

B4575

CLARIS PAPERS

In order to improve access to more of the existing holdings of Western Archives copies of a number of preliminary finding aids are being made available. These preliminary finding aids, some of which were prepared many years ago, vary in degrees of completeness, detail and accuracy. Some provide only basic box listings of the contents of a fonds or a collection, while others provide additional background material. All are intended to be the starting point for access to the records and they should not be considered a definitive source of information on the full nature and contents of the fonds or collection. Questions about the information provided in the preliminary finding aids should be directed to archives.services@uwo.ca

The collection consists of correspondence between members of the Claris family during the years 1846-1857, with some additional undated letters, (probably written in the late 1850s.) The majority of the letters are from George T. Claris to his wife, Maria, written to her during business trips or when taking medical treatments in the United States. Amongst members of the family who corresponded with George and Maria are Maria's parents, Eliza and George Kell and George's aunt, also named Maria.

The letters display a variety of insights into mid 19th century Canada. These include, to name but a few, religious beliefs and political opinions, social events, business transactions, and a recurring preoccupation with health and illness. One letter of note, dated April 18, 1838 refers at some length to the 1837 and 1838 Rebellions of Upper and Lower Canada.

The correspondence is arranged chronologically, consisting of seven files for the years 1838, 1842, 1846, 1849, 1850, 1853, 1857 and one for undated material. A detailed outline of the contents of each letter has been placed at the front of the appropriate file. Copies are also in the case file.

The case file includes photocopied extracts about George Claris, taken from Vignettes of Early St. Thomas, By Warren Miller, 1967, and a copies of a newspaper articles on the St. Thomas Opera House which was founded by George Claris.

Collection organized, January 1991
by Lorna Brooke

CLARIS LETTERS

Date

1838. Feb. 7 Maria to Mr Claris (George)

" Ap. 19 1 letter cont. following corr.:
 Maria to George
 Robert (Maria's brother?) to George
 Eliza Kell (Maria's mother) to George

1842 Ap. 29 1 letter cont. following corr.:
 R. Kell (Maria's father) to George
 Eliza Kell to Maria.

1846 Oct. 20 George Claris, to wife, Maria
 " Oct. 26 George Claris, to wife, Maria
 " Nov. 1 George Claris, to wife, Maria

1849 Feb 20 Aunt Maria (R. Kell's sister) to Maria.
 (crosswritten and difficult to read.)

1850 Ap.? Aunt Maria to Maria
 " May 24 George Claris, to wife, Maria
 " May 30 George Claris, to wife, Maria

1853 July 25 George Claris, to wife, Maria
 " July 29 George Claris, to wife, Maria
 : Aug.1 George Claris, to wife, Maria

1857 Ap. 15 George Claris, to wife, Maria
 Ap. 28 George Claris, to wife, Maria

UNDATED

18-? Aug. Aunt Maria to George

Undated

George Claris to wife Maria

" 1 letter cont. following corr.:
 Eliza Kells, to "girls"
 R. Kell to George

" George Claris to wife Maria

" Eliza Kells to daughter, Maria. Letter incl.
 list of clothing given by various people.

CLARIS CORRESPONDENCE

Date

Details of correspondence

1838. Feb. 7 Westminster, Upper Canada. Maria to Mr Claris, (George).

Supposes Claris wishes for letter to meet him at New York so must make attempt at this. Ignorant of art of letter writing due to lack of practice. He should make allowances. Misses his society and very sorrowful since he left. Labatt (brother?) insisted they go to see the soldiers exercise. Returned to dinner at Mr Mackenzie's. Teased by naughty gents, especially old Mr Eccles, it was his sixtieth birthday. Called on Mrs Smith after dinner who pressed her to stay with her. Promised to go there for a few days soon. Anxious to hear of his safe arrival at New York. Visited the Williamse's. [sic] Intended to have left by moonlight but urged to stay on. A charming family. Believes Robert to be cultivating their acquaintance, Sarah is the favourite. Going to stay with Mrs Mac at St Thomas. Will send for her while she is at Mrs Smiths. Family tells her she has no excuse for refusing. Not much inclined to go as he occupies much of her thoughts. He has left his 2 cloaks behind - discussion of this. Wants to know how he is managing with little bob. Watson has recommenced his woodland life by chopping firewood. Robert left for London to call at the Williams'. Will get Labatt to direct scrawl so that no one at Post Office will know she wrote it. A thousand kisses to little Bob from all of them.

1838. Ap. 18 Westminster, Upper Canada. One letter to Claris, George from the following correspondents:

Maria to George Claris

States her intention to write once a month. Awaits the news of his safe arrival, and meeting with his parents. Longing for his return and expecting letter from him soon. Social life busy - parties and dancing at different houses at St. Thomas. Discusses the Volunteer soldiers and makes fun of their appearance - not very war or soldier like. The wheatfield has been fenced, ploughing will begin for spring wheat. Robert wants to write so she must leave room. Thinks it kind of Mrs Smith to have her. Even though her mother is very kind, she misses him and feels that something or somebody is wanting - she leaves him to guess who! Not sure if it is proper to write this to a Gentleman. Signed Your very much attached Maria.
Kind and respectful remembrances to his parents and sister.

1838 Ap.18
(cont.)

Robert (Maria's brother?), to George Claris

Discussion of farm matters in general - discussion of who was to take Errington's place on George's farm and has arranged for Clement's to do so until George's return. Work done on the farm. Poor condition of cattle on George's farm due to neglect by White when George went away. Warm, dry weather in March caused everybody to burn logs and brush. Fire ran through woods and burned 50 rails of fence. April brought a return to winter - with today being the sort of day when Englishmen cut their throats. Criticism of people who planted too early, especially those born in the country, who have not lived long enough to learn lessons about the climate of Canada.

Mention of Lindsay joining the St Thomas cavalry. Discusses possibility of selling of land by Lindsay and Errington, if they could find purchasers. Believes George would be amused to hear their debate of an evening about love and marriage. Dixie thinks of nothing else since the ball at St Thomas, and is always starting the subject - longing to be in love, possibly with Miss Shore. Writer believes it is better to find someone in Canada to marry as one would know the sort of lady one was getting rather than one from England who would not know what to expect from this country. He can find a nice lass here and not have to go to the expense of a journey home and back, with the short time to choose someone. One should also consider that the old Dowagers at home would know the purpose of the trip over the herring pond, and try to trap one with a regular vixen, when you thought you had caught an angel. It is easier to find out the true character of a someone from Canada in a domestic situation, and so correct those things about her one didn't care for. Dixie certainly does not want to die a bachelor. Growing opinions that there will be war with U.S. Sceptical about this. British must demand indemnity for expenses incurred and which Yankees will not pay.

Reference to 1837 Rebellion:

Annoyed by account that Jonathan ? has sent home, thus gulling Ministers and the public. Fails to see right of Lord Brougham to be critical with regard to the Caroline as knowledge of account was through Frontier papers on the other side. Compares attitude of mother country to Canada with a physician treating patient he has never seen. This might be alright for Lower Province.

DateDetails of correspondence

1838. Ap.18
(cont.)

Present form of government alright for majority, only a fraction are dissatisfied. Skirmish at Point Pelee. Yankees had a raw dressing. Prisoners trials going on in Toronto. Several will be hanged, Sutherland among them who maintained that arsenals were left open on purpose so rebels did not steal arms.

George has two litters of pigs, no calves or lambs yet. A ewe died, but she would not have had a lamb, neither will some of his other ewes. Details of own and Labatt's livestock. Last letter to George as G. will have left England before another would reach him. Will be glad to hear from George and have news of little Bob. Reminder to bring four boxes of Jones Pectoral Pills. Advises bringing out the Blue chaff bearded wheat. Discussion of the condition of wheat and comparison with other farmers'. Wheat on the street, not very well due to frost, in the woods, generally well.

1838 Ap. 18
(cont.)

Eliza Kell (wife of R. Kell) to George Claris

Will write to Mr Kell next week. Impossible this week - so much bustle with visitors. Bewildered by it all. Usually quiet for her. Master Ephraiam having contributed to the noise. Miss Lucy's temper is daily worse and worse, she is really going next week for good. Hopes George does not mind her giving two of his shirts to White as he is very badly off. Discussion of some farm workers. Mrs Palmer has not paid either George or her, she has a very bad character in the village over payment. Errington and Lindsay have not been home since they joined the Cavalry. Will not admit Errington to the house due to conduct to George. (conduct not stated). Discusses health. Missing her husband and little Bob. Wishes to be remembered to George's parents and sends love to her Old Man.

DateDetails of correspondence

1842. Ap. 29 Hackney. One letter to Claris, George from the following correspondents:

Kell, R. to George Claris

Detailed information of business matters re Claris' stock. Details of Claris' account. Discussion of letters sent by certain steamships and the dates they were sent. Hopes George will understand matters and approves of all that has been done. Wishes to leave rest of letter for Maria's mother to fill with the chit-chat of the family.

Kell, Eliza to daughter, Maria

Knows nothing to amuse Maria as she is shut up in her garret. Hopes Kell's letter to George will convince him that there has been no delay or neglect regarding the money matters. Detailed discussion of money matters. Discussion of L.B (Labatt?) going into business at Port Stanley. Questions if this will be in partnership with George. Wonders if George has anything to do with lumber trade. Labatt should remain as he is for present - he has no money until he sells farm. Eliza (Labatt's wife/?) will never be happy living where there is no gospel preacher or schools for her children. None in Port Stanley. Is desirous of prosperity for Labatt and all the family. Discussion of workers and how useful they would be. Wishes to send items to Maria. Stresses that if Maria ever wants fancy articles or anything she can get it at prime cost. Long discussion of her health. Since her last two violent attacks she has taken a new lease on life. Has been seeing Homeopathic doctor who has done wonders for her. Mrs Richards gets weaker and weaker - she should have tried the new system, ages ago instead of a forlorn hope now. She (Eliza) has not been poisoned with medicine. When she does take cold then one or two globules puts me to right. Aunt Maria has books and a Box of Medicine which will last for years. All delighted with the system. Wishes George could practice it. Wishes she could send some books about it. Expects to be hearing of arrival of 6th grandchild very soon. Hopes Maria will have Old Daniels. He is a skilful clever and prompt man. Asks after little Charlotte's health. Will ask doctor about Charlotte's illness. Advises Maria to open all letters carefully in future as she will send some globules. Globules are minute, smooth, white, so easily lost. Fanny Allan up a week ago, looks old and shrivelled.

Tuesday, 3 May

Dinner at Nethercliffs the day before. Sale of property. Maria will hear about it by packet of 19th via Halifax. Has directed that money be sent in same way.

DateDetails of correspondence

1846. Oct.20

New York. Claris, George to wife Maria

Arrival in New York that morning. Went immediately to Bunkers Mansion House and found Robert. Looked round City and found everyone complaining that business dull. Little chance of his doing anything here. In a few days, will decide what course to pursue. Does not think he should waste his little means by staying long. Dull season of the year. Plans may be altered in a short time. Maria will probably see him before the expected time. Did not have time to write from Albany. Robert has written to her and given information required for Labatt. Robert believes Claris should go with him but his mind is same as when he (Claris) left her. Hopes to hear form Maria of all incidents that may take place. Discussion of the children. Hopes that Robert is better and free from hooping [sic] cough. Maria should apply to Wade and not try to depend on own knowledge. Had only ten minutes to see John and family. Wishes to be remembered to the Labatts. Concludes by hoping to give her a better statement in a short time. Wishes to be remembered to family and friends.

1846. Oct.26

New York. Claris, George to wife Maria

Third letter to her since leaving home. Little new to say. Is in good health. Business is dull and everyone is complaining. As it is end of season for Western business immense stocks of flour are arriving daily. Has called on several firms in city. All have been civil and promising to help. Little time to do anything but will be patient and persevering and keep the ball rolling amongst friends till he can find something. Anxious to stop expenses if possible. Annoyed that he must conform to high notions of dress. Robert wants him to dress as well as he can. Annoyed by wearing good clothes to knock about in. Assures Maria he is not wasting his time or enjoying himself. Nothing pleases him in her absence. He is stupidly homesick. Not told anyone of this and is heartily ashamed of it. Wants her to write often. Asks after health of children, Mary Ann and Robert. Misses family a lot. Has paid Robert off and is out of debt. Cannot avail themselves of kindness of Labatt as thinks he will have his money tied up in business after his arrival in England. Grateful for friends who can help out, but believes there should be good reason to call upon them to do so. Robert believes he (Claris) should go home. Thinks idea of doing something on Stock Exchange is impossible.

CLARIS CORRESPONDENCE

6

Date

Details of correspondence

1846. Oct.26 (cont.) Mr Schwamm's letters to Robert makes him think England should be his sphere of operations, as they throw a complete damper on prospects of opening on this side of Atlantic. Does not know whether he shall ever cross to America again. Also Labatt may want to stay in England, and that Maria might be where she would be most happy. Robert's trips to Philadelphia and Boston. Claris' plans to come home have not changed, but cannot tell if they might. Mention of friends he wishes to be remembered to. If Mr Ermatinger asks what he is doing she is to say he is doing nothing, as it is too late in the season, business dull, several failures due to low price of produce. Has caused a panic as people afraid to purchase imported goods until after new Tariff bill is in operation. Goods were sold at immense loss. Country traders unable to meet their engagements due to low price of produce. Flour went up to \$6.25, but fell to \$6. Remembrances to friends. Ardent love to her and his dear chicks. P.S. Expects 1/2 doz letters on the road, and hourly expecting arrival of one.

1846. Oct. ? Lewiston, N.Y. Claris, G. to wife Maria

Travelled day and night except part of Sunday only just arrive. To start again in half an hour by car to the falls and from there to Buffalo. In perfect health altho [sic] sleepy. Urged to keep up spirits and trust in providence for without Him all care and anxiety of no avail. God bless to Maria and dear bairns.

1846. Nov.1 Boston Mass. Claris, George to wife Maria

Just returned from steam vessel that carries out dear Bob and Labatt. They have nice cabin. Thinks they will have short trip as steamer has to leave Liverpool again on 19th Nov. Labatt arrived here yesterday morning, so gave time to chat. Decided best for Claris to stay on this side of Atlantic. Is pleased as does not wish to be further from Maria without good cause. If he had more to occupy his time might not feel separation so much. Received Maria's letter, delivered by Mr Labatt. Seems an age since he has seen her and the chicks and longed to know how they all were. Wishes rail cars could travel 150 miles an hour and leave every 5 minutes. Felt Brown thought him a curious fellow as he would go in several times a day for letters. Received letter from Washington, - (asks her not to be disappointed, it was not an offer of the President's

CLARIS CORRESPONDENCE

7

Date

Details of correspondence

1846. Nov.1.
(cont.)

Chair or even a situation as shoeblack to his Polkship) announcing to Mr Brown that letter waiting there addressed by him to Mr R. Kell and enclosed letter by G.T. Claris containing property of value. Letter had been sent to England and returned to U.S. and opened at dead letter office. Lost L15 is found, but by a remarkable concatenation of circumstances, impossible to receive it in New York Was to be sent to Boston to reach Robert before he left. Up to now have heard nothing of it. No doubt all is right, glad for Roberts sake. Considers he should make another journey as soon as convenient. She probably thinks he has travelled enough for a season. His opinion that he might live cheaper and be a little more happy. She must not imagine he is going to England in a liner and seeking happiness with pretty English girls. She is wrong. Nor is he off to Chicago or Wisconsin. It is to St Thomas. Asks her not to be annoyed or disappointed in that she will have to give him dinner soon after she has read the letter. Will leave other things till he sees her, God grant it may be soon.

Nov.2

Wishes Maria many happy returns of the day. If there had been no second of Nov. his happiness might have been much curtailed, what a cold world this would be without that little word love. With most devoted love.

CLARIS CORRESPONDENCE

8

Date

Details of correspondence

1849. Feb.20 Runston Hall. Aunt Maria to Maria (crosswritten)

Asks of better prospects for George. She and Labatt have had along struggle in managing their families. Both have had financial troubles. California gold rush, effect. Delacount? Blyth to settle at St Francis. Improvements in communication - electric telegraph. The study of unfulfilled prophecy. Predictions of French Revolution 1783, 1848 and fall of papal power. Religious discourse. The new governess, her children's education. Charitable work amongst the poor. An incident involving the illness of a servant.

Feb 22

Acknowledgement of news from Canada. Mention of George Bostwick, presumably of Port Stanley.

CLARIS CORRESPONDENCE

9

Date

Details of correspondence

1850. Ap.? Runston Hall. Aunt Maria to Maria

Condolences to Maria and George on the loss of a child. Much discussion of religion and spiritual beliefs. Wishes to help with expenses incurred and encloses £5.00. Wishes something could be done to place them in a more lucrative situation. Forthcoming wedding of Miss G----? to brother of Sir Willoughby Jones. Not a great match, hopes it will be a happy one. No room (in letter) for particulars.

1850. May 24 Montreal. Claris, George to wife Maria

Safe arrival at one o'clock this morning. In good time to take boat at Hamilton. Pleasant passage, rather slow. Delighted with trip on River particularly jumping down the Long Sault Cascade and Cedars. Too much rain. Feels well. Hopes not to outgrow his clothes if exercise will make a man fat. Visit to Toronto and Kingston for about one hour. Toronto a beautiful town but Kingston looks bad. Rain in Montreal makes city look very miserable. Came across Miss Labatt's Boarding House. Walked in and introduced himself. Surprised to hear Mrs Donahue dead a year, leaving 2 children with Miss Labatt. Had not heard of this from J.K.L. Stayed only a short time. Miss Labatt complained of hard times her boarders having just left her. Will leave all particulars till he sees her. Must not wait for him to send off her letters to England. Not to delay if already off - post as soon as she can and say everything kind for him. Will try and write home too. Say nothing in case he does not have time. He is out for his health. Cannot walk and write. Hand is swelled with walking. Can hardly hold pen. Did not forget to call on Mary Ann and bid her good-bye. Wants Maria to kiss the children. She must consider herself well kissed by him for trouble she has had in reading letter. Allworth is writing to his wife. Claris stopping at Montreal House, cannot get bed until tomorrow or next day.
P.S. I wish you were with me.

DateDetails of correspondence

1850 May 30

On board U.S. Steamer, off La. Co., Lake Champlain.
Clariss, George, to wife Maria.

Left Montreal for New York with some prospect of returning to the lass left behind. Enjoying himself but would have been better if she had been with him. Before leaving Montreal called again on Miss Labatt. Had thought a lot about her being left with Mrs Donoughoe's two children. Sorry to hear the 9 year old had been placed in the Nunnery where such a mockery of Religion is perpetuated. They do not pretend to interfere with religion of children, but how can it be otherwise when attention and love is shown, then children must imbibe principles that are daily portrayed. Description of Fete Obligation day in Montreal. Visited Cathedral as an observer of some of the mummeries of the R.C. Struck him as a most deplorable delusion. 5000 present, but this a preliminary to a great Fete day on Sunday. Did not stay long as anxious to be home, travelling is delightful but not alone. Visit to Bank of Montreal with Mr Allworth to see Mr Simpson. Conversation with Simpson re Clariss' present position. On hearing that Clariss unsettled at present offered to put something his way. Told Simpson he would write to him if he decided he wished to work in Bank. Pleased he came down as obtained useful introductions. Plans to see her in a week. Loves her dearly. In his travels has not seen any he could love so much. Sends kisses to the children. Love to Jenny if she likes.

P.S. I believe I am quite well

DateDetails of correspondence

1853. Jul.25 Cleveland, Ohio. Claris, George to Maria
Had pleasant but tedious trip across Lake due to late arrival. Yesterday excessively warm. Expects to have pleasant trip to Pittsburgh today as the dust well laid. Cleveland is a fine city - two cities in one as Ohio City on other side of the river. Population of the two approx. 40,000 Dust day before intolerable, supposes mud to be worse. Has not been to water cure as some distance away. Will not have time as decided to start from Pittsburg on water cure. Began to have some hopes of water as doing well in crossing Lake. Although very late on deck in Dew, and the heavy rain, yesterday, felt very well. Stopping at New England house kept by Mr Ross. Love to all.
P.S. I leave for Pittsburg this morning.
1853. Jul.29 Phillipsburgh, Beaver Co. Claris, George to Maria
At a resting place for a while on arrival of Mr Smith in Pittsburg. Called on him and his wife. Wife ill with diarrhoea. Rather dangerous so did not visit house, he lives 4 miles out of town. After consulting with him and friends decided to try this place which is owned and supervised by a German physician. Understands him to be clever and conscientious, telling people what the matter is or sending them away if nothing could be done. Phillipsburgh situated on Ohio River, opposite Rochester. Distance between Pittsburg and Rochester being 30 miles. Reached Phillipsburgh by skiff. Ushered at once into Doctor's consulting room. Dinner announced and so had examination afterwards. Expected principally vegetables but meal of potatoes and bread, then bread and potatoes, beans cooked in Senna tea taken out and well oiled. Consultation with Dr Acker. Disease was Rheumoralgia. Might easily be cured with water cure. No medicine, except as a last resort. 20 patients there at present. All very much given to drinking - water that is. Took a brake bath yesterday. Stood upright, not unlike a Roman bath, except water shot downwards from all quarters instead of pouring down. Breakfast consisted of bread, small amount of butter, milk, water and main dish of wet toast. Description of Phillipsburg. On Ohio river - small village, surrounded with hills. Principal inhabitants are German. Talked about Maria? with doctor, who had strong hopes for her. Thought sponging head with cold water and drinking to excess would be good for her. Had patient like her who improved much. Kisses all round and love.
(signed) - yours in liquor.
P.S. Remembrances to Allworth and family.

DateDetails of correspondence

1853. Aug.1 (Phillipsburgh). Claris George, to Maria

Tried Water Cure. Gives very detailed description of the daily routine - treatment, meals taken, exercises by taking walks several times a day. Follows regular course and it agrees with him. Cannot catch cold or get rheumatism. Patients encouraged to let dew soak into them. Saves water and is cooling. Not in much pain. Not supposed to correspond much as it takes up too much time from exercise. Would like to know how she and children are.

P.S. Would like to hear from Allworth if he has time.

DateDetails of correspondence

1857. Ap.15 New York. Claris, George to Maria

Arrived safe and well last night about 10 o'clock after pleasant trip on Erie Rail Road. Beautiful trip from Buffalo to Geneva across Seneca Lake by steam boat, about 40 miles. Took Erie Route to Jersey city thro part of Pennsylvania. Most romantic country - compares it to the Highlands of Scotland, almost one continuous ridge of rocks and mountains.

Doing little today. Calling to see friends. Caught A. Speir Brown before he (Brown) leaves tomorrow by the Baltic. Promised to do all he could with recommending. Left instructions at office to do whatever necessary. Has made arrangements with one house (with Brown's assistance) to have goods on own terms in Grocery line. Believes he will succeed. Pleasant beginning. New York not as noisy as usual. Thousands of strangers. Landlord constantly refusing to take persons in. Will commence business in real earnest tomorrow. Will keep her advised as to whereabouts. Cannot yet tell when he will be home. Should write to him c/o A. Speirs Brown. Asks after children. Sends love and kisses.

1857. Ap.28 Montreal. Claris, George to Maria

Should have written again from New York but could not tell exactly when he was leaving. Is well except for a cold lasting a day or two. Bothered by old complaint, rheumatism and wet weather. Hopes to leave tomorrow. May be detained day or two in Hamilton. Will make way home to love and be loved by dearest wife. Cannot be too thankful for so great a blessing. His kisses and love are as pure as her own. Is so disgusted and horrified of conduct of nine tenths of married men.

Cannot tell much about business in this place. Has seen better. Saw Mr Simpson and he behaved well. Intends to call on Miss L. today. Will leave all to tell until he sees her. Love to Mary Ann, Georgy and Maria. Sends kisses and love to all.

Date

Details of correspondence

UNDATED

18--? Aug.

Runston Hall. Kell, Maria (Aunt Maria) to Claris, George

Does not want package to sail without forwarding a few lines. Not written for so long. Assurances of his attention in his concerns. Assumes him to be eagerly looking into contents of the package. Is sending him some books - small in size but of some value. Description of books and titles follows - appear to be religious works. Urges him to keep "The Morning of the Night Watches on his dressing table and read portion appointed for every morning and evening. Is anxious for Labatt, plunged in worldly anxieties. Urges him to pray. Long discussion of spiritual and religious matters. Would like to hear how he is getting on. Afraid of his being discouraged. Discussion of sin. Continuation of her religious preaching. Expects to hear of safe arrival of packages. Hopes nothing will be injured, and that piano will stand the shaking. It is a Broadwoods, made to stand better than other makers. Sends love to Maria and bairns. May former be brought through her coming trial.

Undated

Hamilton. Claris, George to Maria

Still here. Bought what he could, goods very dear. Intends to go to Toronto tomorrow morning. Will try to be home soon. Very tired of staying so long from home. Has purchased first rate piece of Black Merino which she had better see and secure some. Could not purchase prints shirtings. Must wait awhile. A thousand kisses.

DateDetails of correspondence

Undated

18--? Ap.18

Via Halifax per steamship "Hibernia" from Liverpool.
One letter to my dear girls from Kell, Eliza.
(Letter is concluded by Kell, R. to Claris, George.)

Lengthy discussion of her health, doctor's visits and advice, medicines, treatment and possible cure. Thinks it wrong to spend money on advice as Mr K only in the Bank. Dismissed doctor after having received all advice she could have. Is following doctor's advice and taking his prescriptions. A gentleman has lent her a wheel chair. Delightful rides up and down garden. Delightful to be in the air - blood circulates without exertion. Hopes to go to Chapel in Carriage. Alright in summer, dreads winter. Garden looks beautiful, is in prime order. Louisa and Joe down by Omnibus for tea and supper frequently. Goes nowhere now. Old Mr Burbank, James, Eliza, Leonara dined with them on Good Friday. The admired house and garden. Wished they could get house like hers in neighbourhood. Discussion of items she will be sending to Maria (prob. Aunt Maria) and of Maria's taught [sic] job. Believes Maria to be too old, too religious, too methodistical, and not ton enough for them (i.e. good enough.) She will not stop long. Eliza wishes that in case of her going that Father had a wife instead of a sister to nurse his old age. Tho' does not wish him to have a second family, knows that a wife, if properly chosen is better than a sister, especially one who takes such control as Maria's influence. Would prefer his marrying as can still offer a house and would not lose own mastership. Brother and sister not half as comfortable as husband and wife. Will leave all this in hands of divine Providence. Discussion of spiritual and religious matters and her fatalistic approach to death.

Letter continued by Kell, R to George Claris

Dear mother so tired, desired him to finish it. Glad to hear he is doing well with Sir C. Metcalf - pleased he has been raised to the Peerage. England in an uproar about Maynooth re Annual Grants. Sir R. Peel introduced bill into House to do away with Annual Grants. Discussion of the political and funding aspects of this. Believes this to be damaging to Peel and will be shown at next election. Makes reference to President Polk.

Date

Details of correspondence

18--? Ap.18
(cont.)

Has seen George's father who says he is very unwell. as it is the opening day in ? Had a letter from John yesterday saying he had arrived in Liverpool. Will be in London today. George's father angry with R. Kell having said what he did to George about coming to England, but did not know it was necessary for him (i.e. R. Kell) to correct him on that subject, George must be best judge as to whether it would be prudent to return. It would have been very proper if he thought of going again on the SE. House not decided on 2d Reading of Maynooth Bill. No doubt it will be carried.

Undated

Clariss, George to Maria

All well here. Mary wants to go to a wedding on Tuesday. If possible will let her go. She promised to get her sister or another to come while she was away.

If it can be arranged, should be glad if Maria could home with them on Sunday - or by stage on Monday. If possible would wait for her if she wished. Try to arrange matters with John. Tell him your girl is leaving.

This all depends on how things are working with her. Will leave it to her to decide whether necessary to stay. Knows what her wish is, same as his own. That must be waived for benefit of poor John. Feels for him much. Willing to sacrifice feelings for anything that may assist him in most severe trial.

She had better speak respecting the children. If he has any delicacy in allowing her to take charge of one or more she should press it. If that fails should tell him of the charge his poor wife gave to Clariss. That alone should guide them if Brotherly affection could not direct course they should pursue. Although this may add to her troubles she will derive pleasure and a sweet one in doing her duty. God bless for her worth of love.

DateDetails of correspondence

Undated

Kell, Eliza (mother) to Maria

Letter includes a list of clothing and material sent by various people to Maria.

Tells Maria she can make Mary Ann a pilliesse [sic] (pelisse i.e. child's outdoor garment worn over other clothes or woman's mantle with armholes or sleeves, reaching to ankles.) out of one of cloaks or mantles. Cannot get more money to buy anything, no bill as she used to have at Hackney. Miss Kell had 2 bags from a linen drapery and promoted Eliza's taking up some to help pay for schooling. Housekeeping tho' more comfortable costs more than board and lodging. Has had to buy furniture. Has had physicians and medicine so cash runs short.

Lengthy discussion of fashions worn and type of clothing for children. Clothes should not be too heavy, even in Canada. England by far the worst country because of East winds and dampness. Better for growing child to be dressed simply. Has not been able to send shoes as Papa did not offer money for them. Labatt bought some out of own pocket. Has not had time to write more as ill from excitement of Labatt's going. Obligated to lay down to be fresh for evening. Love and kisses to George and her and bairns. Your affectionate friend and mother.

(P.S.) Thanks George heartily for miniture. [sic] Wonderful for Canada, tho' much inferior to those here. George's likeness very good. Maria must be much altered in bulk, hand is bulk out of all proportion. Portrait does not do justice to Mary Ann as she is really very pretty - she s eems sunk into her dress and scrimped up. She (Eliza) allows for all faults and will prize them as a little bit of own flesh and blood. Believes if George had come when they wrote for him he would have made his fortune by now, however must not murmur it was not to be.