

Phil & Jane 8th 1864
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A happy New Year to you my dear Ann, and to my beloved brother - and the dear little girls - and to all we love. My head is full of good wishes for you - and of hopes that the cause of your silence is rather the festivities of the season, than any less appreciable interference. I am right happy to tell you we are all comfortable in our domestic circle, and right grateful to Almighty goodness for granting so many blessings on the evening of one days. Every new era of time calls on us to reflect on the past, and make due acknowledgments for the mercies granted. I had a very appreciable letter a few weeks ago from Howard, telling me of his family, and our St Louis relations. The tone of his letter pleased me exceedingly. It was manly, affectionate, and self-reliant. I trust he & his wife may see their family and enjoy much parental happiness. I have written to Larry for since his departure from home, I feel so far separated from him, that I can only depend on himself to keep alive the interest I feel in him - and the desire I have not to be forgotten by any of my dear brothers children -

the Myneer we are grieved & shocked
at the sale of an old favorite of his, Bahra
Merchant - who, with all her family are
passengers in the ill fated Steamer ~~the~~
Francisco - on her passage to California -
as it is feared she has perished in the
late storm at sea - the Steamer was then
in such peril - that scarcely a hope remains
of her escape - and 800 troops & passengers
the Officers wives & families who accom-
panied them it is feared are lost -

our newspapers are filled with disasters
by fire & flood. which emphatically show us
the tenor of all earthly possessions. and make
us rejoice in trembling while we thank God
for our preservation from suffering -

Sister Mary spent yesterday with us, & in
while she bade me give her best love to you
and our Brother, she finds Laura Mordue, a
very agreeable & interesting inmate - she gives
her some one to hourly think of & care for,
so that the activity of mind so prominent in
her character, has a new field of action -
Laura's piano affords her amusement too
she is a nice girl - whom we all love very much.

I want you my dear Ann, to talk to me
about your children too when you write. I
wrote Minnie & Lacy to make me acquainted
with their little folks - amiable of the ways

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Wm. B. Gray

Lexington
Ky.

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