exclusion bill
- Letter 12 - Faith restored in Arthur; health struggles; sees purpose in influencing Arthur to good
- Letter 13 - Gratitude for veto of the River & Harbor bill of 1882; rage at Congress's override
- Letter 14 - Reiterates interest in meeting Arthur; asks him to be cautious with New York politics
- Letter 15 - Presents frustration that Arthur has neither visited nor written back
- Letter 16 - Reflections on Arthur's visit
- Letter 17 - Advocates against pardons; concern for Arthur's associations; desires second visit
- Letter 18 - Reiterates desire for another visit; recounts meeting Dr. Van Buren
- Letter 19 - Requests the opportunity to paint a portrait of Arthur
- Letter 20 - Harshness towards Arthur for his associations and failure to communicate with her
- Letter 21 - Shares her thoughts on the Republicans' defeat in the 1882 midterm elections
- Letter 22 - Questions Arthur's resolve on Civil Service Reform; questions if he remembers her
- Letter 23 - Mentions a long, serious illness; interest in Arthur's trip west; soft request for a visit

Letter 1

August 27, 1881

To the Hon Chester A. Arthur.

The hours of Garfield's life are numbered - before this meets your eye, you may be President. The people are bowed in grief; but - do you realize it? - not so much because he is dying, as because you are his successor. What President ever entered office under circumstances so sad! The day he was shot, the thought rose in a thousand minds that you might be the instigator of the foul act. Is not that a humiliation which cuts deeper than any bullet can pierce? Your best friends said: "Arthur must resign - he cannot accept office, with such a suspicion resting upon him." And now your kindest opponents say: "Arthur will try to do right" - adding gloomily - "He won't succeed, though - making a man President cannot change him."

But making a man President can change him! At a time like this, if anything can, that can. Great emergencies awaken generous traits which have lain dormant half a life. If there is a spark of true nobility in you, now is the occasion to let it shine. Faith in your better nature forces me to write to you - but not to beg you to resign. Do what is more difficult & more brave. Reform! It is not the proof of highest goodness never to have done wrong - but it is a proof of it, sometime in one's career, to pause & ponder, to recognize the evil, to turn resolutely against it & devote the remainder of our life to that only which is pure & exalted. Such resolutions of the soul are not common. No step towards them is easy. In the humdrum drift of daily life, they are impossible. But once in a while there comes a crisis which renders miracles feasible. The great tidal wave of sorrow which has rolled over the country, has swept you loose from your old moorings & set you on a mountain top, alone. As President of the United States - made such by no election, but by a national calamity - you have no old associations, no personal friends, no political ties, you have only your duty to the people at large. You are free - free to be as able & as honorable as any man who ever filled the presidential chair.

Your past - you know best what it has been. You have lived for worldly things.. fairly or unfairly, you have won them. You are rich, powerful - tomorrow, perhaps you will be President. And what is it all worth? Are you peaceful - are you happy? What if a few days hence the hand of the next unsatisfied ruffian should lay you low, & you should drag through months of weary suffering, in the White House, knowing that all over the land not a prayer was uttered in your behalf, not a tear shed, that the great American people was glad to be rid of you - would not worldly honors seem rather empty then?

Make such things impossible. Rise to the emergency. Disappoint our fears. Force the nation to have faith in you. Show from the first that you have none but the purest aims. It may be difficult to inspire confidence, but persevere. In time - when you have given reason for it - the country will love & trust you. If any man says: "With Arthur for President, Civil Service Reform is doomed," prove that Arthur can be its finest champion. Do not thrust on the people politicians who have forfeited their respect - no matter how near they may be to you as personal friends. Do not remove any man from you unnecessarily. Appoint those only of marked ability & of sterling character. Such may not be abundant, but you will find them if you seek them. You are far too clever to be easily deceived. In all your policy, have but the highest motives. With the lamp of patriotism in your hand, your feet will not be likely to stumble.

Do you care for applause? Of course, you have had it - after a fashion. Perhaps from the dregs of the populace, inspired by the lowest of politicians. Possibly it pleased you at the time - it may have served some purpose that you valued then. But now, in the depths of your soul, do you not despise it? Would not one heartfelt "God bless you!" from the honest and true among your countrymen, be worth ten thousand times more? You can win such blessings, if you will.

Your name now is on the annals of history. You cannot slink back into obscurity, if you would. A hundred years hence, school boys will recite your name in the list of presidents & tell of your administration. And what shall posterity say? It is for you to choose whether your record shall be

written in black or in gold. For the sake of your country, for your own sake & for the sakes of all who have ever loved you, let it be pure & bright.

As one of the people over whom you are to be President, I make you this appeal. Perhaps you have received many similar. If not, still believe that this expresses the thoughts in many minds, the anxieties in many hearts, today - & do not give those who have had faith in you, cause for regret.

Yours respectfully,
Julia I. Sand

Letter 2

September 25, 1881

Hon. Chester A. Arthur.

And so Garfield is really dead - & you are President. For a time it seemed as if we all were mistaken - as if he meant to disappoint our fears. Then I felt I owed you an apology for what I had written. Perhaps I owe you one now, for writing at all! My only excuse for this letter, is the deep sympathy I feel for you in your sorrow. All through these sad, dreary days, I have followed your name in the newspapers, with the feeling that you were the chief mourner. Even contemplating the wife, the mother, the children of the departed, has not changed your position. Great as their suffering is, it is what hundreds, in the obscurity of private life, have suffered before them - what thousands suffered, in the old war times - & they have those consolations which come to all who mourn for the brave & the true. But your affliction is different. The very thoughts which assuage their grief, but add a pang to yours. What we all endured during the terrible months of anxiety just past, you too endured - intensified ten thousand fold by the reflection that you were the one human being to benefit by his death - that you had been opposed to him - that some believed you capable of having plotted for his cruel end. You were alone in your sorrow - perfectly isolated. All that family affection & the thoughtfulness of friends could do for you, may have been done, but it was not possible that your dearest friend or nearest relative could lift the burden from your heart. You could not put what you suffered in words - & if you could, no one would have comprehended - no one had lived through your experience. There is in that dumb anguish a pathos surpassing all else. But it is God's will that in our greatest sorrow we should be alone - absolutely cut off from human aid. Perhaps it is this that makes us call it greatest. In such affliction, the soul puts forth new life. You are a better & nobler man than you were even a very short time ago. Nothing could be more beautiful than the manner in which you have borne yourself through this long, hard ordeal. The people feel it so.

There was more promise in your dignified silence, than there could have been in the loudest protestations. You have disarmed the majority of your opponents. It is true some regard your whole course as a matter of policy, your conduct as a fine piece of acting - perhaps they have no appreciation of what is fine in nature - & they expect that soon you will change. It is sad to

endure, when your motives all are good. But it is what you will have to bear - the natural consequence of your past career. However, in time, you can prove to them that they are mistaken. When I think of your inauguration, the solemn oath administered to you in the small hours of that terrible night, free from all worldly pomp, instead of the applause of the multitude, the kiss of your eldest son, there seems little fear that you will betray your trust. You have a deeper inspiration to duty than falls to the lot of most men. There is a great sadness overhanging the whole community - on none it falls more heavily than you. Perhaps, long after men have ceased commenting on your countenance, you will feel it resting upon you still. Do not try to shake it off. It is best so. There are higher things in life than what we call happiness. And there is consolation for sorrow like yours - though it comes slowly. It is impossible for you to have it now, if you have taken in the full lesson of this national crisis. But, years hence, you will have it, in the retrospect, when you see clearly how each day of this severely protracted trial has brought you nearer to the hearts of your fellow countrymen, & purified your own heart & given you the strength, the courage & the wisdom to do good work for the world.

Wishing you well in all your endeavors, yours respectfully,

J. I Sand

P.S. It is hard to guess what time or inclination you may have, at present, for newspaper reading - but, if you have not already seen it, I think the enclosed will repay you for perusal. It has more definitiveness of idea than most of the editorials afloat just now. It expresses exactly what is in my own thoughts, but with a force I cannot give it - for, though you may not be quite indifferent to the good wishes of people in private life, when it comes to opinions & advice, they must have more value emanating from persons of practical public experience.

And yet, may I say one word? If it is possible, do not make any nominations just now. If the Senate meets, chooses its presiding officer & then adjourns, is not that all this is absolutely necessary? What the nation needs most at present, is rest. We all are worn out with watching - & when people are very tired, they are apt to be irritable, unreasonable & ready to quarrel on small provocation. If a doctor could lay his finger on the public pulse, his prescription would be, perfect quiet. You, more than any other man in the country, can give us this, simply by exerting yourself in a negative way. Of course the thing cannot last, but one month of peace would be a great refreshment to the whole country.

Yours sincerely,
J. I. S.

Letter 3

October 5, 1881

Hon. Chester A. Arthur

Well, you have gone. So much the better. But they say you are coming back again, very soon. Please don't!!! New York is the one spot on the continent where you positively ought not to be this fall. If your private affairs require attention, show your patriotism in letting them suffer. It will take months for you to live down the injury you have done yourself in being here for just a few days. And it is not for the good of the country that it should lose confidence in you now.

Taken at large, one branch of the Republican Party is about as good as the other - "that man from Maine" [James Blaine] does not lead a band of angels, any more than that man from the other place - but in the state of New York, it is different. Here an absolute right & wrong are in conflict. Unfortunately, you have been connected with the side which represents the wrong - the machine - the thing which I politely request you to smash. Perhaps it was expecting too much of human nature that you should take pride in doing that. But no effort on your part is necessary. Only be passive. Stay in Washington, absorbed in national affairs, not showing by the movement of an eyelash that you take an interest in what is going on here. And when the electioneering excitement is over, you have merely to bow gracefully to that great law of nature, the survival of the fittest. Depend on it, the fittest will not be your old machine. If there is a soul in the Republican Party, it is on the other side.

You are in a difficult position - perhaps feel far more need of comfort, than of criticism - but you ought not to make things worse for yourself than they must be. In coming to New York at this season, you do. You put yourself in temptation, & in a certain way put yourself in the power of untrustworthy men. In your own house with your usual surroundings, might you not some time forget that you were President of the United States? In the depths of your heart, do you not - or, we will say, did you not - love "a political "row"? Not one in which anybody got killed - that is too serious - but just a nice lively time? Do you not - or did you not - take a serene satisfaction in outwitting your opponents? Is there not - or was there not - one chord in your nature, which responds - or did respond - peculiarly to the lights & the noise & the nonsense of a political campaign? Are you certain, with the whole thing in full blast around you, that you could keep perfect by neutral & calm??? And if you could, do you think you would be allowed the credit of it? Not if your old adherents could help it. You cannot longer claim the privacy, of an ordinary citizen, & you have not here the protection of your official surroundings. You might sit in your library with locked doors, all day, & it would not prevent every Republican rag-a-muffin in town from ringing your bell & putting on the air of an intimate friend. You might go to bed at eight o'clock, & it would not prevent some miserable ward association from walking up & down in front of your house with torches & tooting Yankee Doodle till it drove you almost wild. And if, by the eleventh hour, you lost your temper so far as to put your head out of the window say a few bad words & request them to go home, nothing could give them greater satisfaction. They would deafen you with their cheers. And the next morning you would read in the newspapers that you had received a grand ovation from your old friends to which you had cordially responded - while the band played, oysters, chicken salad, ice cream & champagne were served to the crowd by the pailful - after which you appeared on an upper balcony, in full generals uniform, & delivered a lengthy, elegant & carefully prepared oration, setting forth distinctly your future policy - the leading feature of it being a demand, to be made upon Congress at an early date, for an appropriation of \$999,000,000 for the erection of villages in the Rocky Mountains, to

accommodate your Stalwart friends, each one of whom, during your term, should be his own Postmaster, & meanwhile have facilities for building a little railroad, to be president of when you were no more! How would you like it? And how long would it take you to live such a story down? Who, besides possible postmasters & railroad presidents, would have any faith left in you? Do you think it sounds exaggerated? That fair minded people would not credit it? Oh, it sounds wonderfully like what might have been expected, by both friend & foe - from the Mr. Arthur who used to run the machine in New York! You Washingtonians have no idea what a dreadful creature he was. I saw a picture of him once - & it had horns. You must not let yourself be mistaken for that man for one moment. The new Mr. Arthur in Washington is another person - & the sooner he makes the country understand it, the happier it will be for all parties.

And now are you thinking that I am insanely conceited for giving you such an avalanche of my ideas? Probably. I admit I have "let facts speak loudly against me." Yet I am not prompted by egotism. I know that my opinion, as mine, can have no weight with you. If it has any value, it is because we are strangers, because our paths have never crossed & are not likely ever to meet, because, while taking an intense interest in politics, I have no political ties. It is because it is impersonal - a sample of something in general use, like the fresh air - a thing you could have abundance of, if you were out in the fields, yet may feel the want of, in a city, where the atmosphere is close, & the crowd pressing against you. However, there is little originality in the human race. Minds go, sympathetically, in groups, towards a given idea - five hundred people claim to have discovered the comet - & so, perhaps, five hundred people, whom you never saw or heard of - & devoutly hope never to see or hear of again! - have been persecuting you with their wisdom. In that case I pity you sincerely & apologize ten thousand times. But I will not trouble you much oftener - possibly this is the last time. There are reasons why it is difficult for me to write to you. And I am not fond of talking, when it is to no purpose. Soon you will show what you intend to do. Half measures have no place on your programme - they would make too flat a failure. If you choose one course, you will have all the praise you want, without mine. If you choose the other, I shall know, that, if my first appeal to you was in vain, nothing that I could say to you now would avail. But I will not admit that 'if' - I intend to go on having faith in you. Goodbye.

Yours sincerely,
J. I. S.

P.S. Oct 8th

I have just seen a picture of the Mr. A in Washington - a very interesting one - in the character of Henry V. I have half a mind to send it to you, when my brother gets done admiring it.

By the way, do you take any care of your health? Perhaps naturally it is good; but there are limits to human strength. You have been under a great nerve strain for months past. And now we read constantly of your being "hard at work," or "receiving callers," but rarely of your going anywhere. You ought to be out every day, & early in the day too - not when the sunset chill is in the atmosphere & malaria is prowling around in search of its victims. You ought to take the time, even if you have to make it up at night. Nothing supplies the place of fresh air & sunshine. By

force of will we can accomplish a great deal, &, under the excitement of it, fancy that we are thriving, but if the health is neglected, the break down is certain to come - & when it comes, it is not easily mended. If one thing more than another would make the duties of your position intolerable to you, it would be to have to meet them with a perpetual headache. Therefore ward it off - do not sit still all day & let the blood go crowding to your brain. If you are not too heavy - your pictures vary about 100 lbs in weight - & it would be cruelty to animals to have a depressing effect upon them - why not ride on horseback all through the bright, bracing autumn weather? Of all things in the world, that is the experience which most quickly gets the blood in motion & brings refreshment alike to body & mind.

And now, before I leave you in peace, may I say one thing more? What is this talk of a coolness between you & Mr. James [Blaine], which renders his resignation unavoidable? The public does not insist that you should keep Garfield's cabinet, but if there is one man it wants you to keep, he is the one. Do not let him go. If he will not stay for your sake, make him see that it is a time to put aside personal considerations, that the people wish his services, that he has a duty to his country. It was much harder for you to forgive him, than it is for him to forgive you. It always is harder, when we are in the wrong - & probably you see more clearly now, than you did six months ago, what it is for few men to unite to bully the President into carrying out their views. But some people always are in the right - & have a way of making the right seem odious! Is he one of that kind? Well, even if he is, keep him. When he is quite too awfully cool, you can just shovel a few "coals of fire" on his head - & make it hot for him! - like a good Christian. It is detestable to have uncongenial people mixed with our daily life, & yet sometimes it may be good for us. It forces us to be very critical of our own conduct & to live closer to our ideal. You may have a great deal of trial in this way, but in the end - when you have obliged those who distrusted you to acknowledge your worth - you will have the most beautiful of triumphs, one that is pure & noble & perfectly free from all worldly vanity. You have a great responsibility resting on you, but you will prove equal to it. With the best hopes & wishes for your future, farewell.

Sincerely your friend,
J. I. S.

Letter 4

October 27, 1881

Hon. Chester A. Arthur.

What a splendid Henry V you are making! Excuse me for coming back from the other world to say so, but - odd as it may seem - you are the only person to whom I can talk on the subject. Some time ago - it is wonderful what a long time it seems now - I told you that I had faith in you, but I never mentioned it to anyone else. And as yet I have not met anybody who believes in you, as I do. So when I read something in the papers which delights me, I am dumb. Even when you have realized my highest expectations, I shall not have the satisfaction of saying to anyone,

“There, I told you so!” And that is hard, you will admit. But perhaps I shall be able to screw a little comfort out of the reflection that I told you so, when there were not so many to say it as there will be then, or even as there are now - for you threaten to become popular.

Yes - popular! Will popularity spoil you? I think no, but can not be certain yet. When we have gone through tribulation, a sudden whirl of prosperity does not sweep us off our feet as easily as if our whole path had been smooth. You will remember last summer, long after the rest have ceased to think of it. To most of us it was a tragical incident in our panorama of the world. But to you it was different - it cut so deeply into your life. Perhaps you were thinking of it the other day, when, for the first time, the guns saluted you as President. Perhaps it was the undercurrent of your thoughts all the time you were in Yorktown. Your speech there was beautiful. It was perfect. Not a word to add, to alter, or to omit. And your orders regarding the British flag, went right to the hearts of the people. It gave expression to what thousands felt, yet were quite at a loss how to utter. But you knew for them - & somehow it drew them nearer to you. Persons not inclined to admire you, are ready to admit that you have excellent taste & tact. Just what that means cannot be easily measured. Taste & tact may be merely the polish of which any hard surface is capable. But I do not like to think of men as blocks of marble, things that may be cut down in the finishing, but cannot be made to expand. I prefer to think of them as things with infinite powers of growth. And to me tact & taste are the sweet-scented flowers which spring from the root of true sentiment & deep feeling.

And so Mr. Murat H. was “misled” - & you are going to keep your postmaster as long as you choose - & “no longer!” Somehow that made me laugh. You do not love newspaper talk, do you? But you ought to be patient with both writers & readers, considering the great advantage you have over them. You know “lots” about yourself, but are obliged to tell nothing. Editors may know nothing about you, but are obliged to tell “lots.” And then think of the rest of humanity! Probably you do not half appreciate what you are spared, in not having to look in the papers to find out what you did yesterday, are doing now, will do tomorrow, are likely to do on the whole, & did five years ago. Yes, you ought to be patient.

But I have a notion that you are not - with me. You would not tolerate for two weeks a court in which people expressed their opinions in the pell mell manner of - of someone you never heard of. It would tax your grace of manner certainly. But you are not likely to be so troubled. People who go to court, generally know that ‘discretion is the better part of valor,’ don’t they? And you must remember that in the best regulated courts of old, dwarfs always were privileged characters, so you must not expect an exception in this case. Dwarfs, not being able to advance far, naturally cling to the old traditions.

And now, having established a principle - quite to your satisfaction, I trust - on which I may say all the unpleasant things I choose, I may say them, may I not? But I don’t want to. If I ever do say them, you may be certain they pain me more than they can you. If there is a happy part to the presidency, you have not got to it yet - I think of you very often as being care worn & sad, & wish so much that I could say something to comfort you. But what is there to say? If the details of your work are not irksome, if human nature is not irritating, if your burdens are not heavy, &

you feel well & bright, sympathy is superfluous. But if it is just the other way, your work wearisome, human nature exasperating, & you are tired & worn out & have a headache - why, I am afraid your head will ache all the same, even if a little dwarf should say to you over & over again: "I am so so sorry." But I don't see why big people have to be so troublesome. Gov. M. ought to have made up his mind more quickly. And if Mr. McV. [Attorney General Wayne MacVeagh] thinks he is doing a grand thing in resigning, he is mistaken - he is doing a small one. He may be better than anybody else in the world, but the public is not interested in the subject. It would have been quite time to trot out his extra virtue, when you, as President, had done something to offend it. Just now it looks as if you were trying pretty hard to do your duty, & he was not trying at all. So he has not chosen a good background to shine his light against.

And now may the dwarf say something offensive, without offending you? Don't have your old friend Grant much around you. When you are at your best, you may have a good influence on him - but he will never help you to do anything that is worth doing. He is unintellectual - heavy - commonplace. Do you remember what sort of a man Lincoln was in '60, & what in '65? He was alive in every fiber - he grew from day to day - if he made a mistake once, he never repeated it - he was a larger man in heart & soul & mind, when he died, than he was when he first came into office. I believe that you have some of that power of growth in you. Grant has not. He is not even a block of anything that takes polish easily. Eight years of the presidency ought to be an education to a man, even if he knew only how to read & write before. A trip, of years duration, around the world, would be an education to any bright boy in his teens. Grant has had both, & what has he learnt? Except an inflated impression of his own greatness, has an additional idea been rubbed into his brain? In case it has, he has kept the secret wonderfully. If you are really fond of him - there is no accounting for tastes! - keep him as a friend to smoke cigars with, when you have nothing to do, but don't consult him on national affairs. Do not let the people believe that he is to influence your administration. He will never give you an idea that is new, or deep, or even bright. To him, politics means, which man is to get a place, & very little else. As to real statesmanship, he has no more conception of it than has a wild elephant! Now don't be angry with me - you know it is so - only you are too polite even to think it. At any rate, remember what you promised - for silence is consent, isn't it? - that I could say to you whatever I chose.

So I will choose one thing more. That was very ugly, jerking Mr. Bayard out of his place at the head of the Senate, in such a manner. I hope it was not a coup d'etat that you smiled at. It was brilliant certainly. So are sky-rockets - & sometimes, when the brilliancy is over, a stick comes down & hits some one on the head. If that was intended for statesmanship, "angels & ministers of grace defend us!"

But if there is little statesmanship in the U.S.S. [United States Senate] & none at all in U.S.G. [Ulysses S. Grant], still there is some in Washington. Just where it is needless to state. If I said "in the White House," I might convey - or contradict - my meaning. Enough that it is there, & its influence felt - & found to be strengthening & calming. It must be owned, people are somewhat surprised at it. One hears remarks such as: "This is too good to be true -" "Well this is splendid - but how long will it last?" "Ah, I should be quite enthusiastic, if I thought this genuine - but it is only policy - he is very shrewd." Then I feel terribly tempted to defend you, but I never say one

word. Is there any sense in saying that "I know," what I have no means of proving? Your own actions will be your own most eloquent defense. What you have done thus far may be excellent policy, but I believe you were prompted to it by a very much higher motive.

Yours sincerely,
J. I. S.

Letter 5

November 8, 1881

Hon. Chester A. Arthur.

So you came back to New York - & your dwarf carried a long face in consequence. But the campaign was so dull, you cannot easily have hurt yourself on that point. If you have been in any mischief, you will have only your own conscience to trouble you.

I thought, before you were in New York again, I should have left it - but here we are, in the same city - & a hundred miles apart. I wanted to see you. I had an idea, if I could see your face & hear the sound of your voice, I should know whether I were right or wrong in believing what I believe of you - that your nobler nature has risen superior to the other part of you & is going to rule for the rest of your life. For a moment, I even contemplated going to the ball - the first time I ever dreamt of going anywhere to meet a gentleman. But you are public property now, so that makes a difference. I thought I was sure to see you there - perhaps, without effort on either side, to make your acquaintance - I thought of the pleasure of my mother at seeing her little girl in a ball-dress again, of the approbation of my saucy nephews, who frequently say to me, "Aunt Julia, if you only would put on a little more style!" - of my own delight at catching such a concentrated glimpse of the world, after having lived in the moon so long - & I did want to go to that ball with an earnestness unknown to my early days. Then I thought of the trouble it would be to my brother - that is, if he would take it - to find tickets, for the regular sale had closed - of the flurry of procuring a dress - my last ball was at Annapolis, in '74, & though a costume from Queen Anne's time might be fashionable, one of King Grant's reign would be obsolete - & I thought of five years of unbroken suffering, of the desperate efforts to build up the little health I have, of the absolute necessity of adding to my strength, not wasting it - & then I shut the ball out of my thoughts altogether. And it was well I did. Three accounts of the grand affair make no mention of your having been present. What a disappointed little dwarf it would have been!

And now - we are in the same city still - & will be, how many days? Are we going to say goodbye, without ever having met? If I were well - I must say this honestly, & hope you will not think it rude - I do not think I would go to see you. I never did call on a gentleman, except directly on a matter of business, & even then felt uncomfortable - quite out of my element. But the fact that I am an invalid settles the question. I have not been in society for years, I never pay calls, I rarely go out of the house. For the last ten days, most of the time, I have been on the sofa, with my eyes closed. I would open them, I promise you, if you came. If - but I cannot ask

you. You have fifty things more to do, than you have time to do them in - there are five hundred people wanting to see you. Do not think me so unreasonable as to ask you to go anywhere or do anything - I realize fully the value of your every moment. But I say what I have said, so that - in case you take any interest [in] it - you may understand why I act as I do. Also, that you may know, that, if you chanced to be in this part of the city, visiting friends, or any of the public buildings, or driving in the Park - our house is not far from the 72nd St entrance - & happened to have the time & inclination to call, that you would be most welcome. If you do come, ask distinctly for Miss Julia Sand - unless you prefer to see one of my sisters. We live quietly - have few visitors, except in the evening. If you come in the morning, between eleven & twelve, I think you are certain to find me alone - but I do not think you would be liable at any time to meet anyone who had met you before. If it is not suitable for you to go about alone, bring your son, or your private secretary with you. That is, if you come - but do not for a moment imagine that I expect it. I am quite aware that I have not the shadow of a claim upon you. I merely feel, that if you should want to know who it is that has written to you, you have a perfect right to the knowledge. If not, it is of no consequence.

Wishing the best for your administration,

Yours sincerely,
J. I. S.

Letter 6

November 10, 1881

Hon. Chester A. Arthur.

You are again in the Capitol - & a weight is off the minds of those who wish you well. In Washington, you stand on your dignity - & while doing so, appear admirable in the eyes of the nation & the world. In New York you have very little to stand upon, & make that little less, by your own carelessness. When you arrived here, some was offered you, but you kicked it from under your feet, as if it were not of the slightest value. Excuse me for saying this, but it is true - & I am not sure that any of the friends about you will bring it to your notice. The quietness of the campaign & the fact that the machine made no victory, relieved you from all suspicion of meddling in the election. You might have added to your political capital easily, instead of which you have been wasting it. When you came, the talk of the city was a ball - the grandest affair of many seasons - to be given in honor of our foreign guests. It was in a degree a state occasion - & it was taken for granted that you would be present. If you had been in Washington & had excused yourself on the plea of public business, your excuse would have been valid. But to be in New York & not appear, was a decided mistake. It was a want of courtesy to "the guests of the nation" - & something of a slight to the best society of the city, under whose auspices the ball was given. Now "the best society of New York" is not a thing to be bowed down before & worshiped - under a gorgeous glamour of some intellectual refinement, it is governed, for the most part, by very vulgar ideas - still it represents "our highest civilization." And there is society

where the vulgar ideas dominate, without disguise of any kind. Possibly you prefer this - pardon the suspicion, but you provoke it! - yet really it is best for you to be on good terms with "the highest civilization." There is a report afloat that you have rather graceful manners - most of our public men have not; if you can shine in society, by all means do it. And if you can take "the best society of New York" to Washington with you, you will add very much to the brilliancy of your court. But such little vanities aside, when a man is in a prominent position, a natural question, all the world over, is: "How does he stand at home?" And whether we take the largest or the smallest view of the matter, it certainly sounds better to say, "Socially, in the best society, rather than, politically in the worst." Besides flippant fashionables, there may have been many at the ball who wished to meet you - ladies of high station & culture, who, if acquainted, would gladly have opened their houses for your entertainment - men, who have been politically opposed to you but now hope well of you, who cannot publicly proclaim themselves your friends, until you have given them good reason for it, yet who, meeting you on the neutral ground of social intercourse, would gladly assure you of their earnest sympathy. Such it would be well for you to know. But you had no time for them - only an abundance of it for - you know the list. When you did have leisure to dine, it was with Mr. Platt - of all people in the universe! In the whole political arena, is there a more absolute ninny? - a man for whom the public has a more cordial contempt? The way he apes Mr. Conkling, without possessing an atom of that individual's peculiar ability, is comical. Doubtless you laughed as much as anyone, when you heard of his saying, "We must crush that man Arthur!" I believe there is a lazy good nature in you, which makes it easier for you to pardon, than punish such offenses. But even so, why need you go to the extreme? Do you not see, in dining with him, what you have done? You have cancelled your power to confer a compliment on any man by accepting his invitation. There is only one more step for you to take in this direction - be as indiscriminate in your own hospitality, &, during your administration, it will be no more of an honor to dine at the White House, than at a wayside inn. Now do not be angry with me - I only tell you what I hear in a hundred respectable homesteads, as I skim through the country, riding my broomstick, on moonlight nights. You cannot make your association with that crew acceptable to your fellow citizens. For Grant, on account of his war services, there is a lingering regard, but the rest of that set the people despise. If they are thought of as your chosen advisers, there is a growl of wrath - if only as your dear & intimate friends, then there is a groan of despair. "What can we hope of a man who has such friends?" Ah, if I could think of them as your friends, in any sense that was not a slander to the name of friendship, I would say to you, stand by them through thick & thin, & care nothing whether this generation understands or misunderstands your motives. But reflect on your whole connection with them & answer to yourself if they are your friends. Has any one of them inspired you to a noble action, or added to your life one beautiful idea. And what is their attachment to you? - if they did not hope to use you, how long would it last? If tomorrow the bullet of an assassin were in the air, flying towards you, would any one of them step between you & it? And yet you have hundreds of friends, who have never seen you, who would do that for you unhesitatingly - with the same loyalty that a soldier on the battlefield would spring forward to rescue his general, deeming his own life well lost in saving one that his country needed. And will you, to conciliate a handful of miserable politicians, throw away the love & respect of the whole people?

Your visit to New York has injured you. Just before that a warm feeling of confidence was growing up in your favor, & you have given it a severe check. A feeling of suspense prevails, which renders people nervous, anxious, irritable. Every man is ready to snap out: "There, I told you so!" - only there is nothing, as yet, to snap at. So he takes it out in scolding the office boy, for leaving the door open, or upbraiding his wife for buying too much lace. (Just see what wide-spread misery you cause, when you fail to do right!) The truth is, ugly rumors are started as to what you intend to do, & your associating with the wrong people gives them weight. It is said, in New York you will do so & so. Consider carefully all your actions in this quarter. By what you do in New York, you will stand or fall. It will be the measure of the sincerity or insincerity, the force or feebleness of all your protestations. Hitherto your influence here has been - excuse me for saying it - abominable. Guiteau, instigated or free, is the natural outgrowth of such politics as you & Mr. Conkling have been cultivating. If there are ten Guiteaus on your track today, they are of your own making. If there is true nobleness in your nature, it will be the deepest wish of your life to undo the harms you have done. If there is true greatness in you, you will accomplish it. But it will be no easy task. To reform New York would be almost like reforming the devil. Possibly you have not sufficient force of character for the work. However, you can make it a matter of conscience to do all the good in your power - & not, in a weak moment, be guilty of any of those equivocal actions which will arouse against you the suspicion of treachery. That would cast a slur on your wisest deeds & bring to naught your best endeavors.

Your Cabinet, of course, weighs on our minds terribly. And there is no dearth of rumors regarding it. They say that Mr. Blaine is to leave you. Is that so? Would it not be better to keep that old fox just where you can put your hand on him? It has been said, that one of the problems before you, was "to cut off that gentleman's head, without letting him know it." Can you do it more effectually than by keeping him just where he is? In the Cabinet, he is out of mischief. Out of the Cabinet, there is no knowing what he would be in. If you hold a dog by the tail, he may turn around & bite you - if you hold him by the ear, he may want to, but he can't. If you gave him twenty other offices, he would merely feel that you were following your policy & he was free to follow his. But if you keep him in the one that Garfield gave him, you have a hold on all that is best in his nature. If his affection for his friend was half what he professes, the events of last summer must have told on him deeply. Any deathbed is solemn - but the patient heroism of Garfield's would move the hardest heart. The people worship the memory of our late President - all that he did is sacred in their eyes. And while Blaine holds his present position, his loyalty to the dead binds him to a higher sense of duty towards the living. If not, so much the worse for him. If he misused his power, or played you false in any way, the injury would recoil upon himself. So far as you can, govern men through their virtues, not their vices. It is much more difficult, but when you succeed, it is better for them, for you & for the whole community. I did not like B's [Blaine's] appointment, when it was made, but I think he is a fitter man now, than he was then. He has a certain amount of ability - if it were run for high & large aims, instead of small & selfish ones, would he not make something of a statesman?

It is said, also, that you are to have a Southerner in your Cabinet. By all means, do - but don't let General Mahone choose him for you. That Lynchburg Postmaster was enough for the public - & ought to be for you. You may fool the North, but not the South, by picking up any sort of a

Southerner. Cannot you find some man who has become prominent since the war - who will not shock our prejudices, & yet has the confidence of the people about him?

And don't be too intimate with those Readjusters. Be satisfied with belonging to a disreputable crowd in your own state, & don't go hunting them up all over the country! You are clever undoubtedly, but there are some things you cannot do. You cannot be on the wrong side of everything in state politics, & on the right side of everything nationally. Twice two make four, & not even a readjuster can twist them into three or five. When I heard Grant praising them, I thought there must be something wrong about these Readjusters, so I mounted my broomstick immediately & went down to Virginia to investigate. And it was just as I supposed - all the respectable business men, who are building up the prosperity of the community, were opposed to them violently. Readjuster is merely a more euphonious name for repuditor - as if we in New York should politely take to calling pickpockets, prestidigitateurs. Repudiation is directly in violation of the principles of the Republican party - & for that party to take it up, in any form whatsoever, is simply disgraceful. So don't let the party do anything disgraceful, while you are taking care of it - please.

And when you find your Southerner, don't give him charge of the army or navy. There is no use in putting the South into temptation. Do you recall, in '60, how noiselessly munitions of war were moved from our end of the country to the other? It is not at all likely that the Southern people will again rise against the government, yet it should be remembered that there is a faction, the exact size of which is difficult to ascertain, which has never given up the rebel cause as lost. Also, that Jeff Davis is still alive - that from time to time he has made speeches, very daring for one in his position, & quite absurd, if not be followed ever by actions - that persons, not related to him, have died & left him fortunes - that funds belonging to the South are said to be in Europe - that recently there has been a sudden & unaccountable demand for Confederate bonds. If they ever mean to strike again, now is their time. A sudden dash at Washington, the capture of yourself & Cabinet & a few Republican Senators would throw the government into confusion & the Senate in hands of the Democrats. If anything of this kind is to happen, it will not be, as of old, a rebellion, prefaced by legislative acts - it will be a conspiracy - the springing of a trap - & armed men rising out of the ground. The thing may not be probable, but you can make it impossible, by recognizing it as a possibility. A few detectives in the South & a few more troops around Washington, would render any such scheme hopeless.

In regard to the Navy & War Departments, why could you not choose as Secretaries an Admiral & a General - men of unquestioned character & ability, whom the country believes in? That would be an easy way of ignoring political distinctions & of giving widespread satisfactions. Or is there any law that the Cabinet must be governed by the same principles as a jury - each man being able to swear that he knows nothing whatever about the matters he is called upon to decide? One might think so sometimes. What a list of nobodies the newspapers set up for you to select from. Do not hurry yourself, but put us out of our misery as soon as you conveniently can. We are growing desperately impatient to find out what sort of a man you are - & you may well as let us know first as last. Your Cabinet will throw a strong light on the subject. There is a sad dearth of great men in this great country of ours - but can you not, by diligent searching, find

a few who have some spark of greatness in them? Remember, your name remains - those you wrote around it, will add to, or dim its luster - & a constellation is always brighter in the heavens than a lone star.

What an absurdly long letter I have written you - quite a little hurricane of "fresh air," is it not? But you have not caught cold, I am sure - you know too well how to take care of yourself. And yet, if by any chance - the chance of skipping ten pages - you have got as far as this, I must say one thing more before closing. It pained me so to read of your going about with detectives around you. - it gave such a mournful glimpse of your life. What does it mean? Is it only a precaution? - or are you really in danger? So often I have thought it might be so, & then have shut the idea out of my mind - it seemed too unlike all that we believed & boasted of in our free & law-loving country. What a wearisome strain it must be upon you - no wonder you take little pleasure in going about - to need protection must be almost like being a prisoner. Yet, will you understand what I mean, when I ask you not to regret it? It gives you a keener sense, than anything else could, of the condition of the country, of the absolute need of political reform. More than that, danger is ennobling. When we look death in the face, we are ashamed of the wretched trifles on which we have wasted our time & strength - then first, we realize what life is, how few, how simple, & how grand are its purposes. When I think of you in danger, my faith in you is perfect. May you live to act out all your good aims & to serve your country lastingly. -
Goodbye.

Yours sincerely,
J. I. S.

Letter 7

January 7, 1882

Well, have you had happy holidays? The idea of coming to New York for quiet! One might suppose you had never been here before. Your reception went off charmingly. But how could you close the ceremonies by kissing that baby? I thought of Pickwick - & almost died laughing. Shall I tell you something about my holidays? Will you promise not to laugh at me? By way of making merry, I spent Christmas in bed. The family - nieces & nephews of all sorts and sizes - were having a gay time downstairs - I heard the laughing voices & the music quite distinctly. After a while someone closed the parlor door & the sounds grew fainter. Then the front door bell rang sharply & a moment later I heard somebody coming up stairs. It was my sister - she came into my room, carrying an exquisite horseshoe of flowers. "This is for you," she said, as she placed it beside me, "but we can not make out who sent it." She held up a card - there was nothing on it but a monogram in purple ink. I saw - made out - & was surprised. Can you guess whose it was? I won't tell you! But the flowers were beautiful - ah, how lovely those pink rosebuds were - how sweet the mignonette - what a spicy fragrance those carnations had - & there was a whole row of rich, velvety pansies - the pansies that I loved when I was a little girl, long before it was fashionable to care for them. I was lingering over my flowers with the rapt devotion of a child of nature - the serene vanity of a society woman - the morbid tenderness of

an invalid - when something startled me. I looked up - my sister was not standing there, holding that card, & there were no flowers beside me - only a glass of ice water & a bottle of camphor - perhaps the latter suggested "the spicy fragrance of those carnations!" I was surprised again. Are you laughing? Well, go on - laughter is healthful - but don't be sarcastic. How could I help what I saw - far less what other people chose to do - when my eyes were shut? As soon as they were open, I knew that his pansies were anywhere except with me. Still, for a mid winter day dream, don't you think it was rather poetic? But this is miles away from what I meant to talk about.

In her book on Germany, Mad. de Stael says: "Les poêles, la bière et la fumée de tabac forsurement autour des gens du peuple une sorte d'atmosphère lourde et chaude dont ils n'aiment pas a sortir." Is there a political frying-pan, beer & tobacco-smoke atmosphere, from which politicians do not like to emerge? Perhaps I ought not to reproach you with it, for you have emerged from it so much more than was at one time expected. And yet there are moments when the suspicion sieges me, that you plunge back into it again, when the eyes of the world are not fixed upon you. Is this true? Please let me find out that I am mistaken.

It all reminds me of a story - possibly you know it - about a mother & son - they were French, distinguished - & the story is rather French too. He was the model of son, so devoted, so deferential, & obedient, as only a French son could be. And she was a model mother - had absolute confidence in him - never asked where he was going, or where he had been - never criticized his friends, or gave advice unasked (like some women you never heard of) but always killed the fatted calf for him, & piled it high with bread & molasses & all that sort of thing. And all the while this good mother kept a detective following her delightful son, & so knew all about him that there was to know. I forget how the story ended - whether he was very naughty, or only moderately so. But don't you think she would have been a very happy mother, if the detective had come back & said to her, "Madame, you are entirely mistaken. Your son is all that you could wish him to be."?

Now I feel exactly as if I were your mother - which you must own is generous, considering you are old enough to be mine! & I follow your career with the closest interest. Whenever you do anything that is good, I am delighted. Often I am really proud of you - when suddenly my eye falls on some tiny paragraph which chills me through. Then I send out my detective after you. Not literally - if you took the whim to send one after me, you might, but I do not indulge in such luxuries - it is only the detective in my own nature - the cold, questioning, skeptical part of my mind, which says, "this does not prove that," & "that does not prove anything," & then climbs up on the fence to watch you - a worrisome task, by-the-way.

Do you want to know what delighted me? The appointment of Judge Gray - & of Mr. Frelinghuysen. As regards the Secretary of State, I admit that I was wr - did you think I was going to say wrong? Oh no! - wright, only you were wrighter. (That is the authentic way of spelling it.) He ought to be appointed in reference to foreign affairs, not home politics. Besides, thinking B. [Blaine] over, I fear no amount of good motive would make him a statesman - his brain is not that shape. And I liked the appointment of Mr. Brewster - until I read somewhere that

he was "a man of great ability & small conscience." That sticks a splinter in my memory. How finely the the Star Route prosecutions begin, is nothing to me - I am waiting for the end. And what of Mr. Howe? People say he is a nobody. But he is worse than a nobody - he is father-in-law to the Star Route defense. Do you not think, if two such ugly twos should stand together, they would make a remarkably ugly four? Was your selection of Mr. H. a blunder? - or was it something worse? I would be sorry to have you blunder - but I would rather think it a blunder, than anything else. There - have I said too much?

But several things have troubled me lately. Oswego is not a great city - but is it true that you removed the Collector there, said to be a respectable, upright man, doing his duty satisfactorily, & gave the place to a machine politician? If so, what is the use in talking about Civil Service Reform? And did you pardon a man in New York, & another in Pennsylvania for embezzlement? How can you hold out such reward to rascality & throw such discouragement on honest labor? Is that a right use of power? And there are things which the newspapers do not say, which puzzle me. How is it possible for the highest officer in the land to come from Washington to New York, & it not be generally known? Yet I have an impression that you have been here - perhaps more than once - when the papers best acquainted with your doings & desires, have not mentioned the fact. Do you remember any other President as restless as yourself - who was rushing home every few weeks? If, as Washington gossip hints, you are engaged & wish to see the lady without having her name dragged before the public - of course the end justifies the means. But if that is not the reason, why should there be any mystery about your movements? If you want to see people, they ought to come to you. If they are people you ought not to have around you in the White House, are you sure it is wise for you to have them around you anywhere? Let me beg of you in no respect to lead a double life. Insincerity so degrades a man & poisons the social atmosphere. Think of how high your position is - how wide your influence. You have a grand opportunity for doing good - would you be willing in after years to look back & feel that you had wasted it? Of all your friends, do you know which ones I like best to hear of being with you? Your children. They are your guardian angels. When you think of what it would be if your son did anything wrong & quoted you as his example - if the little girl grew up &, knowing the world better, lost faith in you - I think you would never set an example that he might not follow, nor do anything to shake her faith.

At last I am going away - my trunks are half packed & I am half dead. But the other half is rather tough & means to fight for life. I am going to where there will be more quiet & fewer newspapers - where I can, if I try, for a time, forget politics - & you. But I do not want you to forget me - at least, I mean what I have said to you. I express merely what hundreds feel. The people long to have faith in you - they wish to give you the most earnest support - & every now & then you do something to startle their distrust. Those around you, I fancy, do not tell you this - perhaps it would be very impolite if they did. And the newspapers - which possibly you have not much time to read - do not express all of public sentiment. They utter public opinion as fast as it is formed, but the process of crystallization is something they cannot put in print. What editor will confess himself anxious & bewildered? Or be responsible for the spread of some dark suspicion which may, at last, prove unfounded? And yet this undercurrent of anxiety & doubt, if augmented, may sometimes suddenly rise to the surface & form an opposition more powerful than anything you

have dreamt of. If you mean to do right, do it with an emphasis that is unmistakable. And never imagine that you can accomplish any great good, & keep on pleasant terms with everybody. That theory does for the nursery, not for the world. So fight the good fight, means to receive, more than to give, grievous blows & wounds. In the cloister it may be easy to lead the higher life, but outside it is a hard struggle. And suffering is the first condition of accomplishing any great good. Cannot you accept the condition - be willing to suffer for the sake of the good? You are strong - able to endure - why should you expect that life be smooth? From where you stand now, can you not see how much more noble & beautiful life will seem to you in old age, if you can feel that when power was in your hands, you used it only for the purest purposes? Even if you can not do all that needs to be done, the effort is honorable. There is defeat which has the flavor of victory in it. Who calls that man a failure, who dies defending his country's flag? And what of the success of him, who, by deserting it, saves his life? The lowest kind of failure is to succeed in ignoble things. People call you a shrewd politician. Does that satisfy you? To me it means almost degradation - the using of great ability for small ends. My ambition for you is larger. Look at the careers of some of the shrewdest politicians - what have they amounted to? There was Cardinal Wolsey - what a pathos & a warning there is in his remorseful cry: "If I had served my God, as I have served my King"! And what a piteous wail comes from the death bed of that prince of shrewd politicians Talleyrand, on the emptiness of life - ah, yes, the emptiness of his own.

The vital question before the country today is Civil Service Reform. The vital question before you is how you will meet it. Evasion in any form will be a proof of weakness. Yet if you fight the rampant evil - though more than half the country will back you - you will do it at your own risk. Are you a coward? Do you fear to face the same danger that Garfield faced? It is for you to choose. Are you content to sit, like a snakecharmer, & let loathsome serpents coil about you, priding yourself on it that not one of them dares sting you? I would rather think of you, like St. George, in shining armor, striking death to the heart of the dragon.

Goodbye.

Yours sincerely,
J. I. S.

Letter 8

March 1882

Hon. C. A. Arthur.

If you have leisure for such levity, how you must laugh at your out-of-the-world correspondent, who never hears of anything until a fortnight after it has happened, & then takes a week or two more before she can mail a letter scolding you on the subject. Ah, you would value those scoldings, if you only knew how inconvenient they are to her! But, in spite of her deafness, lameness, & other disadvantages, you admit - don't you? - that she is very often in the right.

She certainly is in this, that whenever you make up your mind to the effort, you succeed in doing something excellent. Your Blatchford nomination was all that could be desired. But why not be good always, first, instead of last? That preliminary plunge into naughtiness is so awfully human!

However, the thing weighing on my mind just now is that outrageous Chinese Bill. I am too far under ground to know whether it has passed both houses of Congress, or not - but if it does pass, please give it a most emphatic veto. A congress of ignorant school boys could not devise more idiotic legislation. It is not only behind the age, but behind several ages - not only opposed to the spirit of American institutions, but opposed to the spirit of civilization all the world over. If it becomes a law, it will place our country in a most absurd & contemptible position. What could be more absurd than that we, a civilized nation, should imitate now, what, twenty years ago, we considered intolerable in one only half civilized? And what more contemptible than to bully so fiercely the meekest & most inoffensive of the hordes of foreigners who land on our shores? It is only because the Chinese are so peaceful, that the passage of such a bill seemed a possibility. The men who originated it, would not have dared propose such a measure against any country able to fight. It is mean & cowardly - more than that, it is a step back into barbarism. The only suitable retaliation the Chinese could make, would be for those here to form a conspiracy, burn Washington & cut your head off. They would be quite justified in it, with such an example before them. But it was hardly to be expected that the United States of America would take the lead in a march back to the Dark Ages! So don't sign that bill, some evening when you are half asleep, & find out the next morning what you have done. Take hold of it when you are wide awake & send it back to Congress, with a message that people will remember. You might recommend an appropriation for a public school in the District of Columbia, where our honored Senators & Representatives might go for an hour or two a day to study history & political science. At all events do not let your Administration be marked by any such disgraceful retrograde movements.

Yours sincerely,
J. I. S.

Letter 9

April 1882

Hon. C. A. Arthur.

Of course you don't care - do you? - whether I am pleased, or not. But, as I always growl, when I catch you doing wrong, my own sense of justice requires it, that I should make some kind of a sound, when I catch you doing right. Therefore I must tell you that your veto of the Chinese Bill delighted me. And, what is more to the point, a great many other people also were pleased - pleased & surprised. Don't you feel flattered how awfully surprised they are, whenever you do anything good? Well, go on surprising them. But I am never surprised, because I expect it of you. If you had done otherwise, I should have been dismally disappointed. Yet, even expecting it, it put me in a very cheerful mood - so cheerful that - what do you think? I sent for a horse & -

there being no heathen Chinese around - showed my superiority to race prejudice, by taking a colored fellow being out to drive. He never thanked me, though & probably expects to be rewarded - such is the demoralizing effect of civil rights! But I enjoyed the drive - it was a windy, whimsical April day, the Green Mountains intensely blue, with a gleam of sunlight on one peak, a snow-cloud breaking over the next - & we went out Union Ave at a lively trot. But as "Frank" did not shy at anything, nor run away, & I did not take a wheel off of anybody's wagon, nor upset my own, turning around, it was not as exciting as it might have been. Still, after a year & a half of absolute passiveness, to have the reins in my hands again, seemed like coming back to life. Two months ago I was so nervous I did not like to look at a horse, & when a gentleman took me out sleighing, was in misery all the while, between the impulse to, & the determination not to - cling to his arms - oh, it was dreadful! But now - it only remains for me to get on a horse, & after that almost anything will seem possible. I may even get down to Washington before your administration is over. And then & there - you being the "Jumbo" of the great American show - I should certainly go to see you. According to Washington etiquette, it would be my social & patriotic duty, wouldn't it? And I always try to do my duty. But, in this case, perhaps I won't - it might be such a frightful disillusionment. Cannot you imagine the groan of despondency with which I would exclaim: "Oh, is that the man I have been writing to?!" - & the grunt of dissatisfaction with which you would mutter: "Why she wasn't a nice little Mother Shipton, on a broomstick, at all,

'But only Mrs. Something Rogers!' ?

However, if my health is in any way dependent on your goodness, don't you think that there is considerable risk of my not recovering very suddenly? In fact, don't you think that there is some danger of my having relapses & relapses, & only getting well finally, just in time to die of old age? Who is responsible for that mean little trick about Nehemiah [Newton] M. Curtis? But why should I ask, when I know, as well as you do, that you are? The thing would not have been done without your approval. But, if the blunder was a trick, it is equally true that the trick was a blunder, for everyone sees through it - & though people may be glad to have you right on the Chinese question, they feel that the New York question strikes much nearer [sic] home. If you wish the public to believe that the blunder was really a mistake, there is only one way to do it - order your oily District Attorney to rectify the mistake & continue the prosecution. But you won't do that, will you? It is of no use to say a word, is it? I can see the quiet, fixed obstinacy in your face, as if I were talking to you, instead of writing - I have hit against one of your strong convictions. But what is it? That Gen C. is such a dear friend, you cannot bear to have him hurt? Or is it that he is such dexterous hand at political dirty work that you really cannot spare him? When will you learn that the President should have no such friends - that it is time for you to have done with political dirty-work? What are you aiming at - the perpetuation of your power? I do not condemn ambition - I think the world would be better if most people had more of it. But there is ambition that is noble, & there is ambition that is vile. What is your idea of greatness? Napoleon - at St. Helena? Nero - fiddling while Rome was burning? Cyrus - entombed under the epitaph: "Oh man, I am Cyrus, who founded the Persian Empire: envy me not then the little earth which covers my remains!"

Did you ever read these lines:

“Oh may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence:

Live

In pulses stirred to generosity,

In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn for miserable aim that end with self, in thoughts sublime
that pierce the night like stars, and with their mild persistence urge man's search

To vaster issues.

So to live is heaven!”

Think of them sometimes. And when you have thought of them a great deal, ask yourself if there is anything in the world that can make you happier than truly to serve your fellow men.

Yours sincerely,

J. I. S.

Letter 10

April 1882

Hon. C. A. Arthur.

What a peaceful time you must have had when I was not able to read the papers at all! But there is not much rest for the wicked - (which of us is that?) - so I have to trouble you again. There is something more weighing on my mind - that [John] Mason. Please don't pardon him. For a nation to murder its prisoners, is even more barbarous than to exclude foreigners! Justice & the honor of the country require that that man should be punished. To pardon him, would be giving direct encouragement to lynch law. There is too much of that in some of the states already - we do not want it introduced in the Capitol. Besides, his deed was worse than any lynching. It was his duty to have defended G. [Charles Guiteau] had any danger assailed him - then to turn murderer & attack a perfectly defenseless victim, was as low, cowardly, & contemptible an act as could well have been thought of. This wide-spread sympathy for him - which may have a touch of political trickery underlying it - is a piece of rotten sentimentality. The more severely it is rebuked, the better for the formation of a more healthy public opinion. And yet there are reasons, I can see plainly, why you might feel tempted to grant the pardon. The pressure for it is very strong - a petition over a mile long, with upwards of 350,000 signatures - to give it, would not cost you an effort - no immediate, practical, tangible results would follow - &, at the stroke of a pen, you would make yourself popular with 350,000 fools. But would it not be a good opportunity to stand by the right, purely for the sake of right? Of course some hateful things would be said about you - but would it not be better to endure opprobrium for doing your duty, than for failing in it? And justice comes at last. It is not enough for you simply not to pardon him - try to make those idiots understand why they ought not to want him pardoned - that his conduct was outrageous, that, if it were in time of war, he ought unquestionably to be shot, that,

as it is, his sentence is merciful, not harsh. You might also mention that the country at large was not before aware quite how many hundred thousand fools it contained. But you would not dare to say that, would you? You people who live down among the mud & wolves of political strife, have to be polite. But we little white lambs, up on the roof, can say anything we choose, can't we?

Yours sincerely,
J. I. S.

Letter 11

May 1882

Hon. C. A. Arthur.

What is there to admire in mediocrity? Why do you take such comfort in half measures? Does it never strike you that there must be back of them only half a mind - a certain half heartedness - in fact, only half a man? Why do you not do what you do with your whole soul? - or have you only half of one? When you vetoed the Chinese Bill, the better class of people throughout the country were delighted. Now you sign it. And what is the difference, as it now stands? In quantity less, but in quality just as idiotic & unnecessary as the first. Unnecessary legislation is a positive evil, in any case, but this is worse, for it is contrary to the spirit of our institutions & the civilization of the age. The Czar of Russia might well respond to your remonstrance against the persecution of the Jews, with an expostulation against your persecution of the Chinese. Wouldn't you feel rather small, if he did? The bill must be either a dead letter, or a firebrand. Whom do you expect to be benefitted by one or the other? You have not even the poor excuse of a party measure - it was Democratic when it passed.

Are you going to let your administration be a failure? Cannot you realize that there is only one kind of success that deserves the name? What you do now, if you do right, will wash out all the harm you ever did in your life - but nothing that you can do after will obliterate your Presidential record. That will stand, for, or against you - for, or against the good of the country. For, or against the good of the country, while you are in power - but for or against yourself, forever. Think of it. Cannot you rouse yourself to a higher code of action? You have an impartial mind, when you choose to exert it. Can nothing but the present pang of suffering give you an earnest soul?

Yours sincerely,
J. I. S.

Letter 12

May 1882

Hon. C. A. Arthur

You good old sinner, I had just made up my mind never, never, never again to write you another word - when I heard that "Nehemiah" was still to be "persecuted," & that melted my hard determination completely. Poor man, he would be surprised, if he knew it, wouldn't he? But really it comforted me beyond measure. I had been out the night before, over at Dr. Strongs, to hear the Rev. Dr. Cuyler lecture about Egypt & Palestine. He agreed to talk for about one hour, but he did for about two. I enjoyed it intensely - a person who has been dead & buried for five years is glad to hear about anything on the face of the earth - but my spinal column had not agreed to stand for that length of time, & there was no ozone-generator in the room (except the undersized little broken vessel) so, when the excitement was all over & I got back to my own little sitting room, I collapsed. If I had taken a glass of wine, I would have rallied in half an hour - but I hadn't any to take & no one was there to do anything for me - so I lay on the sofa for about three hours, more dead than alive, without the comfort of unconsciousness. Once or twice I thought of pounding on the wall & making somebody come - & then I thought, what was the use in making two women, instead of one, miserable? So I crawled off to my little bed room, tumbled into bed somehow, had a few small sized nervous chills & fell asleep between three & four in the morning. Can you imagine my mood, when I awoke? Where would your cheerfulness be, if you had a headache which extended to the tips of your fingers & the soles of your feet? I thought that this was the wickedest world that I ever lived in - everybody in it was an unmitigated worm - & they all were squirming down to perdition, as fast as they could go. I am not sure that I did not think of you as heading the procession. When I came up after breakfast, I punished all my flowers - geraniums, primroses & roses that are not prim, alike - by pulling down the shades & not letting them have one gleam of sunlight. And then - then somebody brought me a newspaper. I felt like flinging it in the fire - newspapers make me so sick! - but I condescended to glance at it. And there I saw a paragraph, saying that District Attorney Woodford was going to correct his mistake & continue the prosecution. And then - now don't laugh at me - I couldn't see anything more, for there were two big tears in my eyes & half a dozen others rolling around generally. They were very cheerful tears, though - the kind of drops that rainbows are made of. But to think that I should have done you injustice! Will you ever forgive me for not having trusted you quite enough?

But are you really, really, really going to be good & never make anyone worry about you any more? If I could feel sure of that, it would make me happier than anything else in the world. You have it in your power to do so much good - & so much harm - that it is impossible to be indifferent as to your actions. If I could know that you had resolved in the depths of your heart to serve the country faithfully & never let any small or selfish aim drag you from the path of duty, if I should never see you, I would be willing to give up all I have gained in health & lie here & suffer till the end of my life. And if I could think that I had influenced you in the smallest degree towards forming that resolution, I should feel that I had not lived in vain. May I rest peacefully in the trust that you will do right? Will you ever awaken me to a cruel disappointment?

Sincerely your friend,
J. I. S.

Letter 13

August 2, 1882

My dear friend,

How can I tell you how delighted I was at your veto of the Harbor Bill? Ah, if you only realized what a thrill of enthusiasm you awaken, every time you show the people plainly that you have the good of the whole country at heart, I think you would never again waver as to what course to pursue. Your decision in this matter has been awaited with such anxiety. The few days I have been in town, morning & evening I have watched so eagerly for news. And when at last it came - when my brother looked up from his newspaper & said cheerfully "It's vetoed" - I had to turn away my head, to hide the tears that started to my eyes. If anyone had seen them, how they would have been laughed at. For a woman to weep over the veto of some of her own little bills, is quite rational, I suppose, but to get so excited about a bill down in Washington, with which she has nothing to do, is inexcusable.

Still, I was deeply moved by your action concerning this one, for I realized what a struggle you had passed through - how you had been worried, perplexed, tormented - what an opposition you had to stand up against in coming to your final decision. The arguments on the other side were so plausible - they might have deceived many. I am glad they did not you. If you had signed the bill, no proviso that you could have made would have stopped the stealing - you would merely have fixed the responsibility for it on yourself. As the next Congress meets so soon, the country is not likely to suffer for the lack of appropriations; but even if it were, in a case like this, you would do well to let it suffer. It deserves to suffer - & suffering that is deserved, is healthful. It would learn to view public affairs more seriously & at the next election would send a better set of men to Washington. In the mean while it might be grateful for having a President strong-willed enough to check the rapacity of its representative rascals. You gave a well-merited little slap very nicely, when you said that the more objectionable the bill became, the more widely it was supported.

And now that the excitement about it is over, how do you feel? - weary, worn out, irritable, depressed? I hope not - you ought to be enjoying all the satisfaction of a rightful triumph. But sainthood never takes into consideration the human nervous system. After action, comes reaction. I am almost certain that you are feeling rather gloomy. Please do not feel so - or, if you must, realize that it is merely the result of fatigue, of a few nights sleeplessness, that it is a physical, not a mental malady, something that will pass away after a few days of quiet. Do not let the howling of a few disappointed political highwaymen drown to your ears the hearty cheer for you which is ringing throughout the land. Hoping that Congress may soon adjourn & that you may pass the rest of the summer peacefully & happily. I am

Sincerely your friend,
J. I. S.

Aug. 3rd.

How disgustingly Congress has behaved! It is a disgrace to the country. But its action does not alter the fact that you are in the right & have the enthusiastic approval of the people at large. Do not let the insolent opposition of a few good-for-nothing congressmen embitter you. Do not for one moment feel that your effort has been in vain. The rascals who have pushed their measure through in spite of you, may fancy that they have gained a victory over you, but in truth you have triumphed. You have rendered the country a real service & the country will not forget it.

Enclosed is a scrap cut from a newspaper, usually opposed to you - if your opponents take such pains to deal fairly with you, need you doubt the justice of the people? The country is proud of its President today, & ashamed of its Congress. I am so proud of you, I cannot put it in words. I hope you will calmly & firmly maintain the honorable & independent stand you have taken, & make your true friends proud of you till the end of time. As ever,

Sincerely, your friend,
J. I. S.

Letter 14

August 15, 1882

Hon. Chester A Arthur.

Well, have you not five minutes to spare for me - when I have spared so many hours for you, in this long, sad, exciting year? When I was an invalid & hardly ever went anywhere, or saw anyone, it seemed quite natural that I should not see you - you were as far from me in New York, as in Washington - but now it is different. And this, perhaps, is the last time that we will be near enough for there to be any chance of our meeting. Soon I will leave town, expecting to spend the fall & winter in Saratoga, as the fine air & quiet life there agreed with me so well, & when I come home the next time, my home, probably, will not be in New York. I would not on any account have you run the smallest risk, or subject yourself to the slightest annoyance for my sake, but, if it is possible, I do want to see you.

And if it is impossible, may I say again what I have said before? Be careful what you do in New York. Here lies your greatest temptation. If you have influence, I do not ask you to throw it away - I only beg of you to use it with conscience. If, as some people say, you can name our next governor, do not waste your efforts patching up a peace among a few contemptible politicians, but name a man who is worthy to be Governor, one of whom the State may be proud, one for whom the people will thank you. If we have a candidate who appeals to our patriotism, the Republican State Committee will not need to pick the pockets of post-officer & Custom House clerks for his support - the people at large will support him enthusiastically.

And may I say one thing more? Do not, at the last moment, do anything weak in the Star Route cases. I know it is one of the most painful things in life to turn away from a friend, & let the cold,

hard hand of justice fall with full force, where it was expected that we would mitigate the blow. I am almost certain that this thought is troubling you now. But do not waver. Remember that your duty to the country stands above all else. If you must suffer, by all means suffer for the sake of truth & justice. What we suffer for wrong, degrades us - what we suffer for right, gives us strength. And I yet hope, before you leave public life, that patriotism & the love of justice may so become the habit of your mind, that the people may await, not with anxiety, but with perfect confidence all your actions & decisions.

Yours sincerely,
J. I. S.

Letter 15

August 19, 1882

Hon. Chester A. Arthur.

Are you offended with me - really - seriously? Do the few harsh things that I have said to you, outweigh all else - the fact that for a whole year I have thought of & felt with you in your cares & perplexities - that last summer, when you were bowed down in gloom & seemed almost broken in spirit, I did my best to arouse your manhood & your courage - that I had faith in you, when hardly anyone who had the welfare of the country at heart, hoped anything good of you! I did not ask you to answer my letters, for I knew you could not speak to me on the subjects I chose to discuss - but it never crossed my mind, till now, that you distrusted me. Perhaps most of my letters have never reached your eye - possibly, at the sight of the unwelcome handwriting, you destroyed them unread. If you disliked them so much, why did you not stop their coming? It would have saved me some trouble - & you could have done it in an instant, by writing one line on your card. Or do my persistent appeals to your patriotism, my obstinate belief in your better nature, convey to your mind the impression of a character not to be trusted even with a line on a card?

If possible, I will send this to you in a way that I will know if it reaches you & is read. Please answer me simply whether you are or are not offended. If you are, there is nothing more to be said. If not, what then? It seemed to me, if you wished to see me, nothing could be easier than to stop, when you are out driving in the Park - but in that perhaps I am quite mistaken. It may be that it is not safe for you to go about in that unguarded manner. And outside the question of safety, possibly there is an importance & a publicity attached to all your doings, which connects undue annoyance with the simplest acts in life. Owing to your official position, it would be suitable for anyone to call on you - still it would be very hard for me to do it. Besides I have a feeling, that, when you are in your own house, "the people" ought to let you alone. And yet perhaps this is the last chance of our meeting. I expect to leave New York - &, owing to certain unfortunate circumstances, it is not likely that I will take a pleasure trip to Washington, or anywhere else, very soon. But I have not paid calls for five years - & I shrink from beginning just when & where I would not be welcome. Tell me the plain truth. If you would rather not see me,

do not hesitate to say so - I will understand your motive better than you think. And if you still believe that I am not to be trusted with a line on a card - when I have trusted you so boundlessly! - you may send the message verbally. It will annoy me, of course - but that is of no consequence - the bearer may be trusted.

Yours truly,
J. I. S.

P.S. In case I cannot send this, but have to mail it, & you are willing to answer my questions, but feel a mysterious objection to sending a letter, with my innocent address upon it, out into the world, you may enclose it in an envelope, directed to G. F. Rossire Esq. - 54 Wall St, New York. He is my nephew, & will forward it without question or delay. Occasionally I request to have a business letter sent to me in that way, so it will not attract attention.

Letter 16
August 24, 1882

My friend,

How good you were to come & see me after all - & how badly you were repaid for it! But that is the usual fate of goodness. I am afraid you had a - what shall I call it? - a very stiff visit - which was a pity, for my family are not given to stiffness - but you see, you took them quite by surprise. And do you know they had the coolness to find fault with me for not entertaining you more agreeably? My brother said I was like the man in the Arabian Nights, who got the Big Genie out of the vase, & then was so frightened, he wanted to put it back again. But that is not true. I did not want to put you in your carriage & send you home again - I felt much more like putting some of the rest in a carriage & sending them out for a moonlight drive. However, you have taken all the vanity out of me. I thought, if you did come, it would be to see me - but now it is quite evident that it was my mother, sisters, brothers & nephews in whom you were interested. All summer our house is open, but we very rarely all are in it. Of the ten days you were in town, you could not have hit another when so many of us were at home, nor of all hours in the day, one when you would be more certain to find us all in the parlor. But I am glad you had your way - & perhaps it is quite natural that you should give them the preference - they are wiser & "gooder" & never said anything ugly to hurt your feelings - in fact, my nephew said you were handsome & looked about forty (what nonsense!) & my sister thought you conversed exceedingly well. But none of them were conscious of your compliment. They really thought you came to see me - to scold me, perhaps - & that I was so cowardly that I made them sit there & talk to prevent your having a chance. But that was slander. If you had come any morning, or afternoon, for a week before, when I expected you, you would have found me, in long white robes, like Patience on a monument, waiting to be scolded. If you had come any evening early, for a week before, when I did not expect you, you would have found me, in short white robes, alone with my little nephew, willing to be scolded - (yet, in the twilight, looking so like the "Child Angel" in the American Baron that you could not possibly have done it!) But even coming as you did - when I was tired,

cross, had given up all thought of seeing you, had gone into mourning out of respect to the weather, had disdained roast beef & scorned peach-pie, was on the lounge, vowing I would never write another line to that horrid man, at the same time wondering who that gentle-voiced Episcopal minister in the front parlor might be - till a word or two in his conversation caused me to jump up suddenly & find out - even under all these trying circumstances, I endeavored to give you an opportunity to say anything dreadful that you chose, & you would not avail yourself of it. I asked if you were fond of music. You said: "Reasonably" - what an unreasonable answer! If you had said: "Irrationally," I would have made my sister & brother sing a long trio from some German or Italian opera. And when they were embarked on the high Cs, you might have argued, scolded, in fact, picked up the chairs & thrown them at me & no one would have noticed it, provided you calmed down in time to say: "Oh how beautiful!" at the end, with a clear idea whether it was Mozart or Meyerbeer that you were applauding.

Was I really frightfully unjust to you? I am so glad & so sorry. Glad that it was a mistake - sorry that any mistake of mine should have pained you. But you must realize that it is difficult for me to know just what to & what not to believe in the papers. It is never easy for a woman to trace all the motives that may lie back of the printed words. It is doubly hard for me, because for five years I have been so cut off from the world - I have not met the people who could help me. You said you would like some time to tell me the real truth on several points, in regard to which I had false impressions. If the opportunity comes, I hope you will. Nothing would give me greater pleasure. I have no desire to live in a little clique & hear the same opinions reiterated every day. I like to know people as different from each other as possible. In every case I want to hear both sides. More than for anything else, I care for the truth.

But I did not like what you said, just when you were leaving. Firstly, it was fearfully mean, for it left the bystanders to imagine that I had accused you of being an angel, or something of the sort! - when you know that I have never for a moment been under such hallucinations! Nextly, it hardens you to say such things. Thirdly, it has a bad influence on others to hear you say them. And fourthly, it is not true. There is no such thing as standing still & remaining the same - stagnation means deterioration. Not all of us are given to introspection & setting up moral milestones to mark our moral progress - but would it be fair then to say that there was no progress? Sometimes we progress slowly, sometimes rapidly, & much depends on circumstances to develop, or repress certain qualities in us. But it is by our opportunities that we will be judged. The Presidency puts a man terribly to the test. If he has fine qualities, they will shine with double brilliancy. If he is commonplace, it kills him. What has Grant been good for since - except to eat dinners? Will Hayes ever be heard of again - unless at a Sunday school festival? It has not killed you yet - & will not, unless you, at some important turning-point, deliberately choose the wrong path. Setting aside all cant (8) about sudden conversion - I hope you do not understand me as believing in that - & thinking simply of what it is to meet a great emergency, to rise to it, or to fail, are you not wiser & better than you were? Look back on the past year - did you ever in your life work harder? - & has not almost all that work been for others? Even in your pleasures, have you not considered more what you could give, than receive? Have you not had larger thoughts in your mind? When Vice-President, you had no dignity, to keep, or to lose - forgive me for saying anything so hateful, but it is true. As President

- so far as the world knows - you have never lost your dignity once. Opponents have been forced to admire you. You have done better than friend or foe expected. And it is to your honor that it is so. You should not deny it & be ashamed. You should be proud of it, I would say, only that it is humility, not pride, which marks all true greatness of soul.

There is something more I want to say to you, but will not now. Why should you be talked to death, when off on your holidays? Besides, if I argue with you, to prove that you are better than you think, perhaps you will forgive me, but if I should argue on exactly the opposite tack, perhaps you might not. So I will give you time to rally from your malaria, before I find fault. Am I not generous?

Do you know, though I was very glad to see you, your visit left a rather sad impression on me? It seemed to me that you were not well, that you were very weary & worn out. You must not rely too much on your good constitution. There are so many strains it must bear, you ought to avoid all that are avoidable. You ought not keep your malaria a secret & endure it so patiently. It is a disgrace to the country that the White House should be so unhealthy - & the sooner people understand it, the better. If Congress will sit in summer, could you not have a cottage in some healthful locality five or ten miles out of town & attend to business from there? And if, when you are in New York, people will ring your door-bell all day & night - which is enough to give you brain-fever - why not have the wire detached from the bell & let the populace pull the handle as much as it pleases, a servant being near enough to hear that sound & attend to your callers, without your being so disturbed? I felt so sorry, I wanted to do something for you & did not know what. Or rather I did know - but is anything more unnatural than to be quite natural? If I had said: "Do lie down on the sofa - no one shall speak to you for an hour - & as soon as you are rested, you must have some dinner," you would have thought I was demented, would you not? And even if you were tired as a tramp & hungry as the traditional beggar, you would have exclaimed: "Thanks, no!" in amazement. So you sat up & talked, & were talked to, had some of that melancholy beverage called claret - in a sherry glass, our waiter probably having lost his head in delight at seeing you! - & then a long drive home. I am afraid, your visit to me being a sort of last straw, after a whole summer of burdens, you will have me associated in your mind forever & ever with annoyance & fatigue. Is it so? Please tell me. But not now - when you are rested. Hoping that your visit to Newport will do you a great deal of good.

Yours sincerely,
J. I. S.

Letter 17

August 28, 1882

Well, are you sufficiently refreshed now, to be found fault with? Or have you, since we parted, lived in such a whirlpool of adulation, that you will not tolerate a lecture? - not even from a poor little woman, who has always been the youngest of her family, who, consequently, if she lives to be fifty, will always be treated like a child - who would have no comfort in life, if she could not occasionally scold some very big man! But I am glad you went to Newport - instead of Long

Branch. The latter is a vulgar hole - at Newport even the worldliness is cleaner. And have you had a delightful time? It sounded so in the newspapers - & I hoped it was true, in spite of their untruthfulness. If on your arrival, the air braced you up, I am sure you have had much enjoyment - if not, I am afraid you have been terribly tired sometimes. But I have not envied the people who have been entertaining you - I have admired their disinterestedness! If you had been visiting me, I would gladly have killed the fatted cat (the only animal we at present possess!) & cooked it myself, if necessary, but as to inviting the neighbors to dine with you - to take you away from me - I would do nothing of the kind. On the contrary, as soon as you arrived, I would have pinned a pair of large, beautiful, white wings to your shoulders - so that no one, catching a glimpse of you, could by any possibility recognize you - & then I would have kept you all to myself - treating you very nicely one day & quite horridly the next, so that you would find variety enough to make your stay interesting. But, unfortunately, my villa is not yet built, & our immediate cat is painfully thin, so I cannot press you to come. Of course you would - you have plenty of time & no rush of engagements. I am so sorry to disappoint you! And now, after all this adulation - you see it does not "come natural to me," but I am trying to be good, because you are the President - may I say what I think?

It is just this, that you were wrong in what you said to me, the other night, about your Attorney General. It may be his place to investigate cases for you, to give you the chief points & to express his opinion - but it is not his place to decide whom you are & are not to pardon. You cannot make him the keeper of your conscience. And it is cowardly in you to try to shirk responsibility in that manner. Besides you do not succeed in the attempt, for the public accepts no such arrangement. It is useless for you to try to hide behind your Attorney General, because you are the bigger man. If things go wrong he may hide behind you, but in any case, if there are blows to fall, they will fall upon your head. So meet what lies before you like a man & have no dodging. In a pardon case, what you ought most to consider is the effect on the community. There are crimes, shocking in themselves, which you might pardon, with little fear of their being imitated, the temptation to them being very limited. But this is not true of embezzlement. The temptation lies before almost every man, woman & child in a civilized community - too many succumb to it - it is the sin of the age. It is a sort of moral epidemic, which ought to be checked with the severest measures. You said there were many things worse - you would have been nearer to the truth, if you had said that there were few. Recall the details of some prominent cases - the low vices that this stealing was done to gratify - the heart-breaking disgrace brought on many an honorable family - the victims, doomed in a moment to a life of penury that one man for a year or two might riot in luxury. Is there anything in this that awakens your sympathy for the culprit? It seems to me that there is scarcely indignation strong enough to meet his des[s]erts. His sin is one of the blackest dishonor. It poisons the moral atmosphere of any community that will tolerate it. It rots the very foundations of society. An embezzler ought not to be pardoned under any circumstances whatsoever. In fact, would it not be well if you waived the pardoning privilege altogether? Is it not something behind the intellect of the age? Is there any good reason why one man should have the power to reverse the decision of a court? If you renounce the power, no one can rebuke you for it. But if you use it, the responsibility rests with you - & you alone.

Another thing that I wish to speak to you about is the political assessment going on at present. It is a disgrace to the Republican party - & one for which you are responsible. Never in the history of our country has the thing been done with such insolent effrontery as now, & you have given the people to understand - for what else can they understand by that farce, you & your cabinet hemming & hawing over that claptrap letter from "A. Thomas"? - that it is done with your approbation. It is a stain on your administration - one which money cannot cover, nor tears wash away, not time wear out. Only your own hand can remove it. The nobodies who ply the work will be forgotten, but your name will be remembered, & if this thing continues, the dishonor of it will continue yours forever. Looking at the matter from a national standpoint, it is so self-evident that the United States government was not intended for the support of any party or faction, that it would be absurd to argue on the subject. The question is simply whether you intend to do your duty to the whole country, or to sacrifice the good of the country, or to sacrifice the good of the country for the benefit of a small clique of your personal followers. That clique may try to deafen your ears to the voice of the people, but beware how you let it succeed. The "steal" is only a little different in form from that of Dorsey. The natural question of the public is: "What fraud does the Republican party intend to perpetrate at the coming elections, that it needs so much money?" And the best part of the Republican party resents that question - it will not go halves in any fraud. You will break the party before you force it. You are popular, your finest qualities are fully appreciated, but there are some things which the American people will not stand even from a prime favorite. Show that you intend to run the United States government for the benefit of a faction, & the people, regardless of party, will sweep you & your "machine" out of the political arena as so much broken rubbish. But will you bring things to such an issue? I cannot believe it. In spite of what you have said, I still have faith that your nobler nature will assert itself. You have dulled your own perceptions, by associating too much with men who worship success from the lowest, vulgarest stand point - who have no political morality. Stand apart from them & you will see clearly. Whenever you stand alone, your conduct is far more to your credit. It is your so-called friends who drag you down. Be independent, forget the trifles of today, think of life as a whole, of what you owe to the country, of your own honor - can you waver then as to your duty? It requires great moral courage to correct our own errors - especially when they are so public that the correction must be public also - but I believe you are capable of great moral courage on great occasions.

Are you angry with me for speaking to you so plainly? Must I tell you again that I am your true friend in doing so? Sometimes I ponder regretfully on your visit. It was rather my habit to sit in that armchair, just where I sat beside you - now, when I sit there, & glance up at the vacant sofa, I - would you smile, if I said I missed you? Well, it is almost that - I wish you back - I feel that we nearly missed each other in that one meeting. You staid[sic], they said, about an hour, but I do not remember very distinctly anything that you said - except one word. I remember you, your voice, your manner, the change of your expression, as you spoke - I think I liked it best when you looked at me. But that one word - can you guess it? It was that inexorable "no," at parting when I asked if you had forgiven some of the harsh things I had said. I did not believe you meant it - yet there was nothing in the shake of your hand that contradicted the word or the tone. Do you really feel towards me so coldly, so distrustfully? It pains me to think it. But if it is so, it is. Will we ever meet again? Is there any chance that, before you return to Washington & I

go to Saratoga, we will be in the city simultaneously? If so - but you could not spare time for another visit, could you?

Yours sincerely,
J. I. S.

P.S. If you ever do want to write to me, & at the same time don't want to, you might compromise by sending the letter to J. I. Sand Esq. No such person exists, but people write to him occasionally & I kindly attend to his correspondence. But I begin to believe you are too afraid of me to write under any circumstances!

Letter 18

September 13, 1882

My very bad friend,

And so you have let all these weeks, since our first meeting & last parting, go by, without writing me a line. How atrocious! You are quite mistaken in supposing that I think you "the gentlest mannered man that ever, etc, etc" - I could imagine one much gentler! However, variety is the spice of life. If you had sent me a sugary little note from Newport, on Tiffany's best night-blooming-cereus-scented-squashed strawberry-&-cream-tinted paper, I should only have tossed it aside & said meditatively: "Yes, this is the way he talks to all my sex - in some form or other, he has said this very thing twenty times this week - to Mrs. E. D. Morgan & to Mrs. E. D. Jr. - to Mrs. John Jacob Astor & to Mrs. W. W. - to Mrs. Ellis & to his fiancée, Mip" - (Excuse me, but I really cannot remember which one you are engaged to at present!) But your taciturnity towards me is a distinction. If any of those lovely ladies said to you "It is a fine day," of course you would reply. Your acting towards me as if you were a Hottentot, is so exceptional, that I must feel complimented.

By-the-way, are you acquainted with Dr. [William Holme] Van Buren? He was here the other day - & how you would have laughed, if you could have looked in at us! He came with a friend of mine, but as his card was not sent up, I expected to find only my friend in the parlor. I ran down stairs, looking like an angel, in dotted white muslin - (I hope you know that the angels always wear that - probably because there are so many of them, that they have to be economical - & it is pretty, considering.) through the half-open door, I caught a glimpse of some grayish hair & a fine, large figure - not at all like my friends - & I thought! - what do you think I thought? Of course it was very absurd, when I knew that only two days before he had been on exhibition at Niagara, or some such place - but I really did mistake him for - for Jumbo [the Elephant]! As soon as I was in the parlor, I saw my blunder, but the introduction was instantaneous & I held out my hand and exclaimed: "Oh, Dr. Van Buren, I am very glad to see you - I have heard about you so often," all with a seraphic look of surprise & delight, which in reality was not intended for him at all, but for - for Jumbo. The next day, my friend said: "You made quite an impression on Dr. V." "How do you know?" I asked. "Oh, I know, by his manner," was the reply. "When we left, he

asked just one question about you & then he leaned back in the carriage & did not speak for quite a while." I felt guilty. Honesty ought to have compelled me to say: "I hope he does not think I am as nice as that always - that first look was not meant for him at all." But then my friend would have asked: "Was it for me?" - & honesty would have compelled me to say: "No." And then my friend would have said: "For whom?" - & then honesty would - no, I don't think it could have compelled me to say anything so absurd as: "For - for Jumbo." But it was a ridiculous affair altogether - & I know you are laughing at me. But I do not resent it - I am willing that you should laugh at me once in a while, because I say such temper-trying things to you occasionally.

I hope you are a great deal better for all the delightful sea air - & the petting - you have had along the New England coast. But how about those mountains, you were in such haste to reach? Why do you come to New York just now? If it is to get something pretty for Mip - (you know the name) your motive is ideal - if it were only to see me, it would be rather good - but I am afraid it is to see some of "those horrid men" & to stir up some political mischief. You ought to have kept out of the state till after the Saratoga Convention. Your coming here just now will go far to confirm the impression that you are actively interested in the state election.

But, if you are here, may I ask, are you coming to see me? I have made one little visit out of town, since I saw you, & expect to make two more before going to Saratoga, but will not run away just now, if there is any probability of my seeing you. That would seem cowardly - wouldn't it? - to run away, just when you were coming - just as if I were afraid of your scolding me, politically. And I am not a coward at all - except when I am - which is generally. But perhaps you are not coming. I would like to know - but I won't ask you to let me - because when I tell you to do one thing, you almost always do the other, don't you? So goodbye, till the next time - if there is any next.

Yours sincerely,
J. I. S.

Letter 19

September 19, 1882

My friend,

Of course there is no knowing how much mischief you may have done during two quiet days in Lexington Ave, but - taking for granted that you did not do any - I am very glad you went away so soon. If you had remained in New York just now, though a dozen good reasons might have kept you, nothing would have prevented the impression that you were here for the direct purpose controlling the Saratoga Convention, & it would have awakened a very bitter feeling against you, even among many who consider themselves your friends. But you are to return in a few days, it is said. Will you be here during the last week in September? If so, would it be possible - & if it were, would you be willing to set for your portrait - just a little sketch in water colors? This is not an attempt at extortion, for I do not mean to let you have the picture, under

any circumstances. If it is bad, you won't want it - & I would be ashamed to let it go - & if it is good, I shall want it myself. When I go to Saratoga, in October, I expect to open a studio. I must do some kind of work, & that seems the most feasible. I am not afraid of work - in fact, after the years of enforced idleness that I have lived through, I am only too grateful to be able to work on any terms - but there is something that I am afraid of. I hardly know how to express it, without seeming supercilious - yet nothing could be farther from my thoughts - but I do dread contact with the world. I suffer over things that are not worth it - at which a person of a tougher mental constitution would only laugh. But there is much, besides true love that does not run smooth - &, perhaps I am not as practical as I might be. This is rather discouraging, yet I do not mean to let it take all the courage out of me. I intend to go on trying, even if things are rough - even if I make them rougher for myself than they need be. And to begin with, I ask this favor of you, with less hesitation than I would, if you were an older personal friend, because I am sure you will have no hesitation in refusing it, if it is really disagreeable to you. Of course sitting for one's portrait is a bore - but then you have been bored so much during the last year, that perhaps you can endure that more resignedly than most men. And if it were a question of, between two engagements of interest, sitting in your own parlor & hearing the door-bell ring forty times in thirty minutes, or sitting in our parlor & enjoying a serene blank, possibly the latter would be the lesser evil. The light in our parlor is good, morning or afternoon, & I would be ready at any hour you chose to name, after 9 A.M. Any portrait that I might paint now, would be of some use to me - but, you being rather well known, to have painted yours, even hastily & badly, would, in some person's eyes, add greatly to the interest of my work. And as I do not ask to have the picture hung in the Capitol or the White House, can you have any conscientious scruples against letting me take it? Of course my asking it at all is very selfish - but, you see, I admit the fact - I do not pretend to be anything else. It remains with you to reward or punish this selfishness just as you think best. But if you have any of the good nature, which the newspapers (no doubt, falsely) accuse you of, come & see me soon after you return to New York & let me know whether you will or will not sacrifice yourself for just a little while, to gratify

Your sincerely selfish friend,
J. I. S.

Letter 20

October 9, 1882

Well, we are in the city simultaneously again - I have been too ill to go away. Are you coming to see me? It pained me that you did not the last time. It was not just the disappointment of not seeing you, nor about the picture - for I did not think that there was one chance in fifty that you could or would sit for it - the disappointment was in yourself. I felt that you were doing things which made you feel that you could not, with comfort, look me in the face. Invalid as I am, for more than a year I have poured out my best strength in one continuous appeal to your finer nature - & what has it availed? The dew might as well fall upon polished marble in the hope of producing a flower. You have had an opportunity for good such as does not come to one man in a million. And what have you done with it? Look at your friends. To lie, to cheat, to steal, to

forge, to bribe, & be bribed - those are what they consider the avenues to your favor. Do you realize what the reflection is upon yourself? Ah, & you had one friend even more devoted than they - have you forgotten him? He [Charles Guiteau] died last June - he even believed that you would find murder acceptable.

All my thoughts of you now are full of sadness. I feel as if I should never again speak to you jestingly, or tell you about myself, or ask a favor - those things implied confidence. Can I ever trust you again? Regretfully I recall our meeting - we did not really meet - we only passed each other. I wanted to talk with you, but there we[re] too many persons present. More than that, I wanted you to speak for yourself. You said I did you injustice - that I believed too readily what appeared in the papers - that you would like to give me the correct version in some of the cases discussed - that if I knew the truth, I would judge differently. Can you say that now? If I knew the truth, would I judge differently? You know I do not wish to do you injustice - that it pains me beyond measure to think ill of you. But I love my country too much, to call myself your friend, while I believe you are doing it an injury. Am I wrong in believing that? If I am, come & tell me so yourself.

J. I. S.

Letter 21

November 8, 1882

Hon. Chester A. Arthur.

The struggle is over - election day past. And I have some sad thoughts concerning you. It is not my nature to find pleasure in saying to people who are discomfited: "There, I told you so -" & it is not in such a spirit that I write. Before I have written for other reasons - today it is wholly for your own sake. You are unhappy - gloomy - disappointed. If I were at home, I should feel almost tempted to go & see you. And yet I would dread the meeting. You would say to me something harsh - something bitter - something that would wound me. Yet it is not the mere words, nor even the fact of being wounded that I shrink from - it is that you have the hard, bitter thoughts in your heart. Put them away from you. Be true to your better nature, at last.

You have had a terrible defeat. You know it - everyone does. It would be useless to try to disguise it - you could deceive no one, except yourself. And you have deceived yourself too much already. You have trusted in the badness & the stupidity of human nature - you have believed that all good men were cowards. There was some excuse for the latter impression, I admit. They do often seem cowards. But it is because they trust too much to the goodness & intelligence of human nature - they cannot easily imagine that people deliberately mean to do wrong & so will not vigorously oppose them. Yet, when they are aroused to danger, you see what they can do. You must not think that there was anything factional or personal in the opposition you have met. The men of the Republican party who voted against you yesterday, would stand by you through thick & thin, if you would stand by principle. If there was a factional

spirit in the campaign, you introduced it yourself by the factional methods you have followed for the past few months - if there was a personal element, you forced it on the people by the active personal interest you have shown in local affairs. Had you remained at your post of duty in Washington, or at least kept out of the state of New York, for the last six weeks, you would not be in the deplorable position you are now. If there was anything deeply humiliating in your defeat, it consisted in, not what your opponents prepared for you, but in what you prepared for yourself. You have been your own worst enemy. I say this to you, not as a taunt, but because I believe that, when we see that our troubles are of our own making, somehow it touches our sense of justice & compels us to bear them more patiently. Do not imagine that your opponents are triumphing over you. It was a melancholy victory to those who defeated you - it is painful for life-long Republicans to vote against the Republican party - sad for any true-hearted American to be opposed to the President of the United States.

And now it remains for you to decide what you will make of this defeat - whether it shall be the stepping stone to better things, or the mill-stone about your neck to sink you to the bottom of the deep. There is only one way to make the world forget your humiliation - make people forget how much you have deserved it. I do not know whether you aimed at a second term of the Presidency, but if you did, you have destroyed your chances for it by the part you have taken in the present campaign. No free convention would nominate you - & if a packed convention did so, more than half the party would bolt. You have undermined your power both for good & evil. It is not of vital importance to the country what you choose to do now - but it is of vital importance to yourself. Remember how swiftly time glides away. To many men there comes a long pause between the activity of life & the closing scenes of death. How sad it must be for any one then to look back & feel that the best strength of their manhood has all been wasted on unworthy ends. For your own sake & for the sake of those who love you, do not fill your life with actions which afterwards can bring you only regret. Go back to Washington - forget New York, political strife & personal animosity. Remember that you are President of the United States - work only for the good of the country. And bear in mind, that in a free country, the only bulwark of power worth trusting, is the affection of the people.

You will not come to see me here, I suppose, & probably I will not be in New York again for a long long time - so perhaps we will never meet any more. But please think sometimes of what I have said to you - & ask yourself if, even when opposed to you, even in the severest things I have said, if I have not been more truly your friend than many who are nearer to you.

Yours sincerely,
J. I. S.

Letter 22

December 29, 1882

The sorrowful old year is drawing to a close. What year does not look sad, viewed from this end? I wonder sometimes how it would feel to look back upon one that had been happy. This

has not been a very joyous one to you. You suffered a great deal last fall, I think - the more so, that what you suffered, you could not express to friend or foe. But those sorrows which we endure entirely alone - if they do not happen to kill us - give us more strength than anything else in life.

I read your message with interest. But what do you mean by it? Are you like Josh Billings's mule that behaved beautifully for six whole months, that he might get a first class kick at his master? - or are you sincere in the good you propose? Do you know how the people regard your message? They don't regard it at all. You gave a splendid one last year - but you did not live up to it. People have a great aversion to being made fools of - especially for the second time. Words will never serve you again - actions only will count. But if your actions are honorable, energetic & for the good of the country, depend up[on] it that they will be fully appreciated.

One day last autumn, when I sat alone in my studio, poking my wood fire, my eyes wandering from the Roman scarf & red wheat over our window, to the bearded wheat & blue tissue draped above the next, & down to my little Countess Potocka in one corner & my big morning glories in the other, while my thoughts wandered to things hundreds of miles away, I ended a long reverie with the remark to myself: "Perhaps he has not brains enough to know what is right." But there I was wrong. You have brains enough. Whenever you choose to exert them, you show a very clear apprehension of what ought & what ought not to be done. The trouble is, you object to using them. I understand the objection perfectly. It requires about three times as much vitality to run properly as to run all the rest of the body. The more you think, the more you have to think. If a matter is to be dealt with conscientiously, it means that you must read & write, talk & listen, weigh the evidence on this side & on that. Yes, it is very troublesome - but then some things are worth the trouble. You want to have all the benefit of being wise & good - but you would like to get it by a short cut. There is something tricky in your nature. You have shown it to me, in your extreme distrust of one, who has trusted you unboundedly. That has hurt me often, but it really pained me more on your account, than on my own - to think that you did not know whom you could trust. But I do not mean to reproach you with the indirectness of your nature - that is, that your temptation lies in that direction - for we are not responsible for the traits with which we are born. But we are responsible for it, if we make no distinction between the good & the bad tendencies in us, & put no restraint upon the latter. I believe that you are perfectly sincere in your words & direct in your actions, at times - but the times would be more frequent, if you willed it so. Cannot you make up your mind to put all double-dealing out of your life? If you think Civil Service Reform trash, & don't care a fig if it fails, say so, & have done with it. That would be a pity - but the country will live. If the people don't like it, they have themselves to blame - they put you where you are. If they want Civil Service Reform, they will have to wait a little longer for it, that is all. But if, with your present opportunities for observing, you believe that Civil Service Reform is a real public need, then stand by your convictions openly & earnestly - & let your example be such that no man can question your sincerity. Do not waver. If a thing is worth doing, do it with your whole soul.

A few weeks ago Miss Wayland left us, to spend the winter in Washington. I told her, if she chanced to meet you - not at a big reception, but some how informally - to ask you if you

remembered ever to have met a Miss Sand in New York - if you remembered her, she wished to be remembered to you - but if you had forgotten her, she did not wish to be remembered. But perhaps Miss W. will not remember - so I will never know if you forget! I envied my elderly friend quite wickedly that morning she went away. I never envy people their possessions, but I always have envied them their opportunities to travel, to see, to learn, & afterwards to make use of that learning. But I expect to go to Washington yet - very soon, in fact - when I am seventy, when you have forgotten me, when the dear old Republican party is dead, & the Democracy only knows who is President!

Something reminded me of you the other night & made me laugh. I was polishing up my dull old brains with a little French & dipped into Fénelous Télémaque. About the middle of the book there is a scene - well, it is too long to quote, but it amounts to this: that excellent old man - or woman - Mentor undertook to give the impetuous king, Idoménée, what crude Americans would call "a blowing up." He - or she - said that he was too much accustomed to flattery, it was necessary that he should hear things called by their right names, etc, etc. And what do you think Idoménée answered? Why, he wept & embraced Mentor - according to French accounts the ancient Greeks were very emotional - & he exclaimed, that, in all his life, he never, never, never had met anybody who loved him so much, as to be willing to offend him, for the sake of letting him know the truth! How very different from a certain potentate, with whom we are acquainted, who expressed a wish to cut his little Minerva's head off!!! But then it must be admitted that Idoménée did not know that he was talking to a woman. That, of course, makes a great difference. For a man will forgive a woman for telling a lie, even if it break his heart, but he will never forgive her for telling the truth, if it happens to wound his vanity. Is not that so? You know - & you are a man. Therefore I do not expect you to forgive me - far less to take Idoménée's heavenly view of the case - but if, for the rest of your administration, you will do what is for the good of the country, honestly & earnestly, & not be turned from it by any smaller considerations, I will be your friend always - even if you persist in that odd little notion of being offended with me. Do you remember last summer? You came to see me, just when I had given you up - & you said that I ought to have known that you were coming. Will you surprise me that way again? Will you do at last what I have asked you from the first? And will you say - to yourself, for we never meet - "She ought to have known that I would do it." How much faith do you expect me to have in you? Have I not had almost too much already? The saddest disappointments in life are the disappointments in human nature. For your own sake - if no other sake will move you - please do not let the good I have believed of you be all a mistake. And so to you & this sad old year, goodbye.

J. I. S.

Letter 23

September 15, 1883

My very bad friend,
(who does not deserve that I should care where he goes, or what becomes of him!)

Are you coming to Newport? One day I hear that you are, the next that you are not. I saw your dear little boy at the Casino the other evening - he was talking to the ladies in front of me for quite a while - but he did not say anything on the subject. By-the-way he did not seem silly or & dudeified at all - in spite of what you & some other men say about him. But are you coming?

It seems a very long time since I saw you last summer. I feel about ten years older - I have had so much care & sorrow. I thought then that I had suffered all I could suffer - but I was mistaken. Now I believe we do not reach that point until we are dead. I came near reaching it, though - in the spring I was very, very ill. But somehow I pulled through & at present I am stronger than I have been for years. Yet I don't feel it - because so many sad things happen in my life & wear me out. Sometimes - does this strike you as very comical? - when I feel exceedingly gloomy, I have an idea I would like you to come & talk to me. It is absurd, I know - but I can't help it. I like the sound of your voice - even if you are such an awful old sinner! - & I would like you to tell me about your trip out west. I enjoy hearing about places I have never visited & interesting things I expect never to see. Will you come?

Of course, if you are an old bundle of worldliness & have no heart at all, you needn't. But you know best whether you are that, or not. If you can remember a time when you were very unhappy, & I tried to say things to comfort you, & you did care for my sympathy, then do come. It is very hard for me to take hold of life again - & I am very grateful to those who help me at all to be cheerful.

At present I am staying at Mrs. Ives - a quiet little house, in a quiet little street. Of course it is not the same as being in my own home - but how can I help that? And we so seldom are near. Do come, if you can.

Yours sincerely,
J. I. S.