My dear Virginia,

I have no time to write to one of you, and as you were the last from whom I received a letter, you must also be the first to get an answer. Washington is very gay and I go so much into society that I have scarcely a moment to devote to writing or reading. I have had several books lent me since my arrival and I have not been able to read more than one or two. I have seen a little volume of poems by Thomas Moore called Irish Melodies, it is a collection of all those songs which he wrote and adapted to the old Irish airs, some of them are very beautiful; so I know you are fond of both music and poetry. I have quitted some of these songs for you. It is very to the old tune of 'The hours I have spent in the arms of my dear' and although not origin ally intended to go together, the music and words agree very well. I paid a visit to the capital a few days ago and had an opportunity of judging of the amazing splendor of this building before it was destroyed by the British. There are many vestiges of its former beauty and grandeur, broken columns, fallen, immense staircases of stone, wild iron railings. So under the building, there are vaults so dark and gloomy that you may almost fancy yourself in the castle of Vladislaus or some other place of the kind. I remained some time in these vaults, and so they were so frightfully damp, I was very near paying dear for my curiosity, for my cold was so much increased that I expected I should be obliged to stay at home the night of the last night ball, but fortunate.
However I got well in time to go to it. I have not time to describe this ball to you, which was very different from any that you have ever been to.

Adieu dear Virginia, write to me soon, and in your letters tell me every thing that takes place in the family, how yourself and sisters come on with your studies, whether the boys improve as rapidly as you wish, I remember particularly that you can never stay too much of Sep. her looks, her actions, her little sayings, every thing relating to her, is matter of the greatest interest to me. in return I will write to you whenever I have time, and tell you of all the strange things I see and hear. give my love to Cornelia and Nancy. I shall write to them the next leisure moment. I love remember me to the Albion family. I believe me to be your most affectionate sister. E. S. P.

Feb. 29th.