both probably for ever, and my health is already greatly improved in consequence. I found that my constitution strong as it was would not bear stimulants in this hot climate, and I should think it would be the same with you. I left California in the Steamer of Dec 10th and came down with Capt Watkins in the Panama. We had but few passengers, and came down in fourteen days; crossed the Isthmus in twenty hours, and came home in the Georgia, being thirty days on the passage and stopping seven. I found the weather bitterly cold in New York, the streets full of sleigh, and the East river frozen over so that people crossed for two days. I had to go [illegible] New York twenty days in [illegible] I came down the Mississippi, and arrived in New Orleans the last of February, and found that Mrs Smith had left to join the General just a week before I arrived. I did not have a very pleasant time in New York except in the family circle, I knew but few persons in Society and went out but little. All New York had got a vast three years ahead of me in everything, from dancing down to scandal, and so I was voted slow, and was in fact rather disgusted to find that from my long absence I had become forgotten in my own set. I went to a very beautiful masked ball at Commodore Stevens, at which some 500 people were present, and was a good deal interested and amused. I found the Stevens girls pretty well budded out, the eldest of course in very full bloom indeed, Miss Nancy was quite the pretty, although getting quite spoiled. As great many young spoons did me the honor to ask if I was Frank Gibbs brother, and finding out that I was, smiled severely upon me, and then we smiled together in the punch room. The fashion for girls was what might be called semi-nude, and for the other sex, clothes of the extremest tightness and most enormous collars, this with wide sleeves gave most of them the appearance of having been driven red hot into their younger brothers pants, and then vainly endeavoring to hide their faces in their fathers coats. Charlotte Levy was married while I was there, and several other antique specimens of New York Society when I was a boy, but I attended none of these last.

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