

Edward's idea that it is his "turn," every night, to sleep with his mother, amused me not a little — and then it is clever in you, to reward your children for their good behavior, by allowing them to sleep with you in their Father's prolonged absence. But when will he return? you, & other dear ones, would like to know. I can't tell you — but hope it will not be very long, and that when he does come, it will be in high spirits and with comfortable prospects for the future. I feel considerably encouraged, within the last few days.

I am glad to hear of the excellent choice of Deacons — the very three I would have selected, and of course I approve of their election. I like the idea, too, of a new bell, & of the Church debt being paid — but "oh my!" how that debt seems to grow apace! It was supposed to be provided for, three years ago, nearly — & yet has required this effort, and is still a little short!

I sympathize with you in the ugly little sprain that kept you "to hum" on Sunday — & hope you have already recovered from it & quite forgotten it.

I sympathize, also, with our little city in

the ugly state of things that the Railroad suit has caused. I suppose a still further depression of property must be the result.

James Pierce's failure does not surprise me — except in its manner, & the length to which his creditors are pushing him. I told Mr. Brodick, about six months ago, that he would not make his first payment on the dwelling-house at maturity, if at all. His creditors, I presume, will try and make it sell for something more than enough to pay the debt to your mother — & it is very doubtful what sort of a neighbor Hanny is to have as his successor.

I wish Hanny and Phoebe excellent success and much pleasure, in their trip to Oxford.

Tell Maria & Mary Ellen to write soon, with a few lines from Lewis and Edward. Can't you hold the little fellows "hands," to write a few words. It would seem so cunning — & be very interesting to me.

Good bye. God bless & keep you all, & guide your absent husband safe home to you. Love to all, & kisses to the children.
(over)

Very affectionately,
Richd. H. Collins.