

Letters of Charles Joseph La Trobe to Comtesse Louise de Pourtalès, 1832

Transcribed by John Botham.

Source: La Trobe Neuchâtel Archive, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library Victoria, MS13354L Box 5, Folder 44. (Original archive is held in the Fonds Petitpierre, Archives de l'Etat Neuchâtel, Switzerland.)

In 1832, La Trobe departed from Le Havre to New York with Count Albert de Pourtalès for a two-year tour of America and Mexico. La Trobe kept up a correspondence with Albert's mother, Comtesse Louise de Pourtalès, to inform her of their progress and to seek approval of their plans.

At anchor off Sandy Hook. 30 miles from New York.

21 May 1832

My dear Madam.

I take up my pen in haste, to scrawl you a line by an English packet which is on the point of sailing for Europe, to say, you will in all probability receive detailed accounts of our voyage by the Havre Packet of the 1st June, & in the mean time to give you such brief intelligence as may set your minds at ease about the fate of the Havre & its passengers. -

Our passage has been long, & in part very stormy for the season but not otherwise unpleasant: good seamanship & patience however has prevailed over adverse winds & I believe that Tomorrow morning we shall not fail to be off newyork after a passage of 41 days. I had fully depended upon Albert's having a letter ready for you & had therefore consecrated the little leisure which I could command, favourable to letter writing, to carrying on my family correspondence, but am sorry to say that after unabated good health during the passage, he has become indisposed during the few days past, with what proves to be a mild form of measles, a malady which has been prevalent among the children of the steerage passengers. The case is however distinguished by no unfavourable symptom & I hope that a few days will see him restored to perfect health. Care is all that is necessary, & that we will take, you may be well assured, to the best of our ability: & our plans modified so as to give him every advantage. In this I am sure I shall be seconded by Mons de Luze¹ & family to whom I have given notice of our approach, by the pilot boat. Your kindness & solicitude about my health I have not forgotten, & rejoice that I have it in my power to show you that I am grateful for it, by attention to your child, though I would rather that he were well than ill.

[p.2] 22nd. We have safely arrived at the Quarantine Ground & have now the whole ship to ourselves. We shall probably stay here 3 days or so till Albert can be removed to new york without the least risk.

I have seen Mons de Luze who is very anxious to have him & nurse him, but both the medical men who have seen Albert at my request, coincide in opinion that the removal will be more advisable in a few days. I hope, my dear Madam, that neither you nor M^r de Pourtales will be anxious but await with confidence the news of your son's complete restoration - Our plans will probably suffer no change than this that I may leave Albert in N York in the care of his relatives in whose house he is to be a guest to gather fresh health while I make a week or 10 days visit to Baltimore. I wish to give you more intelligence but must close - assuring you of our constant remembrance & anxious thoughts - We hope to have intelligence of you by the Erie. Albert desires his duty & affectionate regards to his father mother & all friends - I send this enclosed to London & make no doubt but it will be immediately forwarded.

Believe me ever My dear madam With best regards to Mons de Pourtales

Your most attached friend & serv^t.

Chs Js^p Latrobe.

¹ Louis Philippe de Luze (1793-1877) & his wife Sarah (1800-1879). Louis Philippe's father's sister was Albert's paternal grandmother.

New York
26 May 1832.

My dear Madame.

I just hear of a merchant vessel quitting the port unexpectedly for Havre & though prepared to write to you by the packet of the 1st June I cannot do otherwise than scrawl you 3 lines. – I wrote a short letter to you by the English packet of the 24th the receipt of which will perhaps [...] be anticipated by the arrival of this. I mentioned in that our safe arrival in this port on the 22 & also that Albert had been attacked in the mildest manner by the measles, on which account I delayed removing him from the vessel till such time as all obvious risk might be avoided. I am happy to say that nothing could have been more propitious than the whole stage of the disease hitherto, & that with the permission of his medical advisor I was able to quit the Quarantine ground yesterday & bring him without bad effects to New York, where in the house & family Mons & Mad^{me} de Luze I am assured that his health will be reestablished in very few days. Nothing prevents him writing to you, but ignorance of the opportunity, as except that he must be careful of himself he is almost as well as ever. By the 1st however you will certainly hear – Mons & M^{me} de Luze have received us both in the most cordial manner & Albert who is inmate of their house will be in want of nothing. They desire the kindest regards to you. I must close

I am ever with best compliments & regards to
Mons de Pourtales am ever, dear Madame
Your most devotedly C.J. Latrobe.

[Side:] Pray excuse blots but I have no time to get a better pen or re-write the letter.

No 2.

Madame la Comtesse Fredrick de Pourtalès

Neuchâtel

La Suisse

Par Pontarlion

[27 May 1832]

My Dear Madame

I wrote you a blotted ten lines on Saturday of which I am heartily ashamed, my haste was in vain for the vessel has not yet sailed & this letter (a welcome one I am sure) will be in time. May you soon receive it. Possible I am still have Albert's company to Baltimore at the end of the week. He is I hope more than quite convalescent. We expect news from Europe with great anxiety.

Ever your dear. Madame
Most faithfully
C J La Trobe

28 May.// The landing of our effects has taken up all my time else I should have performed my task of correspondence better. You shall soon hear again. We are in good humour with each other & all the world.

PS 29th: Our letters are still provokingly detained. I have however pleasure to say Albert is quite well & we go together on Saturday to Philadelphia & Baltimore.

No 3 Baltimore. 6 June 1832.

My dear Madam. This time I must contrive that you receive a decent letter from me! Our two communications No.1 & 2 I hope have will long ere this have come to hand, the first satisfying you of our safe passage of the Atlantic, & the second of Albert's convalescence &

progressive return to complete health, after his unexpected attack of the measles. I leave & must often leave I fear to him & to his pen the task of giving you details upon our movements & turn in the first place to such general details upon our position & plans as may interest you & his Father. Now as to the voyage: our companion Washington Irving² proved to be all we expected of him: circumstances threw Albert & myself much into his company & it will be as agreeable to you to know, as it is flattering to us both to feel, that the friendship & companionship which we were encouraged to cultivate with him at sea is not likely to lose force on shore, but that he continues to show us every mark of kind attention & a disposition as far as circumstances permit, to keep us at his side. Albert's good sense, talent, utter absence of pride, & natural sympathy of character has rendered him a great favourite with this gentleman, & let me add on my part most justly so. It will gratify you to hear what I can say with truth, that Albert since were this time left to each other's more intimate acquaint^{ce} has gained greatly upon me also, & I feel my affection for my companion growing daily. I believe we understand one another much better than heretofore, & I am led to anticipate not only an absence of difficulty in conducting our present relations together & a pleasant period of wanderings – but the gradual growth of a friendship which may last during our lives. During his short illness & the subsequent season of restraint which prudence dictated – nothing could have been more truly amiable & acquiescing than his whole conduct, & the prudence with which he checked his impatience & 'did as he was bid' has I hope met with its reward in his complete & speedy restoration to health. You will have learned that from the 22nd May when companions left us at the Quarantine ground till the 25th we remained prisoners on board the ship, but on that day found ourselves enabled to reach New York without risk & Albert took up his quarters with his relatives. A few days showed him so completely restored from all the remnants of his indisposition, that I resolved to change my plan of going to Baltimore without him & gave him to the 2nd of June to get quite strong and stout. The interval was spent most agreeably in New York – we made many & advantageous acquaint^{ces} returned visits, mingled in the family society of connections of M^r de Luze etc., & by the real frankness & kindness of our reception on every hand found ourselves very favourably impressed at the outset with America. Among other entertainments at which I happened to be present but unaccompanied by Albert who was still at that time under some restraint, was the public dinner of wel-

[P.2] come given to Washington Irving by his townsmen & friends, & was greatly gratified by the spirit which reigned upon that occasion. We will contrive to send you a newspaper giving you the details if possible, as they will not give you an unfavourable specimen of American humour & feeling. As to Irving himself he is as happy as a prince (or must I say as a president) If you wish to have a sketch of his character from my observation I should say that according to my idea – he is a man of happy & well-directed, rather than great talent – with much feeling for what is noble & virtuous, a sound judgement & insight into human nature, a most affectionate and excellent heart; possessing a quiet good natured vein of humour & much discrimination of character. He has a great readiness at detecting those little harmless foibles which are to be found in almost every human being, but there is no gall mingled with his observation of them. I have been the repository of the major part of his sly observations on board ship (a position which of all others is the most favourable to the production of ill humour) & I never heard him witty at the expense of correct & good feeling. He is not gifted with a ready tongue & is consequently no orator but what he says is always neatly expressed. He is now 46 years old but has contrived to keep much of that boyish freshness of feeling & hability to cheerful excitement which is the charm of life. He is adored by his townsmen & with reason for he is most passionately attached to them & his native place. Consequent to our plans we left N. York on Saturday last in his company & that of another N. York acquaint^{ce} & proceeded to Philadelphia where we spent Sunday. Monday we

² Washington Irving (1783-1859), writer called the 'first American man of letters.' He is best known for the short stories 'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow' and 'Rip Van Winkle.'

arrived in this beautifully situated city & found ourselves welcomed by my unknown relatives³ here with a warmth of affection which makes both of us feel quite at home. I leave Albert to say what he thinks of the Latrobes (a strange race all the world over) on this side of the Water, & turn to our future plans & projects merely adding that we find ourselves all at once transplanted into the centre of a delightful circle of acquaint^{ces} & introduced to so many pretty personages that I fear Albert will begin to groan over your interdict about the exportation of a wife. I will take good care that he plenty of change & but little opportunity of throwing his heart after his eyes. According to him I am irrecoverably a lost man: though how I am at a loss to conceive! In referring to future plans I must still procrastinate in a measure & leave my next letter giving you the itinerary I promised, as I hardly have been able to combine & arrange all the details of our summer ramble. So far I can say that in about 18 days time we shall be again at New York -

[P.3] having in the interval visited Washington & made various excursions in this neighbourhood. That then prior to our journey towards Canada we shall make a short excursion to Boston & back & shall scarcely set off for the north before the 10 or so of July. What now keeps me rather undecided with regard to the details of our longer summer tour is the conviction, that, to run over the United States at the rate at which we shall be obliged to do if we are to get to Mexico in the course of the following spring, will be in a measure little more than loss of time. It is impossible to see, examine & study all that one would & should do, after crossing the Atlantic within so short a space of time. I therefore wish little by little to produce this change, that we do not go to Mexico before the autumn of next year, a plan which I believe would pretty well fall into your views. We should then be able to see the US. much more in detail as every day proves to me that they ought to be seen & we shall have time enough for the examination of the countries more to the south: & will I doubt not enabled to do if ... increased profit. I think that I shall be able, by watching the occasion ... bring Albert to accede to this with a good grace: & perhaps as far as you are able, you & M^r de P. will (if the idea meets with your approbation) lend yourselves to render this [?] to me. He has already talked with me about an extension of our travels from Mexico to Peru, the communications being so frequent & easy, & therefore is no longer in as great a hurry to return as he appears to be; & all this supposing that it should eventually be done, is compatible with the change I have proposed & the period of time to which you thought his absence from Europe might extend. However I shall have other opportunities of writing about this subject. I must now close, as this same post must carry my English dispatches also. We are, my dear madam, very anxious to receive some future communications from you in addition to the few lines which were dispatched from Paris on your return from Havre. Begging you to present my best compliments to M^r de Pourtales, Guillaume – Your Sister Made^{me} de Castellane with a kind word to such of my friends as you may see, whether young or old – believe me ever –

Dear Madame

Your most faithful & attached friend & serv^t

Charles Jos^p Latrobe,

Madame
Madame le Comtesse Frederic de Pourtales
Neuchâtel
La Suisse
Suisse par Pontarlier
No 4 New York 30 June 1832.

³ The relatives in Baltimore were: Mary, widow of La Trobe's uncle Benjamin Henry; her children, John H B and his wife Charlotte, Julia E, and Benjamin H Jr and his wife Maria E.

My dear Madam. We are most anxiously looking out for the arrival of the packet of the 20th of last month, trusting that it will bring us intelligence of relatives & friends in the other hemisphere. Meanwhile letters must be in preparation for the Havre packet of Sunday next & to those which Albert will doubtless send I would wish to add a few lines. Our last No. 3 was dispatched about the 6th of this month from Baltimore. It would have given you some idea of our proceedings up to that date. It would principally have been welcome to you, inasmuch as it informed you of Albert's perfect convalescence & full recovery from the attack of the measles. Since that time he has enjoyed the best health in the world. Our stay of nearly 3 weeks in the neighbourhood of Baltimore will always be remembered with pleasure by both of us. Our excursions to Harper's Ferry in Virginia - to Washington, & to the Manor, the seat of the Carroll family were all productive of much enjoyment & were unaccompanied by any drawback if we except the great heat which at times rendered existence a little troublesome. Upon occasion of the first mentioned, we gained our first glimpse of American river & forest scenery; our second excursion brought us in contact with our amicable compaignon de voyage, Washington Irving, again: the third introduced us to the intimate acquaintance of the most noted & wealthiest family in the state of Maryland [scratched out]. I feel equal pride and pleasure in communicating to you, my dear Madam & Mr de P. intelligence that on all occasions & in every place, Albert continues to [?olden] opinion [?] honour upon you & your past care of him, by his conduct & [?]. I am [? ?ished] to find him a universal favorite for though we have our occasional disputes and rubs I love him better every day, & my hopes for the future become more & more confirmed. All that he wants, is firmness of principle & mind, to practise continually & habitually that which he can [?produce] so well when there is no temptation to do otherwise. But time may do all & more than all this. Our acquaintance has now had nearly one year's standing: so far I can find no room to repent the circumstances that produced it, or the fruits which this period of time has produced whether by my instrumentality or not that matters little: I think much has been gained & look forward with cheerfulness to the future. While at the Manor we received intelligence of the Cholera having followed us across the Atlantic & of the terrible loss of life by which its introduction into Canada has been marked. The alarm in New York was excessive, but we judged that it would have subsided by the time we thought of returning here - which in fact it has. Had an earlier opportunity occurred we should have already written to satisfy you of our being well & inclined to be prudent & you may rely upon this that we will not needlessly expose ourselves, but keep out of its way as far as we can. Of course our visit to Lower Canada has been relinquished for the present, but just at present there exists no reason why we should not put our plans of visiting the northern states of the union in practise. A few days will still be spent here & in over running some parts of the Hudson River with W. Irving - after which we shall direct our course to Boston or Niagara as appears advisable. Albert is quite satisfied to fall into my...

[Envelope] project of remaining next summer also in the United States, leaving Mexico till the following winter. What we want now is some intelligence of you & of my relatives in England, for the English packets seem also to be long on the road from Europe. May we soon receive it. In the mean time we think often of you & our distant friends & amidst the heat of America remember the snows of the Alps. May I beg my sincere regards & compliments to Mr de Pourtales. Madame de Castellane & any of my valued friends at Neuchatel, the family de Montmollin - a la Rochette, etc.

Farewell, my dear Madame, believe me
ever your most attached & faithful friends & serv^t,

Charles Joseph Latrobe.

I take it for granted that Albert has given you every detail about our friends Mr & M^{me} de Luze & their numerous relatives.

Madame la Comtesse Fred^c de Pourtales
Neuchâtel
Swiss

Saratoga Springs. State of New York. August 10th 1832. No 5

My Dear Madam

I began this letter some days ago, but having travelled with it in my side pocket, I find that the jolting of American vehicles on American roads has so far defaced it that I may as well commence another. I allowed Albert to dispatch his last to you (dated Lancaster 26th July with hardly the addition of a postscript from myself in order that I might, with the better conscience send you an epistle by one of the intermediate packets: as I am sure that you will never complain of hearing too often from us, especially in seasons like the present, and I have surely matter sufficient to fill a supplementary sheet from time to time. We are still without letters acknowledging the receipt of those which were dispatched immediately on our arrival – announcing the same & Albert's slight attack of the measles. Since that time you will have had another fright about the cholera which has followed us to these shores: but with regard to that also I trust that with the blessing of God you may also feel at ease. You will recollect that I am among those who make the best of matters, & having taken the precautions & measures dictated by prudence, I strive to trust to providence for the rest. The malady has been more felt at New York than we wandering among the hills of New Hampshire had supposed – yet is now on the increase there, though spreading to the E. W. N & South. To choose a line of route where no symptoms of it may not appear, is now almost impossible, so we have chosen one on which the cases are trifling & far apart & remain stationary only where there is nothing of the kind – a general watchfulness over our health, and prompt attention to so [?] trifling complaints & indispositions experienced, has shown to be the best preservation & you may rest satisfied that we shall not neglect them. We both of us love Europe & many within its confines too well, not to see & revisit its shores again. Here we are spending some days at a fashionable resort famed for its mineral waters – a fine healthy spot which has an influx of nearly 10,000 strangers during the summer months in ordinary years – but which this year is quite deserted from the fear of many to go far from home or meet in large numbers anywhere. But taking up the sketch of our proceedings where I suppose that Albert left them at the date of his last, I must tell you how we got here. The morning that his letter was dispatched, we parted with our amiable companion Mr Irving who had to repair to New York giving us however a rendezvous in ten days time to join company again at this place – as we had schemed still to make our visit to Niagara together. Well, these ten days Albert & I passed very agreeably together in overrunning the beautiful state of Vermont, whose green mountains we found much more to our taste than the more elevated ranges of New Hampshire (neither could supply the Alps to us however). It may astonish you to hear me say that I never was in a country which had so many & great pretensions to interest, which was equally prosaic & unpoetical. The details, interesting as they are, never produce in the mind thing like enthusiasm – nothing comes before the eye calculated to excite the imagination – nothing excites poetic feeling, few or no scenes, however fine & grandiose, are picturesque. In truth, America is the most prosaic, matter of fact country I ever saw - & I hope ever shall see. So pray my dear Madame, do not expect great things either from our pens or pencils – neither [Page 2] have been quite idle – that is true, but neither had we so good an excuse for remaining unemployed. But to resume – we crossed the Hudson about the 2nd of this month, about 10 miles above Albany & arrived here, where we did not fail within a day or two to be joined by Mr Irving – we are now awaiting the arrival of his brother – who is to complete our quartette in moving towards the lakes. I know that the fortuitous circumstance which brought us into contact with this agreeable & accomplished society & which have since conspired to render us good companions for each other, & desirous of rambling in company,

are fully appreciated by you & Mr. de Pourtales. Nothing could have been better arranged either for the good of Albert or my pleasure. Indeed from the very moment of our quitting you, it seemed to me, that the parents' blessing that you bestowed upon your child was heard & answered for we often speak together of the singular manner in which all seems to prosper with us & seems to turn out for the best. Albert speaks often of our own good genius & his services. I believe he quitted us, however, for about a minute the other day, when, as Albert & I were driving like two milers in a rumble-tumble vehicle towards Lake George, the machine was suffered to break down & the shape of my nose was suddenly changed from a non-descript, to a very decent grecian one – besides my right eye nearly cut out. The latter isn't particularly a change for the better. Albert escaped without a scratch, as we were going at a snail's pace over a bridge, & neither fell out, only my superior height brought me in contact with the head of the vehicle. However I still have my right hand & my left eye at your service, dear Madam & make no doubt that long before this reaches you the right will look much as usual. As to the nose, as the accident has been productive of an amelioration, I yield myself to my fate & by you will prepare my friends at Neuchatel for the change in my profile. ... The letters I have had the pleasure of sending you occasionally since we parted have I am assured given you much satisfaction, in as far as I was enabled with truth to speak in terms of eulogy & approval of my friend & companion.

The year past has been of great benefit to him in every way – you know Alberts fickleness & instability of purpose sufficiently well to conceive that there must be moments, when the novelty of his position ceases to excite him & loses its first force. At such times, homesickness, ennui-regret & even remorse for the abuse of his pleasures & advantages in times past will creep in. I am not astonished at it – but expected & looked for it & consider this as a part of that moral schooling to which he must submit. At the same time I sympathise with him & with good reason. He is at such times discouraged – but not so far as yet, as to conceive the serious idea of relinquishing any part of the tour we have proposed. At the same time I perceive that a good deal in management may become requisite at certain times to keep him steady: & this may not be difficult as his periods of discouragement are very temporary.

[P.3] His manner of speaking hitherto has gratified me extremely. He argues reasonably about himself & his present & future prospects, & is, I believe, fully aware from an examination of his own heart & temper, of the necessity of the experiment now making. He feels, that however accompanied with trials & self denials in some respects – it will, if persevered in manfully, tend, more than anything else, to give stability to his character & keep him from mischief in present years & remorse in future; as well as lead him to make a just & worthy use of those many & great advantages, which, in the thoughtlessness of youth he has hitherto made too slight account of. I would indeed hope that providence had guided his Parents to that which was the best alternative - & that the experiment you are now making, at so great a sacrifice, is the very best calculated to produce the desired effect upon Albert's mind & future life. I consider the tour in the Eastern States, which we have now in a measure achieved at the least exciting of all those we have in contemplation: I am sure that all the others will give him more pleasure. He has taken a fancy against the character of the ordinary american & I regret if, for though it is not quite to my taste I think that we have been exposed individually to little or nothing unpleasant & shall be in all probability be ...ished when we return to the westward for our ultra-fastidiousness in the East. As to our ... they are briefly these: to go in company of the gentleman said by the ... the Mohawk to Niagara – then to hold consultation whether our initial plan of returning to New York by the Saint Laurence ... or not: at all events to be in this city in the course of next month, & ... our course southward as the autumn advances. The cholera's travels will ... course in a measure influence ours – so far as we shall never think of staying anywhere it seems to have got the upper hand. In Philadelphia it is for the present increasing & report says that it has reached Baltimore through there I believe from circumstances its power will be limited.

Since I began these lines, your lines to Albert of the 9th June have come to hand & have been heartily welcomed as giving us cheering accounts of your wellbeing;. Your patience will I fear be greatly tried before my first letter of 22 May from New York arrives with you. We have now quitted Saratoga, & spending a day together in the midst of some very charming scenery on the banks of the Mohawk about 20 miles below Utica, the brother of Mr Iving having as yet not joined our party: all well. Albert bid me say mille choses to you & all, & will soon answer your letter. He as well as myself has become rather Indian in complexion: by exposure to sun & air. His bird collection has not advanced as yet indeed we have hardly been in a country favourable to it, or to my collection of insects, as in spite of my very diligent pursuit of every creeping & flying thing, my store box is filling, but very gradually. But I do not doubt but I shall yet, health & opportunity permitting, be enabled to do all I have hoped to do.

[P.4 address panel, starting at the bottom section] I have good news of Mr & Mrs de Luze's health: they are for the moment in the country; less on account of the cholera, for they remained at New York till it began to subside – but because all business is at a standstill. It seems to me that the panic fear that accompanies the progress of the malady has been greater & done more injury in this country than in Europe.

You will not doubt but the intelligence you gave Albert of Neuchatel affairs, & the changes for the better or worse among friends & acquaint^{es} are welcomed with great interest by me also. Some of the marriages make us stare others make us smile.

Albert tells me that his worthy uncle Mons Louis de P. promises to write to him. I am very glad of that, for I believe the advice & opinion of that excellent relative bears more weight with it than might be supposed. Of Alexander trip to Alger we were amused to hear. To the members of that family to whom I have the honour of being known, I beg to offer my respects – to every member of the de Montmollin family, whether married or to be married, with best wishes etc. In your own little circle you will I am sure forget nobody. I often think of Guillaume & Deborah Debitsch – of Mad^{me} de Castellane & good music – to which we have alas bid adieu - of Mons de Pourtales & his many kind words & actions – not to mention yourself, dear Madame & the pleasant hours I have spent in your society at Neuchatel, Berg Greng & Paris – I will not say Havre, for the remembrance of the short stay there is like an uneasy dream. I never remember to have been so truly indisposed as I was there – happily for me the circumstances did not permit me to yield to it & the sea wrought my cure. Albert is sometimes a little bilious, but remedies are never neglected.

Farewell

I am d^r M^{me} yours truly attached friend & servant

13th August

C.J. Latrobe

Madame la Comtesse Frederic de Pourtales
Greng,
Près de Morah
Canton de Fribourg
En Suisse

6

St. Louis Missouri. 15th September. 1832.

P.S. I have on second thoughts resolved to detain the enclosed till such time as our preparations for departure should be accomplished & now after a world of pains & palavre, the moment of our final starting is fixed: our arrangements are made & this afternoon we shall be again en route to the westward. We, i.e. Mr Ellsworth (the Commissioner appointed by government in whose train we follow) Dr Odivires an army surgeon – Mr Irving, & your two travellers, have made the following arrangement. A light two horse car has been

purchased capable of containing the two first mentioned gentlemen & the baggage of the party, with two tents: bear skins & blankets for each in case we bivouac frequently etc etc. Mr Irving joins Albert & myself on horseback, to which end I have just made acquisitions of the necessary quadrupeds & their accoutrements & make no doubt but that when we wish to dispose of the ambling animals, we may do so with but little loss. I have procured Albert a rifle as he had set his heart upon it, & have taken care that he is furnished with such little personal comforts as I thought might be conducive to his health – knowing that his parents, however they desire for his ultimate good, that he should learn to restrict his fancies, are always solicitous to supply every reasonable desire. We have engaged as factotum, driver, & jack of all trades, a sharp witted clever fellow, who is all this, & if I mistake not, a great rogue into the bargain. However he is just the fellow we want, can not only shoot but cook our venison & is an old traveller on the route we are going. That route lies up Missouri as far as Independence, whither Col Choteau our companion precedes us there we join company & proceed to the S. into the Osage Country & to Fort Gibson. But you shall soon hear again. We are all expecting much pleasure & believe that we shall have it ... permitting. Yesterday we went & saw the celebrated Black Hawk & his companions ... But I must conclude – I

am ever, Dear Madame

Your most faithfully

Chas. Jos^h Latrobe

We expect to be in 15 or 20 days at
Cantonment Gibson on the Arkansas.

Madame la Comtesse Fred^c de Pourtales
Neuchâtel
Swisse

Fort Gibson, Arkansas. 11th November 1832

My dear Madame.

Upon the principle that any news, even if comprized in but few lines, is & will be most acceptable & better than no news of your wanderers, I sit down to scrawl a few in great haste by an opportunity which just offers itself of sending to New York. Details I must leave – but you will be gratified in hearing that on the 9th instant Albert, M^r Irving, myself & others returned safe & well to these outskirts of civilisation from a months travel in the vast wilderness to the Westward, during which we had been favoured by pretty fine weather & sound sleep & appetite. I was summoned to the Fort this morning by M^r Irving, from the Creek Agency where Albert & I have taken up our quarters (3 miles distant) & find that a steam boat having touched here & remaining but a few hours, he had resolved to return to the Mississippi & homeward by it. We cannot possibly from circumstances that I cannot detail bear him company at so short a notice but propose following in the course of 10 days & shall God willing be in New York to spend our Christmas – thence you shall hear most fully from us both. I have much very much to say but must close as the steam-boat is on the move. God bless you my dear Madame. Albert would write but is not here. To Mr de Pourtales pray give my duty & regard & believe me ever

Yours most truly & constantly

Charles. Jos^h Latrobe

Madame
la Comtesse Frederic de Pourtales

No.6.

Steamboat Reindeer, Decr 3rd 1832.

On the Arkansas river near the mouth.

My dear Madame. It has been a subject of great vexation & anxiety to me that our position in a remote territory, partly beyond the reach of posts & partly within reach of very laggard & uncertain ones, joined to the entanglement in our plans of return to the Eastward, has produced a gap in our correspondence that may have been productive of apprehension & disquiet in your mind & that of M^r de Pourtales. I have always felt desirous to spare you this in some measure. I trust that a note written in haste upon our return from the expedition to the Westward of Fort Gibson, & sent by way of New Orleans (Nov 10) will have found its way to you ere this & set your mind at ease. A very considerable period has elapsed since that was written – yet had a second letter been written, I doubt whether it would have found its way to Europe before the arrival of the present packet, as with all the delay which has taken place in our departure from the neighbourhood of the Fort it would in all probability not have reached regular & certain posts much before the present date. M^r Irving was bearer of my last to New Orleans. As during our descent of this river in our canoe to Little Rock, Albert sat opposite me preparing what appeared to be a very voluminous epistle to you, I do not doubt but he has given you a detailed account of our proceedings & adventures from the time of our quitting the Creek agency Oct 10 to our return hither; & further to the present time. I will therefore not run the chance of mere recapitulation, but employ my sheet in such general remarks upon the proceedings & events of the past months as may satisfy your minds on many subjects connected with us since my last particular letter to you written in Saratoga in the commencement of August & numbered 5. You will have received divers postscripts & additions to Albert's letters from Cincinnati beginning of September. S^t Louis of the 15 of that month, Independence of the 26th West Creek Agency of the 9-10 October, All of which I trust have reached you in due course & given you the information you desire as to our continuance in health & general well being. Up to the present date we have only received letters from you up to the date of June 30th & are most eagerly looking forward to our arrival in New York for a host of letters from beyond the Atlantic & much wished for intelligence from England & Switzerland. I need not, as I said above, enter at large into details of the long journey which has been effected since I directed N^o 5 to you. You will have followed us to Niagara, & thence on to Lake Erie. There you will recollect that a great modification of our plans took place in consequence of our meeting with Mr. Ellsworth, & that leaving Canada for this year, we travelled with him & M^r Irving to the westward, crossed Ohio to Cincinnati; & then following the Ohio & Mississippi reached S^t. Louis by Steamboat. There we took to our horses, & once more reduced to a trio (Mr Ellsworth taking another route) we travelled 100 miles to Independence: where our hunter's & camping life properly began. Three hundred miles south course brought us in 10 days time through the outskirts of Osage territory to the neighbourhood of Fort Gibson. Thence on the 10th of October we wrote to you notifying our (that is Alberts & my) idea of joining the Osages & going out with them to their hunting ground, in preference to joining an expedition of 100 rangers sent out at the same & partly in the same direction by the Am: government, & to which M^r Irving & M^r Ellsworth attached themselves. Owing to circumstances beyond our control, our projects of going with the Indians had to be relinquished & we attached ourselves to the other party & with them made a tour of about 400 miles into a region but little known & rarely visited. This lasted from Oct. 16 to Nov 8, & during this whole time, living in the woods & prairies we enjoyed the best health & I hope culled much that will be of use to us in the future. Upon our return to the outskirts of civilization of Fort Gibson, we were compelled to miss the occasion for our descent of the Arkansas which M^r. Irving embraced, & have since been further detained by the non-return of the steamboat to the Fort within the time specified. Our little canoe has however served us well & by an amusing & singular voyage of a week we reached Little Rock, where after one days delay the steamboat above named took us up & has since I commenced this page landed us at the mouth of the River. To finish this brief sketch, I will now add – that upon our arrival here we have come to a decision as to the mode of our

return to New York. We had balanced between the Ohio & New Orleans. Circumstances however & the fact of our baggage not having been forwarded to us thus far from St Louis, but only to Memphis in Tennessee, & the existence of the yellow fever in some few instances, in New Orleans, principally decides us to return by the straightest & safest route: namely the Mississippi & Ohio to Pittsburg & Pennsylvania. By this means we shall still if all goes well still eat our Christmas dinner with our worthy friends Mr & M^{ne} de Luze.

This packet of letters we shall at all events send to Europe by New Orleans, as by far the most expeditious mode.

[p2] Since we passed the Mississippi in our progress to the west, the Cholera, which then already threatened St. Louis has visited the whole of the vallies of the Mississippi & Ohio - & while we were breathing the pure air of the prairies has caused considerable loss of life & much alarm in most of the cities & towns within them. Now upon our return we find through God's mercy, that both the panic & apparently the scourge has passed away; & from everything we hear we are led to believe that we run no extraordinary risk in passing swiftly through the country. I consider this among the many signal proofs of the care of Providence by which we have been hitherto favoured. I need not add but you shall have intelligence of our return to New York by the very first vessel that sails from that port after our arrival there: & that during the winter season you shall not have reason to complain of great intervals occurring in our correspondence. But leaving general subjects of interest I turn to that which is paramount with you & talk of Albert. His bodily health has been scarcely broken by a day's indisposition since his attack of the measles at our landing, & he is in all respects looking far stouter & better now after our two months hard lying & rough living, than I ever saw before - to this I make no doubt he has borne his own testimony, as he is vain of his visible increase in bulk & often asks me my opinion of it. He has during this interval however, made strange experiences & I trust learned some few lessons of true manly independence, that is to say, dependence upon ones own head, hands, & resources for ones comfort. Like the rest of us, he has had to pack his saddle bags, saddle his horse - ease him of his burden at night, take care of his own property, choose his own bed place & arrange his own blankets - & though I cannot promise that he will ever step forward to anticipate the obliging efforts anyone, either servants or friend to do these matters for him, yet he knows now how to do them & other like offices for himself & will no longer hesitate when necessity calls upon him for an exercise of this newly acquired power. Our position in the desert was very rough, rude & patriarchal, yet has had many charms & I think that in future he will remember much with gratification, even though at the time there was not an absence of disagreeable alloy. I can never forget, my dear Madam, that I have the privilege of corresponding with Parents to whom I may dare to tell the truth, & obey the impulse which I feel in being quite open & undisguised in my communications with regard to their child. I have acted upon this principle as you know hitherto, & I believe that both my own spirits & your minds are in equal measure tranquilised in moments of anxiety & difficulty by the knowledge that I have both the power & the will to be so. You are well aware of the peculiar character of the tie that binds my companion to me as fellow travellers - a tie that in fact binds him at the same time that it cannot be proclaimed to do & one that he should not have reason given him to break as long as it is possible to keep it unbroken. Still the task of restraining, without the ... & production of some forceable means for restraint is at times a task of the greatest difficulty. On occasions where his fancies & plans were of a character that precluded my giving concurrence either directly or indirectly - when the influence of others upon him acting in a contrary way to that in which I should employ mine, spurred him to contrive folly of one kind or another, I have had to open my eyes to the feebleness of that gentle force which I feel myself at liberty to exert to change, guide or restrain. During the course of the last 3 months I have had to make bitter & abundant experience of this. It has been a season of great mental anxiety to me, & now that I believe it has come to its termination I look back upon it with something like a shudder. However, the trial has for the

present passed away with the circumstances that gave rise to it, & has left Albert & myself good friends & I believe contented fellow travellers for some time to come. In the past events I have learned nothing new with regard to his disposition or character: circumstances alone gave to his unbridled & unreclaimed fancy, his impatience of disappointment either from the agency of persons or the unforeseen operations of time & circumstance & want of steady principled self government, - a force vigor which made them particularly difficult to counteract. He has however I believe on his side reaped some better fruit, & that experience, that may ultimately be of use to him. As to myself, the future presses too much on my thoughts, to allow me to stand in active speculation on the past: & to that I turn my thoughts most frequently. I propose upon our return to New York or shortly after leaving Albert with his New York friends & going to Baltimore to mine, for a month or six weeks. Of the expediency & policy of such an arrangement I remember I spoke to you & M. de Pourtales before we parted in April & that the plan met with your full concurrence. If I am [p3] sharp sighted & uncompromising with reference to Albert's faults & failings - I would wish to be equally clear-sighted with reference to his peculiar trials & privations: & among the rest to those which the difference of our years & character may entail upon him. With all his efforts to be grave or reasonable & all mine to be witty & folâtre, there must be at times, when nothing from without of equal interest attunes & accords our minds & feelings, more or less effort or restraint. Again, there are times when owing to circumstances the subjects of conversation must of course become more or less restricted between two beings moulded, whether by time or nature, so differently. Some are unpalatable to him because I will not enter into them with all the levity of youth; others to me because he cannot treat them with suitable seriousness; others again, because former & repeated disagreement has rendered them sore points. Thus I sometimes pity the poor boy, & reflect that he must have a great longing to have a set to with those of his own age & buoyancy of spirit. And it will be well if he has such this winter. While I am upon this subject I take the liberty of giving you an intimation for yours & M. de Pourtales consideration. The subject would have been better touched upon by Albert himself, but as he begged me to do it under the plea that he was ashamed to be continually asking favours of the kind, I acquit myself of my promise. It has reference to his pecuniary allowance of which he would wish to have some augmentation if his father thinks proper. He finds his temptations for expenditure even while travelling greater than he had imagined; & that with regard to the expenses of cities in America they are much greater than in Europe, so that with his present income he will not be able to keep on a footing with those with whom he associates. He has, this I state in justice to him, up to this time kept faithfully to the limits his father assigned him (much to his astonishment & mine too) but I fear that the allowance which has but just met the expenses of the last months will be quite inadequate to keep him out of debt when surrounded by the daily temptation of cities. Having thus acquitted myself of my promise, I turn again to our future plans of which I give you the following brief outline in advance, as far as they have been digested for the following years - begging you to give me your timely opinion of them & to make any observations you think proper. By means of that change of plan which devoted the major part of both our first & second years to the United States, we obtain several advantages, two principals of which are these - we see what we pretend to see, thoroughly, & in a far more advantageous & detailed manner than the majority of European travellers. We remain comparatively within reach of friends, & intelligence from them; & defer till a later period, the visit to those countries, the influence of whose climate & manners upon a young man are more to be dreaded than these. There is no portion of my project for ... which Albert does not feel a lively interest at present, & I think is likely to continue to ... about the middle of Feb. & I propose that Albert & I meet together in Philadelphia & spend a short time ... returning to N. York previous to our departure for the Southern States. To these we would proceed ... the end of March after he has paid a second visit with me to our Baltimore Friends. We propose going direct to Charleston & Savannah perhaps peeping into Florida &

then following the spring to the north, visit the finest parts of Georgia, the Carolinas & Virginia – returning to New York about the beginning of June. Thence we take our second departure to the East & proceed, (passing by Boston on our way) & through such parts of the Eastern States as we have not seen, to Canada. Employing the rest of June & July in visiting that province & the lakes above we should probably descend through Indiana or Illinois to Kentucky & Tennessee from whence if nothing prevents it we have the project in the commencement of September to repair to our late quitted quarters near Fort Gibson, & to go out with the Osages for a second buffalo hunt, & let me say under far better guidance than our last. No doubt Albert has spoken to you of this part of our next year's project, & I will say more another time. It will employ the months of October & Nov. after which as the season gets healthy we propose moving forwards to New Orleans by way of Red River & passing a winter month there previous to any attempt upon Havana & Mexico. Of those I have also something to say but think you will say I have planned enough for the present. I think so too. Albert tells me has described to you our adventures on the Big Prairie & chiefly his part of them. I will only add that he gave me a fright – but that he got a good lesson which will make him more careful on every like occasion. He behaved very well throughout the adventure, as I believe he will always do when his energies are well directed.

[Page 4 address panel, starting at the bottom section] Since we quitted New York in June last I have found myself so fully occupied with those daily duties which almost constant movement has entailed upon me, that besides notes to yourself & letters to my Parent in England I have sent no letters beyond the sea. In the approaching season of rest & quiet however I look forward with much pleasure to the renewal of correspond^{nc} with my various friends. To M. de Pourtales I owe a letter giving some account of our financial concerns & shortly after my arrival in N. York will attempt to render some acc^t of my stewardship. One or another of my friends at Neuchatel may be asking after me & why I do not write & with these I must impose upon you my dear Madame to undertake my justification - giving you carte blanche for as many promises as you see fit to hazard. Those in the Simmenthal will also often look to the Westward & think of me, they shall not be forgotten the moment that I am sedentary. The seeds that I have gathered in these distant regions I shall probably send to you without delay & I hope that one day I may be favoured to see the flowers of the Prairie flourishing both in your garden at Greng & their little [?parteane] at Erlenbach. Your plans for next year interest us extremely & I hope you will give us timely notice of your departure from Switzerland & the points to which you wish letters may be sent. Those to us may continue to be sent to M. de Luze for the first six months of the year at least. In closing this letter I recollect the old European custom of wishing a 'happy new year' & beg you & every member of your family & connection to receive the expression of my sincere good wishes. May God indeed bless you with health strength & peace of mind. What is Guillaume engaged in – my kind regards to him if you please. You know I have a warm side towards the families de Montmollins ...& Coulon & shall never forget their kindness towards me. My best respects to Madame de Castellane. Farewell My dear Madame & let me beg you & your worthy & excellent husband to receive these feeble proofs of the sincerity with ... Your obliged & faithful Friend & Servant

Cha^s. Jos^h Latrobe

Madame

Madame la Comtesse Frederic de Pourtalès

New York. Dec^r 31st 1832.

My dear Madame. On the 7th of this month I had the pleasure of sending you a thick & closely written packet from Albert & myself, prepared during our descent of the Arkansas etc etc & containing a pretty full account of our proceedings during the months of October & November. It was dispatched by way of New Orleans; & will I trust, long ere this have come

to hand & relieved you of all anxiety. Our journey from the mouth of the Arkansas river to this city has been brought to a conclusion within these few days & as my date shows we are once more before the close of the year in the society of friends & acquaint^{ces}. The providence of God has indeed followed us during our many & varied wanderings, & given us a degree of health & enjoyment far greater than we could well have anticipated. I feel & acknowledge this from my very soul & am well assured that you & M. de Pourtalès do so with equal sincerity, when you recollect your many fears & misgivings about the welfare of your child & reflect how he has been preserved through all up to this moment. Albert was certainly never better in his life & has grown both tall & stout in the interval of his absence from New York. Our voyage per steamboat up the Mississippi & Ohio Rivers was much more favourable than we had any right to expect from the advanced state of the season. We reached Louisville on the 13, Cincinnati on the 16th & Wheeling on the 21st whence we proceeded over the Allegheny by carriages to Baltimore. An overturn which happened a few miles from that city prevented our arrival with our friends there on Christmas Day, though the damage received was only superficial. The following day Albert preceded me to N. York, as his impatience to get letters etc. could brook no delay, & I followed him in a couple of days. Here we find a host of letters from Switzerland & England & have both been highly gratified by the contents which are almost altogether there satisfactory. I believe only one letter has miscarried & that is in all probability at Fort Gibson from whence we will contrive to recal it. My arrival here having been retarded to nearly the close of the month, I am unable to make up & send a small packet that I had intended to prepare for you, but shall not fail to get it in readiness for the next ship sailing for Havre. My principal contribution to it must consist of the seeds which I have gleaned in the prairies of the far West & I am impatient that they should be safe in your hands & committed the earth during the course of the ensuing spring, though you will hardly be able to watch their development, as your proposed excursion to England will probably consume the summer. I have something to say about them, but will keep that for another time. The English packet sails also tomorrow & I have a host of letters to reply to which I know will plead my excuses with you, my dear Madame, for the brevity of this envelope. In about a week or ten days time I shall return to Baltimore leaving Albert in good hands & good society according to the idea I opened to you in my last. To the latter city, he has always a warm welcome when ever he choses to join me which at all events he will do in the course of 5 weeks or so, as there are grand levees at the President's at Washington which I think it may amuse us to attend. I have been today to hire a pianoforte for him, being well assured that this is an indulgence you would wish him to have; & he will begin forthwith to learn Spanish.

M & M^m de Luze with their family are well & rejoiced to get their gay & light hearted guest back again, I make no doubt but Albert will enjoy himself greatly during the season of repose that is now at his command. Allow me to return you my thanks for the kind manner in which you & M^r. de Pourtalès name me in your letters to Albert I assure you again that your kindness & confidence are highly valued by me.

Once more wishing you & all that are dear to you A happy new year

I remain as ever, My dear Madam

Your most truly & affectionately attached

Friend & serv^t

Charles Jos^h Latrobe

May I be permitted to send a special salutation to M^r & M^{rs} Ibbetson your future travelling companions. I know I have sinned in the opinion of the latter beyond recall; nevertheless I wish she were less inexorable; as I feel often tempted to send her four & twenty lines for the sake of the good understanding that once existed between us, before she was pleased to conjure me into a rebel & revolutionist.