Lowell, April 12 - 1846

Dear Mother,

Again would your absent Son address a fond mother, a mother dear as ever although sadly neglected – I think of my dream of home and friends as ever yet it is a task to write after working all day and I keep putting off and days and months slip by – I have been thinking of late how well I should like to be “Down East” a week or two with you especially as Lavinia is about to step into a new relation and some others follow her example – But I think I cannot go home until fall – About late October I think I shall visit Winthrop [Josephs] earlier – I have worried some this winter for fear you would work too hard with your new boarder – How have you got along? What do you have a week? Has Mary gone to Orino? How long does she expect to stay? How do the children get along with their studies? How does Charles get along with his work? Is it correct that he has a woman? If so who is she? Is she pretty, sensible, and smart a perfect model as Charles said he should have in any? I am glad if He has one in his eye – He will need one soon! Would you advise me to have any thing to do with the Girls? “Yes James if you can find a good likely one” Mother
Well Mother I [kinder] think I can but I “should tell
nobody” and I don’t want you to – Mother I don’t mean anything.
I have thought some of going to New Jersey –
but have given it up – so don’t worry –
If you come up this summer I should like to have
you come in August or Sept – it will be pleasanter –
though I would have you [ ] your convenience –
Cannot you bring Emmons & Martha with you –
I wish you would – I want to see them and the
friends also – What do you think about Sarah –
She does not seem to be contented, she wants to
come to Lowell and I am not sure but it
would be best for her – please give your opinion
in your next letter – Please write soon and tell
how grandfather and mother, uncle folks, and all
hands get along. Mr [Hang] & Lavinia I suppose
are soon to be bound in Hymns hands – success to them.
I hope they will extract the sweets of Matrimony with the
skill of master workmen – It is a trade no doubt –
Adams and wife live happy as you please – he has left
the shop and gone into the office again –
My work is now sitting all the time. The work is
straiting the work that Adams did – the best part of the
trade. I am pretty well most of the time –
Last month was out sick – weather is warm
and pleasant – first rate going. Friends all[smart]
Love to all – excuse this and I will do better
when I feel right. Your unworthy son.

James A. Metcalf
Dear Brother Charles,

How does the world use you – no doubt pretty well – 
I hope so at least – and I dare say you try to use it as not abusing it – What is the news with you – How is politics & sleighing – Morals & Family – Matrimony and “the critters” With us these things keep still – The greatest affair of the season is the “Exposure of Odd Fellowships.” Some fellows are about (and pretty smart fellows too with all the fixtures as they say to an Odd Fellows Lodge and they give [executions] – They gave it at the City Hall – I went one eve – I have no doubt but it is correct – That is the general impression Odd Fellows look savage enough – He gave the signs, grips, &c. The way that they did they organized as any lodge would and did business – initiated members &c – This was a great performance – the culprit knocks once at the outer door & three times at the inner. He is conducted in by an officer of the lodge blindfolded and chained – They lead him round amid groans &c equal to those of the lower regions, after a while he is led up to a skeleton in either side of which is a ghost and the bandage is pulled off from his eyes every one in the lodge is masked and the most horrible looking things I ever saw – it is enough to frighten the most resolute – how must a fellow feel think you not knowing what was coming
Some time when I can see you I will give you
the grip – It is this place the thumb of the right hand
upon the joint of the longest finger of the right hand of
the one you shake – and the fore and angst finger in the
hollow of the hand – then grip. I cannot tell the others
without seeing you – do write soon – Love to all
friend [ ] in particular your loving Brother

James