Stamford Dec. 19

My Dear Friend,

I have been waiting to send you the "Statesmen of the 19th Century" for a Christmas souvenir, but my publishers, for reasons of which I am ignorant, have concluded to suspend the publication till January, and that is the reason why I did not reply to your beautiful letter which I have carefully preserved as one of the most valuable of my autographs.

Beside, I have had a long attack of the gout which has kept me in doors for 2 weeks, & one week in bed, thus making me as blue as a disappointed lover, & as (even?) a red Indian--utterly out of the mood to write letters to any one. There is no greater mistake than writing letters when one does not feel like it. Either the letter will be as dull as a political platitude, or one will say something for which he will be sorry, especially if he writes in the evening, when the imagination dominates the reason.

I cant tell you how much we enjoyed your brief visit. It was an angel's visit full of benedictions & beatitudes--to be remembered--another link in that chain of friendship without which our souls would be roving forever without a resting place. I hope it will be renewed this winter, for you are very dear to both Annie & me. Indeed I do not know who to put before you. If I never saw you again I would have a lasting place in my heart, & we trust that your sister Mrs. Eastman, will find it convenient to make our souls glad for a week or two at least. When Annie is better, & our raw servants get a little trained, Annie will write, & if not convenient to come then, Caroline must intimate when she can most easily leave home.

Annie is gaining very slowly but I think surely. She finds her greatest pleasure this winter in her Sabbath school class & in visiting the humble people she has to reach 3 miles from home. I think she is getting tired of the butterflies & their heartless conversation ventionalities & empty gossip. Light only gradually breaks in to the mind of a generous & (unsuspecting?) woman. I dont know a woman with a more level head that Annie's, or with a truer heart, but she is neither impulsive nor demonstrative, even to me.

Par moi, I am pegging away, disgusted with myself for obtruding my literary egotisms, almost a certain sign that I have no real genius even for history. I paint historical characters, but I have not written history. I have just finished 100 pages on Benjamin Franklin--to be laid aside for 2 years, and Annie gives me 4 or 5 years to live.

Sincerely & affectionately, Yours

John Lord

Love to your Sisters in which "annie joins."