Rokeville Va. April 26, 64

My Dear Daughter:

I am going to write you another letter to-day; it will perhaps be a long time before I can write you again, and it may be that this will be the last you shall ever receive from me. This might indeed be said of every letter one writes, but we do not often write with so strong a probability of soon being in very dangerous places. I hope therefore you will think the move of the letter, and any advice it may contain, if I should live to see you grown up, I should be very glad to believe you to be one of the best girls I ever saw; but if I should not, I hope you will always have some one who will feel toward you as I do, and that you never cease trying to become what I wish you to be.

Few persons have so good a mother as you have, and if you should live to be a hundred years old, it would never cease to be a great comfort to you to remember that you always loved her dearly, and showed your love by always trying to please her, never wilfully offending or disobeying her.
If you ever really try to please her, you will never be too solicitous, but you will always try to do what she wants, and not what she wishes you to do. I think I suggested in one of my letters that you should seek your own pleasure on the point of doing anything about which you feel doubtful, whether mother would like you to do it. If you think she would not, then you may be very certain that it will be best for you not to do it.

She is thinking all the time how she can best promote your real happiness, and when she attempts to advise you, you must accustom yourself to acknowledge within your own mind that she is right and submit yourself without questioning to her greater wisdom and fuller experience. When once you acquire the habit of doing this, you will get along very smoothly and happily with her, and home will become as pleasant as it can be, and you will not care to leave it and will always be very glad to go back to it.

If one thing you are quite certain, that is, that quarrelling with your little brothers is very much disliked by mother, and at the same time unpleasant to yourself and every one else near you. One thing which you have to learn there is to play with them without quarrelling. They are younger than you and they sometimes will be rude and unreasonable, but you do not need to settle by getting angry and fighting with them. If you never begin yourself to get out of temper, or at least to show it, you will find that it will not be so difficult to get along with them, for I do not think either has a bad disposition, and I think you are passionate and head strong and often do what they choose.

It is the pleasantest thing in the world to have a little family of children living together, without quarrelling or fighting. It is not to commence as it should be, but it would make me very happy to know that I had one of that kind. Now, you are the oldest, and I shall expect you to take the lead in making it rich. Your example will have a great influence on Frank and Bobby and Mary, and I want that example to be an excellent one. Will you try to please your mother and me, by letting them know your example?

The tongue is called the sinews of speech and too often is rightly so called. It is so easy to say ugly and bitter things which wound the feelings and to try, first, to find other words to heal the wounds they have made. Try to remember this, and check yourself when about to say anything for the purpose of making another
feel badly. Home above all is the place where such things should never be said, and if you are careful not to say them there, you will soon lose the inclination to say them anywhere. Some persons are foolish enough to think it best to make ugly speeches, but generally fail to be the sufferers when the words are spoken of themselves. When you feel tempted to make them, remember that your further will not be pleased if you do, that you would feel hurt if others should make them to you, and try to subdue the spirit that prompts them. You will think much better of yourself when you have thoroughly subdued it, and will be saved many painful reflections and unavailing regrets.

My letter is growing too long, but I hope my dear The time may not soon come when you will wish it were still longer, and that you will never have cause to regret yourself for disregarding the kind advice I have given you in these letters. They were written in the hope that they might help my dear little girl in her effort to become a good and noble woman, and I trust that they will not altogether disappoint my hopes.

Now, the last change I give you is, always trust your mother; have no secrets from her, as long as you live; never promise not to tell her anything; never do anything which you are ashamed to tell her fully and frankly, and you will keep yourself out of much trouble and never do anything very wrong.

God be with my dear daughter.

Your loving father

T. J. B. 73 years

Since I finished my letter I have gone into woods and gathered the wild flowers, which I enclose.