Astoria, Oregon, Jan 20. 1853

My Dear Mother

As we are expecting the Fremont down tomorrow I shall scrawl you a line although I have written till my fingers are tired, getting up my monthly despatches for our Step Uncle, but you must have your letter even if I have nothing to tell you of, for as there are the means of sending from here, you might well consider me undutiful if I did not use them. I am gradually getting settled in my little office, which I have had lined with white domestic and have been painting & fixing up so as at last to have a comfortable place to live & work in. In a few days I shall be regularly at work & will then commence writing up my notes. We have had a series of awful storms, very high tides & a freshet in the Willamette combined, which have done great mischief. Several houses in Oregon City have been washed away & stock & goods destroyed, & here at the mouth of the river two vessels have been lost though without loss of life fortunately. The weather has now cleared up and it is as pleasant as spring. I had no letters from you by the Fremont, nor in fact any, except one from a friend in Tennessee, but presume the budget will come by the Columbia. You must not suppose that the Moores have been negligent about my letters, they have on the contrary shown the kindest attention, but my letters to Mr Moore all failed & he did not know what had become of me