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## Documents Online

**Title:** Letters from Charles Collins to Harriet Collins (Jul. 1851)

**Date:** July 8-9, 1851

**Location:** I-EwigC-1990-1

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My dear  
Portland July 8 /51

Dear Wife

get away. As to his calling me a liar is a pure lie in his party. He says that I was talking of going to any of my friends at the college. He says that he has no part in my letter to my father. He says that he has no part in my letter to my father. He says that he has no part in my letter to my father. He says that he has no part in my letter to my father.

I seize the first opportunity  
morning to let you know of my welfare. My last  
you was written from Phila. I spent four very  
pleasant days there & left last Wednesday in  
the evening train for N.Y. Reached N.Y. about  
10 o'clock at night - took the Steamer C. Van  
derbilt the next evening for Boston, where  
we arrived about 15 minutes too late for the Port-  
land train. The noon train brought me to  
P. about 6 o'clock Friday night. The day spent  
in N.Y. was rainy - I tried to find uncle John  
without success. He has bought a country seat  
somewhere & does not live in Brooklyn. He  
comes however into N.Y. three times a week  
between the hours of 12 & 2 to attend at the of-  
fice of some Society of which he is the Secy. I  
learned that it was his day to be in the city  
& hunted up the office & waited more than  
an hour but he did not come & the clerk  
told me he thought he must be sick - that  
he had not been well of late &c. I hunted up  
the boarding house of cousin Mary Hewell but  
she was out & I failed to see her also. I called  
at the great publishing house of the Harpers & made  
the acquaintance of <sup>the</sup> one whom I took to be "Meyer"  
Harper. He seemed pleased to see me, said he was happy



to make my acquaintance - Thought I was a  
much older man - alluded to my doctorate at  
Sickhouse, said he had sent notice of it out  
to be published in some of the city papers at  
the request of Dr. McClintock &c.

It was quite a rainy day which I spent in N.Y.  
& it rained all night on the Sound & continued about  
9 o'clock the next day. My overcoat which you know  
I hesitated to take (& thought of leaving in Washington)  
has proved a most timely article. I wore it all the  
way from N.Y. & from B. to Portland. I was almost  
frozen even with it on. It was the 4th when I  
in B. & great preparations had been made for  
celebrating but the unfavorable weather spoilt  
the fun. I called at the Herald Office & Meth-  
odist Bookstore hoping to find friends, but  
they were not open. Called on Capt. A. Blanch-  
ard & wife & also on Rev. J. Cummings but he  
was out. Had a very agreeable chat with his  
wife who was one of my old Augusta acquaint-  
ances.

On the way from B. to P. saw four or five  
"Bloomers", <sup>for</sup> the first time. Their dress was a Gipsy  
straw hat - lawn & white frock, coming down  
about half way between the knee & ankle, with  
pantlettes gathered tight around the ankle.  
Over the shoulder, small muslin, in consequence  
of the weather being so cool. I could not therefore  
see how their dresses looked around the waist. From



all that the papers have said I was expecting  
something exceedingly neat & becoming  
but must confess my disappointment  
It may do for little girls, but save me  
from the sight of a grown up woman in this  
attire

Reached P about 6 o'clock of the 4th. It had  
been raining hard all day greatly to the ~~great~~  
~~disappointment~~ <sup>of the</sup> good citizens who had pre-  
pared for a grand display of fireworks on  
the hill. Found the family all in health  
— all very well except mother. She has been  
rather feeble during the Spring & Summer  
but seems now to be improving. Sister Mary  
seems in fine health. She has grown very fat  
& is almost as big as mother. I found Sis-  
ter King in the same thriving condition.  
Mary's little Hounah is a very smart pretty  
child & a great pet in both families. She  
is the only grand child on the Nichols side  
with them. She is no doubt a perfect wonder  
She can walk very well & talk a little.

Saturday in the afternoon it being very  
pleasant Cousin Cyrus Steadman made an  
excursion in his new steamer "St Laurence" down  
among the Islands. Mother, Mr Nichols &  
myself in mortation went & had a delightful  
trip. But for this I should have written to you on  
Saturday. Pleasant as was the excursion my dear,



it would have increased my happiness, & very  
much had you been with me to enjoy it. Without  
you, I should have enjoyed the afternoon  
quite as well in writing to you. Indeed  
I want to see you & the children very  
much. A couple of weeks will suffice for  
my visit here after which "gravitation shift-  
ing will turn the other way". Saturday night  
I got your letter written the 26th June. You  
cannot tell how happy I was to receive it.  
Sorry to know that you have had another spell  
of sick headache. That seems to be a fixed  
penalty with you for going to Abingdon. I hope  
you will enjoy yourself in your trip to Wythe.

Carmack seems to have been playing  
the bagadocio in perfect keeping with his char-  
acter. In the Stage I had some talk with Wis-  
dom about Carmack & expressed the idea that I  
was heartily glad we had got rid of him - that he  
had been a mischief maker during the last  
year & c. It appears that Jopling a miserable  
little puppy who was in the stage & overheard this con-  
versation on seeing C. in Wytheville told him what  
I had said. Towards night (of the days spent there) I  
came along to Boy's Tavern where Carmack, Jopling,  
Lybrook, Wythe, Cleary & one or two other persons were  
sitting by the don & saluted them as usual. I soon saw  
something was wrong & presently Carmack came up  
to me & said he would say a few words before we parted.  
He then said he had been told "my saying that I was  
glad to get rid of him - had tried to get rid of him, that  
he had been a mischief maker" &c. I told him it was  
even so - all true. He replied that he did regard  
me that I was no longer his President & he would  
treat me like any other man - that I could not hurt him  
by anything I could say where I was known. I asked him  
in reply what he meant by assaulting me there in that  
way & if he expected to draw me into a street, altercation  
with him? I told him he was mistaken if he did - that I held  
him beneath my contempt & that I should descend to  
to reply to him. At this he shut up, though evidently in a rage &  
went off like a whipped dog, with his companions. My saying  
behind my back & that he was only "sorry to hear" but "could not help" me by so  
at a safe distance. The miserable baggadocio

Portland July 8 / 51

My beloved wife

I seize the first opportunity this morning to let you know of my welfare. My last to you was written from Phila. I spent four very pleasant days there and left last Wednesday in the evening train for N.Y. Reached N.Y. about 10 o'clock at night - took the steamer C. Vanderbilt the next evening for Boston where we arrived about 15 minutes too late for the Portland train. The noon train brought me to P. about 6 o'clock Friday night. The day spent in N.Y. was racing - I tried to find uncle John without success. He has bought a country seat somewhere and does not live in Brooklyn. He comes however into N.Y. three times a week between the hours of 12 and 2 to attend at the office of some [society?] of which he is the Secretary. I learned that it was his day to be in the city and hunted up the office and waited more than an hour but he did not come and the clerk told me he thought he must be sick - that he had not been well of late etc. I hunted up the boarding house of cousin Mary Hewett but she was out and I failed to see her also. I called at the great publishing house of the Harpers and made the acquaintance of the one whom I took to be "mayor" Harper. He seemed pleased to see me, said he was happy

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to make my acquaintance - thought I was a much older man - alluded to my doctorate at Dickinson, said he had sent notice of it out to be published in some of the city papers at the request of Dr. McClintock.

It was quite a rainy day which I spent in N.Y. and it rained all night on the sound and until about 9 o'clock the next day. My overcoat which you know I hesitated to take (I thought of losing in Washington) has proved a most timely article. I wore it all the way from N.Y. and from Boston to Portland. I was almost frozen even with it on. It was the 4<sup>th</sup> when I was in Boston and great preparations had been made for celebrating but the unfavorable weather spoilt the fun. I called at the Herald Office and Methodist Bookstore hoping to find friends but they were not open. Called on Capt. A. Blanchard and wife and also on Rev. J. Cummings but he was out. Had a very agreeable chat with his wife who was one of my old Augusta acquaintances.

On the way from Boston to Portland saw four of five "Bloomers" for the first time. Their dress was a [Gissey?] straw hat - lawn and white frocks coming down about half way between the knee and ankle, with pantalets gathered tight around the ankle. Over the shoulders, small mantillas in consequence of the weather being so cool. I could not therefore see how their dresses looked around the waist. From

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all that the papers have said that I was expecting something exceedingly neat and becoming but must confess my disappointment. It may do for little girls, but save me from the sight of a grown up woman in this attire.



Reached Portland about 6 o'clock of the 4<sup>th</sup>. It had been raining hard all day greatly to the disappointment of the good citizens who had prepared for a grand display of fireworks on the hill. Found the family all in health – all very well except mother. She has been rather feeble during the Spring and Summer but seem now to be improving. Sister Mary seems in fine health. She has grown very far and is almost as big as Mother. I found sister King in the same thriving condition. Mary's little Hannah is a very sweet pretty child and a great pet in both families. She is the only grandchild in the Nichols side and with them she is no doubt a perfect wonder. She can walk very well and talk a little.

Saturday in the afternoon it being very pleasant cousin Cyrus Sturdivant made an excursion in his new steamer, "St Lawrence" down among the islands. Mother, Mr. Nichols and myself in [illegible] went and had a delightful trip. But for this I should have written to you on Saturday. Pleasant as was the excursion, my dear,

[page break]

it would have increased my happiness very much had you been with me to enjoy it. Without you, I should have enjoyed the afternoon quite as well in writing to you. Indeed I want to see you and the children very much. A couple of weeks will suffice for my visit here after which "gravitation shifting will turn the other way." Saturday night I got your letter written the 26<sup>th</sup> June. You cannot tell how happy I was to receive it. Sorry to know that you have had another spell of sick headache. That seems to be a fixed penalty with you for going to Abingdon. I hope you will enjoy yourself in your trip to Wythe.

[Cormack?] seems to have been playing the braggadocio in perfect keeping with his character. In the stage I had some talk with wisdom about Cormack and expressed the idea that I was heartily glad we had got rid of him - that he had been a mischief maker during the last year etc. and it appears that Jopling a miserable little puppy who was in the stage and overheard this conversation in seeing Cormack. [Wytherrele?] told him what I had said. Towards night (of the day spent there) I came along to Boy's tavern where Cormack, Jopling, Lybrook, Wythe Glears, and one or two other persons were sitting by the door and saluted them as usual. I soon saw something was wrong and presently Cormack came up to me and said he wanted to say a few words before we parted. He then said he had been told of my saying that "I was glad to get rid of him - had tried to get rid of him, that he had had been a mischief maker etc". I told him it was ever so - all true. He replied that he did regard me that I was no longer his president and he would treat me like any other man - that I could not hurt him by anything I could say where I was known. I asked him in reply what he meant by assaulting me there in that way and if he expected to draw me into a [street?] altercation with him? I told him he was mistaken if he did – that I held him beneath my contempt and that I should condescend to reply to him. At this he shut up, though evidently in a rage and went off like a whipped dog with his companions. His saying he "gave me the lie" and that he was very "sorry he had not confided me" is said behind my back and at a safe distance. The miserable braggart

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is too great a coward to play the hero at the proper time. He had to do it after I got away. As to his calling me "a liar" it is a pure lie in his part. He dared not do it if he is talking that way to my injury. I will thank you to read this part of my letter to Paul L. So that he may be in possessing the facts of the case.

I remain your affec husband.

C. Collins




Portland July 9 /57

My dear Wife

The shades of night are gathering around & my thoughts are wandering homeward in quest of those who are dearer to me than life. I think a great deal about you, my love, & nothing would give me so much delight, could I drop in upon you to night, or were you here to enjoy the visit with me. Friends are very cordial in welcoming me home & all is very pleasant, but happiness is but half enjoyed unless you are at my side to enjoy share it with me.

Yesterday evening I went with Mr Nickols & Mary to his Mother's (on State St) to get some strawberries. It is just now the season for them here. Such strawberries I never saw before. Many of them were more than an inch in diameter & so thick on the vines that you could stoop down most anywhere & eat you fill.

Yesterday Morning, I witnessed an important Surgical operation in the office of Dr Lord (who removed the tumor from Mother's side). It was the cutting out of a cancer from a man's under lip. He marked the piece to be cut out, with a pen, thus  & then administered Chloroform by causing him to inhale



it from a cloth. Some as he was in the right state (indicated by snoring) the assistant of Dr L, cut it out with as much coolness as he would cut a piece of beef. The arteries were taken up & the parts brought together & sewed - strips of adhesive plaster placed across the Chin & a bandage placed round & all was finished in about one hour. The Chloroform was kept to his nose until the cutting & sewing were finished. When he came out of his sleep he seemed not to know what had been done, though in the sewing he jerked & winced & asked several times "What are you about"? It was truly wonderful to see the effect of the Chloroform.

Last night I had the pleasure of listening to the celebrated lecturer John B. Gough. He spoke at the Park St Church to a fine audience - it was beautiful - in parts surpassingly eloquent - at times argumentative, humorous, pathetic & declamatory. He is a fascinating speaker & I am not surprised at his success. Mr Nichols has heard him before. He pronounces this, much the best effort of his he has ever heard. He will speak again to night at the Chestnut St Methodist Church & I shall attend of course.

The Maine Conf. is now in session at Win-



throp & I have been strongly solicited to attend by some of the preaching but to do so would take too large a slice out of the short time I have to devote to our friends & family. Bishop Hauline was here last Sabbath but did not preach - too feeble. I called upon him Monday - found him very pleasant & sociable. His disease is some organic affection of the heart.

I found Mrs Caldwell at Dr Clarks & was happy to talk over old times. She did me the honor to say if I went to Dickerson, she would go back there & stay while her son went through College. She expressed great joy at Dr Peck's resigning.

July 10. Your letter mailed July 2<sup>d</sup> reached me last night. You can't tell how happy I was made by its reception & its blessed assurance of your welfare & that of the children. I want to see you very much. Your sweet image is in my thoughts all day; & by night when darkness & silence are all around it comes & nestles by my side - sweet vision, but without the warmth & substance of reality. Visions will not content me long. My purpose is to turn southward in 8 or 9 days more, & to be at home by the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> of Aug. I thought of some of attending Commencement at Middletown but to do it would cause so much delay



that I could not get home till  
very near the Commencement of the  
Septem.

Mother talks some of accom-  
panying me, but it is not very  
probable. She seems very much  
attached to her business which so  
far as I can learn is much im-  
proved this Summer.

It gives me joy to hear that  
the Children have been so good  
Tell Charles & all of them I shall  
remember them & reward them  
for their good behavior when I come

As soon as my darling wife, God  
bles you & make you happy in all spi-  
ritual & temporal blessings. I love you  
not only with the warmth of our first  
love but with a still increasing  
ardor. Remember me in love to father  
the children & servants. Again, God  
bles you Adieu

Your affec husband

C Collins



Portland July 9 /51

My Dear Wife,

The shades of night are gathering around and my thoughts are wandering homeward in quest of those who are dearer to me than life. I think a great deal about you, my love, and nothing would give me so much delight could I drop in upon you tonight, or were you here to enjoy the visit with me. Friends are very cordial in welcoming me home and all is very pleasant, but happiness is but half enjoyed unless you are at my side to share it with me.

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that I could not get home till very near the Commencement of the session.

Mother talks some of accompanying me, but it is not very probable. She seems very much attached to her business which so far as I can learn is much improved this summer.

It gives me joy to hear that the children have been so good, tell Charles and all of them. I shall remember them and reward them for their good behavior when I come.

And now my darling wife, God bless you and make you happy in all spiritual and temporal blessings. I love you not only with the warmth of our first love but with a still increasing ardor. Remember me in love to father, the children and servants. Again God bless you.

Adieu  
your affec husband  
C. Collins