

My Dear Mother,

Ash Hill - Dec. 17<sup>th</sup> 1843.

I acknowledge the receipt of your kind letter of the 9<sup>th</sup> ultimo which came to hand in something like the usual time. I had intended writing to you at an earlier date but my domestic avocations; meetings &c. has prevented it. I will try to be more prompt in future. For indeed from you and Cousin Tom Allen I am mainly indebted for all the information I receive from my numerous Missouri friends. I will not deny that as I advance in age, I have less inclination for writing. My fingers do not possess the same agility of movement they once did, & from the multifarious daily employments I am necessarily engaged in, I even at times find it difficult to direct my mind of business matters so as to concentrate it on matters the least interesting, in friendly correspondence. Well - what will interest you most? as the Yankee says I will guess - the present prospects & future success of old Prince Hal - to whom you are more devoted than many a man is to his wife - and indeed I can not say that your friendship or confidence in him is in the least misplaced - for I am sure

he entertains the same kind of friendship for you, that you entertain for him - he writes to you, but he speaks to me, & I doubt not more explicitly than he ever comes to writing. He is your warm & devoted friend - On Thursday last he left us for New Orleans - not to return until after the Baltimore Convention. He will remain some short time in Orleans - pass on to Mobile thence through Alabama - Georgia - South & North Carolina on to Virginia - & perhaps Maryland - but will be in striking distance of Baltimore, at the time of the Convention, to make a response if necessary.

Sarah & the children have just returned from Edwards - they  
 an continued best weather - scarce two days of fair weather in  
 crop - I mind injured by success in raising  
 you find it by a gain - but I repeat all will be successful