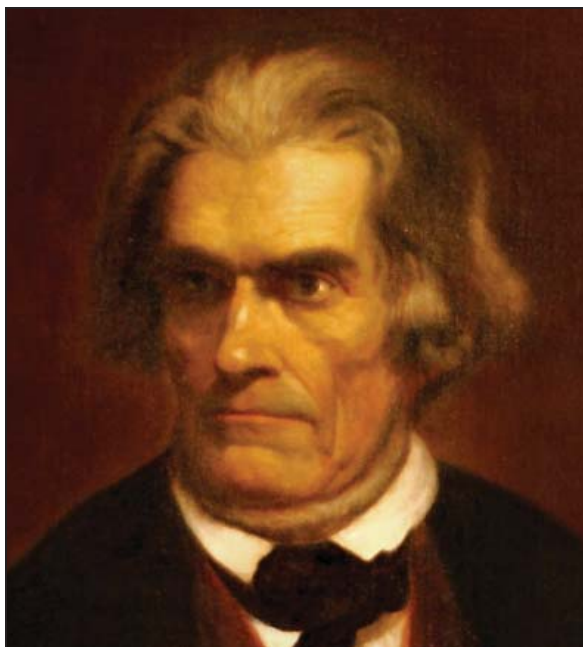


Chapter One



“HER FATHER’S DAUGHTER”



A life of duty, not decoration, was reality for the Southern lady as a type. The Southern lady, as with all women, both black and white, was supposed to be subordinate to men. Anna Calhoun Clemson first experienced male domination at home from the father whose talents she favored and under whose guidance she flourished. Raised by John C. Calhoun to be a dutiful daughter, she did not question the wisdom of the man to whom she was devoted, and she enthusiastically endorsed his views and values. Educated in the same way other elite young women were in the South—to be accomplished in aesthetic sensibilities as well as knowledgeable in academic studies—she was further fortunate to be at her father’s side in the political arena in Washington. Marriage to Thomas Clemson did not alter Anna’s affection for the man she so admired although her obligatory allegiance to her husband was nonetheless that of an obedient wife. Motherhood provided her with an opportunity to impart her father’s ideals to her children in the hope that they too would be influenced by his counsel. A view of the life of Anna Calhoun Clemson must first capture a reflection of her relationship with her father, the family’s patriarch and man she adored.

“... How keenly I feel for my dear Anna.... She adored her father, and he loved her dearly.”

Floride Calhoun wrote the above words about her daughter to Richard Crallé, one-time newspaper editor and close Calhoun friend and associate, not long after her husband's death on March 31, 1850. Anna who unabashedly thought of herself as her father's "favourite child," was in Brussels with her husband and children when John C. Calhoun died and deeply felt the distance from her family in distress at home in America. In a letter to her brother James, she wrote of her grief at being so far away from those who shared the loss of such a sympathetic parent whose high morals and dignity were plainly known to his children. Sustained in her sorrow by the power of her father's memory, Anna saw his whole life as an example of the sentiment she had often heard him express: "The duties of life are greater than life itself." This moral adage was not only a source of strength for her at such a difficult time but a mode of conduct she thought worthy for all and one that she had already introduced to her young children, Calhoun and Floride.¹

Anna's devotion to her father and his affection for her made for one of the strongest bonds in the lives of both. Born on February 13, 1817, at Calhoun's Bath Plantation, located near Willington, along the Savannah River in the Abbeville District (now McCormick County), little Anna Maria would grow up to be the joy of her father's life. The story of their special relationship begins on December 30, 1831, with the first of a long series of compassionate letters from Calhoun to his beloved Anna, by then a young adolescent girl. According to Clyde N. Wilson, Editor, *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*, she was "the person who was to become perhaps closer to him in mind and temperament than anyone on earth." Despite the political controversy that prevailed over the tariff question, a subject of serious concern for Calhoun as vice-president in the first-term administration of President Andrew Jackson, he was his daughter's regular correspondent from Washington, D.C., during her stay at the South Carolina Female Collegiate Institute. Also known as "Barhamville," this combined secondary school and junior college just outside of Columbia² had been in existence for five years when fourteen-year-old Anna Maria Calhoun enrolled at the end of 1831. Considered by her father to be the institution providing the best education for women in South Carolina,³ the school, with a tuition of about \$200 a year, had a student body of more than 150 girls from several southern states. However, for the most part, the majority of the Barhamville girls were daughters of central South Carolina planters.

Established in 1826 by Charleston native Dr. Elias Marks, the Institute was in the forefront of the movement to provide higher education for women. After Dr. Marks's graduation from the New York Medical College he had returned South to pursue an early interest in academics. "Educate a woman and you educate a family" was his belief upheld also by both his first wife, Jane Barham, for whom the school's location was named, and his second wife, Julia Pierpont Warne.⁴ Julia, a former pupil of educator Emma Willard, studied first at a female academy in Middlebury, Vermont, and later at the Troy Female Seminary in New York, and then she accepted a position in 1831 as lady principal at Barhamville. She helped Dr. Marks, whom she married in 1833, establish the South Carolina Female Collegiate Institute as a southern version of the Troy school. The Troy curriculum, the first of its kind for women, resembled that of contemporary men's colleges in that it

covered “mathematics, science, modern languages, Latin, history, philosophy, geography, and literature” but only as deemed appropriate for women in the domestic sphere. Southern girls like Anna Calhoun were not expected to compete with males but, rather, to raise their children in an enlightened environment. At Barhamville, young women could fulfill their limited potential with the study of subjects that they could later impart to their offspring. Thus, in the instruction bestowed upon Anna Maria Calhoun and her classmates there was in reality a modicum of the national reform movement for female education.⁵

Dr. Marks spared no expense in the salaries of his faculty, many of whom, in the fine arts and language fields, were Europeans. Southern elites such as the Calhouns, who could afford to educate their girls but did not expect them to work in a professional sphere, wanted accomplished daughters. Subjects that ambitious middle-class northerners, many of whose own daughters trained to be teachers, considered optional and “ornamental branches” were, to those southerners who could pay for their girls’ education, well worth the additional tuition cost. Selective courses such as music, drawing, painting, crafts and social duties were valued as essential subject matter for young women in the South. Southern antebellum girls’ schools such as the one attended by Anna Maria Calhoun may even be credited for promoting the presence of fine arts in today’s college curricula.⁶

The lonely, sandy road that stretches two miles from Columbia to Barhamville brought Anna Calhoun to the wooded, rural setting advertised by Dr. Marks in the *State Gazette* as “sufficiently removed from those everyday excitements and interruptions” that could hinder the regularity of an academic routine. Only two times a year—for graduation ceremonies at South Carolina College and Washington’s birthday on February 22—did the girls leave the school’s seclusion and, chaperoned by the staff, travel by carriage to Columbia. Once inside Barhamville’s gates and within the carpeted hallway of the three-storied central building, where a black butler was customarily in attendance at the front door, the young Miss Calhoun found herself confined to a systematic regimen regulated by intensive study. Arising early, Anna and her fellow students went to prayers before breakfast and then spent the whole day, until evening, studying. Diligent teachers, who disparaged memorization, demanded that the young women think through their lessons for understanding. No annual public examination of pupils was held at Barhamville, where the doors were opened five days a week, from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m., for visitation from patrons and others supportive of the Institute’s program of “Female Education.”⁷

In Calhoun’s first letter to his daughter away at school, he expressed an interest not only in her courses and teachers but also in the other young ladies there and her own particular companions. Not surprised that Anna, in the midst of strangers, was at first lonesome away from the family’s upcountry Fort Hill plantation home, he commended her for not giving way to tears but, instead, for becoming acquainted with those around her. Confident that his daughter’s good sense would guard her against a close association with everyone, he advised her to be familiar with only a select and worthy few. Wary of the possibility of much socializing among the many family friends in Columbia, he had already admonished her about visiting too many households and going to large parties until she was at least two or three years older.⁸

Pleased to receive remarkably well-written letters from his dear Maria, Calhoun, who considered these missives as high accomplishments, was gratified to learn that she stood at the head of her class. Attributing Anna Maria’s achievement to both effort and ability,

he acknowledged her great dislike for getting up early and praised her perfect attendance at morning prayers. Although undoubtedly proud of his daughter's spirited pursuit of her academic studies, Calhoun commented on the importance of dancing, music, and other aesthetics in her education. Good posture in connection with health he considered to be especially important among the social graces as he advised her to be careful of her sitting position while studying. Supportive of her interest in music, he encouraged her to give her best voice to singing in one of Barhamville's most creative departments.⁹

Proud of the academic achievements of his gifted daughter and clearly pleased by her stated concern about political events from which she felt far removed at school, her father professed himself to be not one of those who thought women should stay completely out of politics. Although typically portraying activism as unbecoming for those thought to be inferior to men, Calhoun was an advocate of enlightenment for females in the arena of public affairs. That Calhoun espoused this belief for his own beloved daughter by no means indicates that he endorsed such enlightenment in white women of lower class or in women of color. All women of Anna's day were subordinate to men, but the degree of domination depended on color and status. "Gender, race, and class," according to historian Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, determined the place of southern women in society.¹⁰

Like Calhoun, fellow South Carolinian Henry Laurens felt that publicly expressed political opinions would not be appropriate for a young woman such as, in his case, his daughter Martha. Both men, though believing in the submission of their daughters, desired them to be confidantes capable of understanding the public world in which their fathers frequently took center stage.¹¹

Anna's school days at Barhamville ended after one year, a period that she would later look back on nostalgically as those "*happy times*" when the days were too short for the freshness of life's early enjoyment. Wary of looking too longingly back at past happiness rather than forward to future joys, she would indeed wonder by the time of her twentieth birthday if she would ever be as happy again as when the awareness of just being alive had consumed her days from dawn to dusk.

At the same time that Anna prepared to return home from school at the end of 1832, her father accepted his election to the U.S. Senate by the South Carolina legislature. Calhoun resigned office as Vice-President primarily because of his political support for the nullification of federal tax laws deemed discriminatory and unconstitutional by southerners. Not only did a new political era thus emerge for Calhoun, but a wider world eventually opened for Anna herself, as she joined him with enthusiastic expectations in Washington, beginning as his confidante and copyist in the winter of 1834. A "beautiful" and "accomplished" girl, in the words of Calhoun biographer Charles M. Wiltse, she had "a deep and thoroughly partisan interest in politics" nurtured by her father and in which he took great pride. According to recollections recorded in her album, she held little fancy for the youthful activities of other girls her age and preferred instead the presence of politicians to the promise of "balls, parties, beaux and compliments."

Unlike Anna, Elizabeth Blair, daughter of Frances Preston Blair, editor of the Washington newspaper the *Globe*, truly enjoyed the social whirl of the nation's capital and relished her role there as a society belle. Like Anna, she was her father's copyist, and she transcribed documents, correspondence and editorials for him.¹²

Then a young lady of seventeen, Anna was scheduled to go with her parents to Wash-

ington in a traveling party that included her cousin Francis Pickens, newly elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1834, and Maria Simkins, his sister-in-law and Anna's own childhood friend from early school days in Edgefield. "We girls," she wrote in her album, "were the pets of the establishment" at Dowson's boarding house on Capitol Hill. Despite what she described as the "*dirt & discomfort*" that the name recalled, the memory of the pleasant company in the "merry mess" at the boarding house remained for her, as well. Her father's fellow senator Colonel William Campbell Preston and his wife, Louisa, were most enjoyable companions, along with Major Felder, an unusual fellow from South Carolina, and Felder's niece, an outstanding girl.

Judge Mangum, a senator from North Carolina, and nice old Benjamin Watkins Leigh, a senator from Virginia, as well as Mr. Archer of the House, were part of a very diverse group in which everyone was very amicable. Although Anna thought of Mr. Archer as somewhat of a sour old bachelor, Major Felder, also an old bachelor with "a sort of Irish potato countenance," was the very picture of merriment, especially when he had indulged in his "favourite *apple Toddy*." Dancing in the drawing room in the evenings to the violin playing of Judge Mangum or Senator Linn from Missouri, who lived next door to Dowson's, was later almost like a diverting dream for her to remember.

The diversion of Anna's dancing at Dowson's in the midst of what she called "*dirt & discomfort*" is further elucidated by the English novelist, Charles Dickens, who penned the following description during his stay at the City Hotel in Washington in 1842:

The hotel in which we live is a long row of small houses fronting on the street, and opening at the back upon a common yard, in which hangs a great triangle. Whenever a servant is wanted, somebody beats on this triangle from one stroke up to seven, according to the number of the house in which his presence is required; and as all the servants are always being wanted, and none of them ever come, this enlivening engine is in full performance the whole day through. Clothes are drying in this same yard; female slaves, with cotton handkerchiefs twisted around their heads, are running to and fro on the hotel business; black waiters cross and recross with dishes in their hands; two great dogs are playing on a mound of loose bricks in the center of the little square, a pig is turning up his stomach to the sun and grunting "That's comfortable!" and neither the men, nor the women, nor the dogs, nor the pig, nor any created creature takes the smallest notice of the triangle, which is tingling madly all the time.¹³

While spending March to December back in South Carolina, Anna played hostess there to her friend Margaret Green. Margaret had accompanied her home from Washington in the spring and later returned with the Calhouns to the nation's capital at the end of 1835. The daughter of Duff Green, editor of the Washington newspaper the *Telegraph*, and niece of politico Ninian Edwards, the nineteen-year-old Margaret had begun a serious courtship with Anna's older brother Andrew during her stay at the Calhouns' Fort Hill plantation. Following a steamboat voyage that started in Charleston on December 10, the Calhoun party arrived in Norfolk after a rough four days at sea. They continued up the Chesapeake to Baltimore, where they took the train into Washington, arriving back in the capital city the week before Christmas. Due to the frail health of Anna's grandmother,

Floride Bonneau Calhoun, her mother had remained behind in South Carolina.¹⁴

In a letter to her dearest friend, Maria Simkins, who was back home in Edgefield, Anna described the group of congressmen and their wives with whom she and her father lived and took regular meals together at Mrs. Lindenberger's boarding house on Capitol Hill. Along with her cousin Francis Pickens and his wife, Eliza, and Maria's older sister from Edgewood plantation in Edgefield, Anna found herself to be the "*only young person*" in the company of Senator and Mrs. William Preston of Columbia, Colonel James Hammond and his wife, Catherine of Redcliffe plantation in the Barnwell District, and General Waddy Thompson of Greenville.¹⁵ All of these congressmen that Anna mentioned would continue to serve South Carolina and the nation in various capacities during the coming years. Francis Pickens accepted a post as U. S. Minister to Russia in 1858 and was elected governor of South Carolina in 1860. James Henry Hammond also held office as governor, though earlier, from 1842 to 1844, and was elected to the U. S. Senate in 1857. William Preston became the president of South Carolina College in 1845, and General Waddy Thompson, Jr., was appointed U.S. Minister to Mexico in 1842.

The years of Anna's association with her father during Congressional sessions in Washington increased her admiration for him, and she became his greatest personal champion. As the copyist of some of his voluminous correspondence, as well as other writings, she believed herself to be taken more fully into his confidence than anyone else and told him her views on any subject about which he inquired. Entries in her journal extolled his virtues as a true patriot and affirmed for posterity the purity of his noble heart and dignity of his every thought and action. In a statement of heartfelt sentiment, she wrote:

It is an old saying that no one is a hero to his valet de chambre but he can be no common person of whom even a daughter however prejudiced can with perfect safety affirm that she has never known him to do or say anything which she would not have been willing for the whole world to know.¹⁶

Anna was appreciative of the opportunity, at her father's side during the last year of President Jackson's second term and the first half of Martin Van Buren's tenure in office, to know with certainty those who were, as she said, "the great actors of the age." She specifically referred to her father's senate colleagues, Henry Clay of Kentucky and Daniel Webster of Massachusetts. She also took advantage, as Calhoun's daughter, of any chance to present the southern view shaped by its interest in slavery—a sensitive subject for someone who was surely aware of its political consequences for her father. As a staunch pro-slavery advocate, Calhoun undoubtedly inspired Anna's thinking after his own; and, according to recollections of Washington society by one Josiah Quincy, a Boston mayor, graduate of the Harvard College class of 1821, and author of *Figures of the Past*, "Miss Calhoun" was "a lady so skilled in political discussion" that he well remembered the clearness of her opinions and the ingenuity that she displayed in responding to his proposed objections to them. Impressed with the fashionable southern ladies who could converse about politics and would prove to have the courage of their convictions, Quincy agreed with the cynical comment of a friend that their sisters in the North, despite costly education in fashionable schools, did not know whether they lived "in a monarchy or a republic."¹⁷

The close companionship between Calhoun and his daughter could well have contin-

ued had not her intelligence and charm captivated the worldly, well-educated, confirmed bachelor Thomas Green Clemson of Philadelphia. As a southern lady, Anna apparently gave priority to class over geographic section in considering marriage to a “Yankee” such as Clemson. In all likelihood, she met the man for whom she would consent to leave her dearest father due to introductions by Senator Lewis Linn of Missouri, a colleague of Senator Calhoun as well as a business associate of Clemson and one of Anna’s acquaintances since her days at Dowson’s Capitol Hill boarding house. Senator Linn, along with his colleague, Judge Mangum from North Carolina, had played the violin for dancing in the drawing room during Anna’s first winter in Washington.¹⁸

Writing to her friend Maria Simkins as she left behind the political world of Washington and prepared to begin the “quiet of domestic life,” Anna declared unequivocally: “You know there was no affectation, in the determination I always expressed never to marry. I thought there were duties enough in life for me to perform.” Of those, usefulness to her father Anna had felt to be primary and judged that she was not without purpose in life while she contributed to his pleasure in any way. Although falling in love with Clemson changed her mind about marriage, the idea of giving up the man who had been “the cherished object” of her life was cause for tears at the thought that no one could take her place at his side or that it might be taken by another. Confident that Maria, who knew she idolized her father, would be sympathetic, Anna shared her innermost thoughts with this childhood friend, as she had always done.¹⁹



Thomas Green Clemson

The candlelight wedding of twenty-one-year-old Anna Maria Calhoun and Thomas Green Clemson, ten years her senior (a normal age difference for the time), was solemnized before a large gathering on the evening of November 13, 1838, underneath a beaded crystal chandelier in the parlor of her family’s Fort Hill plantation home. Father William Taylor Potter, Rector of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in the nearby town of Pendleton, officiated at the ceremony. The still-standing, timber-frame St. Paul’s Church, with its white clapboard siding, was built in the shape of a cross in 1822, founded by Charlestonians who established plantation homes in the South Carolina upcountry. The Clemson nuptials were duly recorded in the *Book of Common Prayer*, the Calhoun Family Bible that had been presented to Anna’s mother for her performance upon the organ of Trinity Church in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1807. Theodore Dehon, the Trinity Rector at the time, later married Sarah Russell, daughter of wealthy Yankee merchant, Nathaniel Russell, whose house on Charleston’s Meeting Street was perhaps “the finest private home in the South.”

At the time Anna married Clemson, her mother Floride Calhoun was considered to be one of St. Paul’s most devoted parishioners; and undoubtedly this former Charleston belle, who had “danced at St. Cecilia assemblies, worshipped at St. Michael’s, [and] summered at Newport,”²⁰ graciously received the guests invited to witness her daughter’s wedding vows and share in the celebration of her marriage. Weddings like Anna’s were wonderful occasions to which most everyone was invited and served supper in lavish style.

Calhoun, according to his eldest son, Andrew, was decidedly more “abstracted” than “af-fable” in giving away Anna, “his favorite, his pride, his *confidant*.”²¹

Although the world of Anna Maria Calhoun seemed serene on her wedding day, an article in the same local newspaper that cited her marriage to Thomas Clemson reported a recent “CONFLAGRATION” in which a barrel full of abolitionist papers and pamphlets were burned on Main Street in Pendleton. According to *The Pendleton Messenger*, dated November 16, 1838, a “base compilation of falsehood” from New York, Pennsylvania, Boston, Baltimore, Michigan, Maine, Vermont, and Cincinnati, sent south in “a great display of folly for the Abolitionists,” was handed over by the postmaster to the police of the city for disposal.²² The ultimate consequence of abolitionism in civil war²³ could not then have been possibly considered by the happy couple who spent their first night as husband and wife in the sanctity of the bride’s family’s Fort Hill home.

Although Anna, like most elite southern women, accepted the institution of slavery without question, two sisters from South Carolina, Sarah and Angelina Grimké, rejected the racist role of their prominent Charleston family and became abolitionist activists in the North. They took to the platform as public speakers in the 1830s at a time when women had no legitimate political voice and brought the cause of women’s rights alongside the abolition movement. Embracing the activism that Anna’s father and undoubtedly their own father considered unbecoming for their sex, they rebelled against the constraints and confines of the woman’s sphere to become, in the words of historian Gerda Lerner, “pioneers of a future freedom.”

A few days before Christmas, the Clemsons left South Carolina to visit family in Philadelphia, where Thomas Clemson wrote to his father-in-law, at the end of February, that Anna was “as well as it is possible for her to be and as contented and happy as you know she always is.” A little over two weeks later, Anna described herself to her brother Patrick, who was preparing for an Army career at West Point, that she was quite well and very happy. She was by that time four months’ pregnant and, despite the dread of childbirth, with its high death rate for women, said that her only fear was of being completely spoiled by an indulgent husband who anticipated her every wish.²⁴

Although Calhoun missed his daughter very much, he approved of his son-in-law’s acceptance, in April, of the offer made to him by Pennsylvania Governor David R. Porter, to become the State Geologist. In letters to both Anna and to Mr. Clemson, Calhoun acknowledged the prestigious office to be one well-suited to Clemson’s professional talents as a mining engineer and one that would afford him enough leisure to spend much of the next summer in South Carolina. When the arrangement for the job failed in May, Calhoun, sympathetic with his daughter’s dislike of Philadelphia, was glad that the Clemsons could now spend the whole summer at Fort Hill. However, considering that the position with its pecuniary possibilities would have afforded his son-in-law the professional chance to display his great attainments, he regretted the outcome of the situation. Calhoun hoped that Clemson could perhaps receive the appointment in the winter and that Anna would relent in her reluctance to reside so far North.²⁵

Anna was impatient to return to South Carolina when her husband concluded that the time had come to go back. She told her brother Pat that she was counting the days until their reunion at Fort Hill. Although she knew he could not join them from West Point for the trip south, she expected him to be not long behind in his departure home

because of a leave from school and looked forward to having the pleasure of soon seeing her “dearest brother” once again.

Nine months after her marriage to Thomas Clemson, Anna Maria, in residence with her husband at Fort Hill, gave birth, on August 13, 1839, to a baby girl described by her aunt Martha Colhoun (Mrs. John Ewing Colhoun, Jr.) as a “Daughter of unusual promise.” Sadly, the baby died three weeks later in the midst of a fever epidemic that had sickened the entire family and left Anna seriously weakened. Ironically, only two days before the little girl’s death, John Calhoun had written to his brother-in-law, James E. Calhoun, a cheering account of the family’s health and described the child as being much better.²⁶

During the next few years, while Clemson frequently managed plantation affairs when Senator Calhoun was away in Washington, Anna’s well-being was the source of great concern for her father, who was solicitous about his daughter’s lingering ill health. He was happy to hear full accounts about farm matters from his able son-in-law, who was glad for the chance to pursue his interest in planting. Nevertheless, Calhoun the affectionate father was deeply distressed that his devoted daughter reported that she felt “badly *all the time*.” Anna had suffered from a sedentary life since the death of her infant child in 1839. She apologized to her father for the dull, lifeless letters she was forced to write while lying down well over a year later. In responding to her melancholy mood, Calhoun acknowledged his appreciation of her situation and encouraged her to bear the affliction of her weakness with continued fortitude. Reminiscent of his fatherly role during her school days at Barhamville, he advised Anna on the importance of diet, exercise, and rest and gave assurance of her recovery. Calhoun’s confidence that his daughter would get well may in reality have been a facade in the face of fear that she might not. Although motherhood was glorified for the southern lady as an opportunity to realize her potential in the raising of children, many women succumbed to the rigors of childbearing for which there was no effective prevention.²⁷

Anna, a dutiful daughter, tried to follow Calhoun’s advice but, early in 1841, confided in correspondence with her close friend Maria, who was married by then for almost two years to Anna’s own Uncle James, the fear that the failure of her health would be permanent. She was four months pregnant by the end of February, needing, as she wrote Maria, a “serviceable” rather than a “*very elegant*” dress. Anna also longed to see her father, whose kindly affection she considered to be one of the greatest blessings that she possessed. She admitted in her letters to him how keenly she felt their separation.²⁸

Calhoun, in reality, felt exceedingly uneasy about Anna but was glad to hear from his son-in-law of her steady improvement, which he could see for himself when he returned from Washington to Fort Hill in the spring. Back in the nation’s capital for an extra session of Congress in the summer of 1841, he received by mail the happy news of her safe delivery of a fine boy on July 17. Expressing great joy at Clemson’s favorable account of the birth, Calhoun was confident that Anna would continue to do well and be completely restored to health. Determined to name her son John Calhoun Clemson, after her father, Anna maintained that he would have to be referred to as “*Calhoun*” with so many John’s in the family.²⁹

Restricted to complete bedrest to prevent the return of her prolonged debility, Anna was stricken with a swollen breast during the first week she was up and about. She wrote in a letter to Maria that she was having a tough time of it. Enduring agonizing pain,

Anna ultimately yielded to the lance that provoked a dreadful discharge. Again in early September, she was stricken in the same way and, this time after a natural break in the enlargement, had two holes in what was now, she said, her “*freely*” leaking breast. Despite this setback for the recovery of her stamina, she characterized to Maria her condition at the end of the year as much improved. She expressed the hope that, in time, a complete cure might be effected.³⁰

A little over seventeen months after the birth of her son Calhoun, Anna safely delivered a fine little girl late in the afternoon of December 29, 1842. According to Clemson who relayed the news to her father in Washington, both she and the child, called Elizabeth Floride after her two grandmothers, were doing as well as could be expected, and, from what the ladies in attendance said, he reported that Anna had had a very easy time in giving birth. In the midst of Christmas holidays, Clemson also conveyed in his correspondence to Calhoun the appearance of happy contentment by all on the plantation, in particular the merrymaking of the slaves, who, after dancing in the kitchen one evening until after midnight, dispersed orderly without any disturbance.³¹ What seemed to Clemson to be a carefree celebration may well have been influenced by his own relief at the safe delivery of his wife in childbirth. However, a case of attempted arson on the part of a female slave within a few months of the festivities belied his belief that all was well at Fort Hill.

Unfortunately, Clemson’s next letter to his father-in-law contained the disturbing personal news that four days after his daughter’s confinement she had become suddenly very ill with a high fever and a rapid pulse. Anxious about Anna, Clemson himself, in the emergency, took the care of his wife into his own hands. Fortunately, all that he did had been approved by the physicians when they came from nearby Pendleton, and he could tell Calhoun that Anna’s health was then much better and should remain stable if she could attend to her general well-being and not take cold.

Happy at first to hear of Anna’s delivery of a fine daughter at the end of the year, Calhoun was, later on, quite distressed and disturbed when he learned that she had been kept in bed throughout the month of January. Also upsetting to him was Clemson’s communication from Fort Hill, in early February, 1843, of the great calamity of a house fire, in which Calhoun feared that Anna might have suffered serious injury from the shocking situation. In her account to Maria of the incident, Anna wrote that one very cold night, a suffocating smoke from a pine beam underneath a fireplace poured through every crack of the floor in the upstairs hall. “I jumped up barefooted & ran into the other room,” she exclaimed, while Clemson, awakened by his eighteen-month-old son, had taken charge of the confusion. Seeing to it that “blankets were piled on me,” he proceeded to save the house in a narrow escape from disaster and issued “such a scolding” when “I dared to approach the scene of action.”³²

By spring, Anna was in good health again and seemed to her mother to look as well as she ever had. In a letter to her son Patrick, then an army lieutenant at Fort Towson in the Arkansas Territory (now Oklahoma), Floride Calhoun relayed the news about his sister and mentioned that the house had taken fire under the hearth in midwinter. She also recounted a recent incident of attempted arson that had occurred around the first of April. Apparently, Issey, a female slave, had tried to burn everybody up by putting a large burning coal under the pillow of thirteen-year-old William Lowndes Calhoun before his bedtime. The smell of burning feathers led to the discovery of the fire in time to save the

house and its occupants. Issey, who was immediately apprehended, confessed to everything but claimed that she, after becoming alarmed at her action, had intended to take away the smoldering ember when she turned down the bed. Mrs. Calhoun blamed Issey's father, Old Sawney, who took up his hat and stick and ran off as hard as he could when the fire signal was given. Although all the slaves seemed shocked at the act and said that the girl ought to have been hung, they might well have feared for themselves when faced by an irate master. In actuality, the use of arson by slaves in defiance against their owners could bring the perpetrators to court for a crime not considered private but recognized as an attack against the system of slavery itself. Punishable by death, Issey's crime was kept a profound secret, and Patrick was instructed by his mother to burn the letter that told of Issey's guilt. Two years later, in 1845, Issey was sent away from Fort Hill to the Alabama plantation of the Calhouns' son Andrew.³³ Separation of slaves from their families was not uncommon in a system that considered human beings equivalent to capital, to be bought and sold.

The abortive arson incident in early April occurred right around the time that Calhoun, who had retired from the United States Senate, effective March 4, 1843, returned to Fort Hill while his Democratic supporters were campaigning for him in his run for president in the next year's election. Anna found her father to look very well and to be in good spirits. She was delighted to have him home once again although aware of the significance of his political prospects. She was primarily interested then in her husband's purchase of the Canebrake plantation, over a thousand acres of land owned by Arthur Simkins, her friend Maria's brother. After a trip North, Clemson decided that, at that time, investing in the iron business with his uncle, Elias Baker of Altoona, Pennsylvania, would not be profitable.

Eager to establish a home for her family, Anna was pleased to move to Edgefield District early in 1844, even though the home where Arthur Simkins and his family had lived on the Little Saluda River was now a dilapidated place. The prospect of not getting into a new house before fall, as it was impossible to get lumber, coupled with the discomfort of living in the existing one where, as she wrote Maria, "the wind *does* whistle through the cracks," were but trifles so long as the children were happy and well. Elite women like Anna, despite their privileged status and protection by white men, were essentially in charge of all household chores although, according to social historian Orville Vernon Burton, they had "more leisure time, more formal social duties, and more managerial responsibilities" than their less fortunate contemporaries. The same white men who protected the privileged position of the southern lady dealt harsh treatment to black female slaves who resisted their authority and challenged the authority of their white mistresses.³⁴

Although beset with domestic duties, Anna felt keenly her father's inability to gain the political support needed to secure the Democratic presidential nomination, and she was indignant that his friends, as she saw it, had failed him. Just at the time of her move to Canebrake, his announcement not to place his name as a candidate before the National Convention in Baltimore was published in the *Charleston Mercury*. In the address Calhoun had made to his constituency, he reaffirmed his opposition to a protective tariff and abolitionist agitation and explained why, in his opinion, adherence to the majority principle that he opposed in the convention's organization would ultimately deal a death blow to the South. According to the *Calhoun Papers'* editor, Clyde Wilson, what

Calhoun objected to was the winner-take-all selection of state delegates to the national convention and the representation of states by population rather than party strength, which disfranchised many party members and made it easier for politicians to deal and to manipulate.³⁵

The fortunes of both Calhoun, in preparing to enjoy the pleasures of life at Fort Hill, and his daughter, in fixing by degrees her domicile at Canebrake, were soon to be altered by a festive Washington event turned tragic. On February 28, 1844, the U.S.S. *Princeton*, on an official Potomac cruise with invited guests, suffered an explosion when one of its large guns was fired just as the vessel rounded Mount Vernon. Among those on board was Lt. Patrick Calhoun, who, as soon as the damaged ship returned in the evening, quickly wrote to his father of the most dreadful accident that he had ever known. Among the five dead that he had found lying around the faulty cannon were Secretary of State Abel Upshur, Secretary of the Navy Thomas Gilmer, and his father's very dear friend, Virgil Maxcy.³⁶

In less than a month, Anna was informed by her father that President John Tyler had offered him the State Department position left vacant by Secretary Upshur's death. Owing to the important pending negotiations over the annexation of Texas and settlement of the Oregon question, his reluctance to accept the appointment was tempered, he told her, by the appeal made to his patriotism, honor, and defense of the South. In a subsequent letter to his son-in-law, he relayed by mail the news of his expected nomination and confirmation, and that he had received a number of letters that strongly urged his acceptance. Unable to see how he could decline without a loss of character, Calhoun apprised Clemson that he had, therefore, accepted the State Department appointment and planned to leave for Washington in a week. He would be traveling by stage coach to Edgefield, expecting a stop at the Edgewood plantation home of his cousin and political associate, Colonel Francis Pickens. There, he suggested meeting with Clemson and Anna, who, he hoped for convenience sake, could come and bring the children the twenty-some miles distance from Canebrake and save him a day's time in his trip to the capital. Calhoun arrived in Washington at the end of March and was immediately sworn into office as Secretary of State. His son-in-law, Thomas Green Clemson, although but a Canebrake planter, had accompanied him in light of Clemson's interest in the possibility of a diplomatic appointment abroad, where he had spent some time during the late 1820s and 1830s.³⁷

Although Clemson returned to Canebrake without any commitment of a foreign assignment, Calhoun wrote to his daughter, in early May, that President John Tyler had said he could name his son-in-law to head the Belgian Mission to the court of King Léopold I. According to Anna, her husband was pleased with the idea and very much obliged to Calhoun for his personal interest in the matter. She herself welcomed Clemson's appointment as Chargé d'Affaires (a position formerly held, from 1836 to 1842, by her father's late friend, Virgil Maxcy) because she felt that he would never be contented with life in America unless he had the chance to see what he could do in Europe, where he had lived and studied as a young man. However, her personal objections and misgivings she confided to her father. In accordance with the accepted behavior of her gender, she would not have openly opposed her husband's wishes, but, as the twenty-seven-year-old mother of two small children—Calhoun, age three, and Floride, not yet two years—Anna expected travel to be filled with troubles and discomforts rather than pleasures. The difficult age of

her little children, along with her own disinterested view of society's irksome functions and decorum, dulled her outlook as did consideration about the operation of Canebrake. There, for the present, she would have really preferred to remain. Nevertheless, despite her reservations, she prepared in the summer of 1844 to embark on an ocean voyage that would take her, for a little over six years, to Europe and the court of His Majesty the King of the Belgians.³⁸

King Léopold I, a ruler whose noble family ties allied him with the monarchies in both France and England, failed to impress Anna, who nonetheless described him to her father as a sensible man. However, the king's frequent absences from Brussels and inaccessibility when in residence, rendered his rule ineffective. Pleased to find herself a real republican in the midst of what she saw as royalty's "most ridiculous and childish business" in the "little second rate" Belgian court, she pictured society's patrons in Europe as "better educated, & more stupid, & twice as ugly, with better manners," than their American counterparts. Even in the magnificent Tuileries in Paris or the Court of St. James in London, she thought the grandeur of the palatial scene would be foolish at best. Although by class a member of the American elite, Anna found fault with the European aristocracy, whose royal rule she scorned. Obviously outspoken in letters written to her father, she dutifully observed the prevailing political conditions around her and was pleased to detail for him the intricacies of Belgian politics. During a ministerial crisis in the summer of 1845, for example, she noted the irreconcilable differences between the Catholic and Liberal parties, the forced resignation of the Minister of the Interior, and the king's frolicking in England away from his responsibilities. Commenting on the difficulties of a Protestant ruler in a Catholic country, she found no sympathy between Léopold and his subjects.³⁹

By this time, Calhoun's political future had seemingly plummeted with his termination as Secretary of State early in 1845, when on February 17 the newly elected President James Polk named James Buchanan to head the State Department. In a letter to Anna written on March 11, the day he left Washington for Fort Hill, Calhoun had told his daughter of Mr. Polk's decision to form an entirely new cabinet. He had mentioned also the president's offer to him to head the British Mission, which he had declined in favor of returning to the quiet of private life. Settled by spring at his South Carolina plantation, Calhoun had written that he had seriously begun again his treatise on the elementary principles of political science. Owing that he had made great strides toward the completion of the rough draft, his plan, following the completion of this work in progress, was to begin the treatise on the Federal Constitution. He felt that he would be able to finish this treatise during the course of the year, provided that he could remain at home. However, his election to the U.S. Senate by the South Carolina legislature in the fall of 1845 (much against his own inclination) changed the course of his life one more time.⁴⁰

Anna, who learned from the newspapers of her father's return to the Senate, was much gratified to know that he would be serving the country there at a time when his leadership could, in her opinion, keep the lawmakers from becoming an unruly crowd. Her sentiments reflected those expressed much earlier by Senator Daniel Huger, Calhoun's successor (in 1843) who graciously resigned in 1845 so that the state's leading citizen might once again be sent to the U.S. Senate. Huger feared that the whole country could be sacrificed to the fury of the rabid abolitionist spirit if the "Planting States" in Congress did not rally in response. He had called upon Calhoun, in the name of South Carolina, to afford the

nation the benefit of his experience and influence.

Political commentary in Anna's letters to her father was interspersed with personal details about her husband and children that she knew would be of interest to him. Clemson's success in concluding the negotiation of a commercial treaty between Belgium and the United States in the fall of 1845 prompted her to report proudly his great diplomatic influence with the Belgian government. Also a source of pride for Anna was the fact that her husband, she said, had "*come out* wonderfully" as a businessman zealously representing American interests. Pleased, as well, with her children's growth and development, she described them to their grandfather as very good and very loving.⁴¹

She proudly commented to her father, early in 1846, on her children's progress, expressed an interest in news from America, and detailed Clemson's diplomatic affairs. Describing the children, Calhoun and Floride, as much more than average in intelligence, she noted her daughter's memory and ability to learn and her son's originality, good company, musical, and artistic talents. Concern over the possibility of war between the United States and Mexico captured much attention abroad as did the controversy over the Oregon question, itself a potential source of conflict for America with England. Her husband, she wrote, was "over head & ears in business" at work with the legation in Brussels as well as in the consul's office in Antwerp. She herself was engaged in the process of copying as secretary of the legation, hoping that whatever money she could earn would supplement their income.⁴² Payment based solely on the value of her work would not have been a factor in Anna's thinking as a southern lady. She had been raised to reign in the domestic sphere albeit always under male domination.

Anna took great pleasure in all that her father told her about himself and his political position, always the subject of greatest interest to her. She was gratified to learn in March of extravagant praise from the press over his Senate speech on the Oregon question. Expressing more about himself to Anna than he would to anyone else, Calhoun acknowledged that, in the midst of congratulations on all sides, he had also excited the jealousy of partisan party leaders. According to Anna, the wounded vanity of her father's opponents was hard to heal and made for the harshest enemies whose self-serving policy contrasted strongly with his own disinterested and patriotic course. She was pleased to say that he was now "*the man*, & the only man" whose opinion mattered in Europe rather than just "*one*" of the distinguished Americans spoken of with honor; and she took pride in thinking that she understood and appreciated him more than any others.⁴³

Always a devoted daughter, Anna felt intensely the distance from her dear parents, and her attachment to them only increased during her years in Belgium. All the "luxuries & splendors of Europe," she wrote, were nothing compared to "dear old Fort Hill," and, given a choice, she even preferred the old house at Canebrake over a homeplace at the French monarchy's Versailles palace. Despite such a seemingly farfetched comparison, Anna's obvious disenchantment with Versailles was later shared by one Carey North, whose marriage to Charles Lockhart Pettigrew in 1853 united two prominent Carolina families. On her honeymoon trip to Europe, Carey, the niece of South Carolina's leading lawyer, James Louis Petigru, deemed Versailles to be absurdly pretentious and described the "Grandes Eaux" on the grounds as "very ridiculous to a plain republican."⁴⁴ Southern ladies such as Anna Clemson and Carey North were not impressed with what they thought to be superficial rather than substantial. Their snobbish scorn for this royal resi-

dence, indicative of their republicanism, implied a contempt, as well, for the European aristocracy with whose elite status they apparently did not identify.

Anna considered herself too American to appreciate the things Europeans valued as treasures and also saw the great men of Europe as, in her words, “such mental pigmies” [*sic*]. The “luxury, & often factitious splendour of these old, & rotten countries,” as she described them to Calhoun, could not compensate for life in her own glorious country whose faults she defended as “those of youth, & too much life, & therefore curable.”⁴⁵

Calhoun praised his daughter’s judgment in preferring a new and growing country such as the United States but warned that she should not undervalue Europe whose advancement he foresaw to be far greater than the heights Europe had yet attained. However, he expressed to her his fear that the failure of political ideology to keep pace with technological promotion might lead to turmoil and upheaval in both Europe and America.⁴⁶

After a long harsh winter, Anna welcomed the onset of spring in 1847, and she commented on those conditions that could well result in the realization of her father’s fear for society’s future. The miserable lives of the poor in stark contrast to the indulgence of the wealthy created an immense class disproportionality that she found disturbing. Allowing for the right of individuals to amass wealth, she nevertheless thought a system that caused such disparity to be wrong. Obviously, her own privileged status as a southern lady dependent upon a subservient slave population did not seem untenable to her as one who expressed concern for suffering as she saw it. Going from the grand residences of the rich into streets pressed with paupers, she had her eyes opened to the dread of political change by the powerful. Recognizing Belgium to be the most progressive country in Europe, with a relatively charitable wealthy class, she speculated as to how bad conditions must be elsewhere.⁴⁷

Anna noted Calhoun’s fear that the United States was “following in the footsteps of Europe” and faced a “most uncertain future.” She insisted that the “glittering rottenness, [*sic*] of social & political life” abroad, and especially in France, was a long way from that at home. The trials of French ministers for corruption and a leading aristocrat for his wife’s murder prompted the expression of her true belief that France, was “the most utterly depraved, & corrupt nation, which exists, or ever did exist.” Acknowledging America’s many and great faults, she still confessed her confidence in the freshness of her country despite her father’s certainty that neither the government nor the people paid much attention any longer to preserving laws and liberty.

Calhoun was, he said, “extremely desirous” [*sic*] of seeing his grandchildren again as well as Anna and her husband, and he longed for the day when his son-in-law would think it in his interest to return to the United States. In 1848, after four years away from home, Clemson did apply for a leave of absence despite, in Anna’s words, “the most unsettled state in Europe.” Revolution in Paris, in February, had resulted in repercussions in Berlin and Vienna and throughout the Continent—everywhere that nationalist agitation prevailed.⁴⁸

The Second French Republic, established with the overthrow of the monarchy, appeared to endanger European peace, and the country most immediately at risk was Belgium. Dreading the possibility of that country’s annexation by France, Anna wrote her father, in the spring, that only outside intervention could save Belgian independence if the French invaded. She was unaware that in March both the French Ambassador Sérurier

in Brussels and the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs d'Hoffschmidt had concurred that fear of such an invasion was unfounded. Minister d'Hoffschmidt had, at that time, notified King Léopold that he could dispense with his efforts to solicit support from those European powers that had guaranteed his country's neutrality.

Anna formed her political opinions from conversations that she remembered with her father and questioned the real republican nature of the new French government with its immense centralization in Paris. In reality, the end of royal rule had not changed the bureaucracy that seemed to please all Frenchmen; and her prediction of the ultimate failure of the revolution proved to be true with the eventual rise to power of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte as emperor. Calhoun shared his daughter's concern over events in Europe and thought her opinions to be very perceptive and fair.⁴⁹

He sent to Clemson, who lacked the funds to bring his family back with him during his leave, the required \$600 for their passage because his return without Anna and the children would have been, Calhoun said, "a cause of great grief" to all. Although expenses did force the Clemsons to travel by sailing vessel rather than the preferred steamer, the entire family, accompanied by the children's Belgian nurse, Mimi, made the long trip across the Atlantic in the fall of 1848. The nurse was, Anna wrote to her father, "an excellent person, & such a treasure." Leaving from Antwerp, on October 4, on the sailing packet *Roscoe*, the Clemson party arrived safely in New York a month later, having ridden out a hurricane off the coast of Newfoundland.⁵⁰

Their stay in the United States over six months passed all too quickly for Anna, who actually saw little of her father during this busy time for both of them. Despite his failing health, Calhoun continued with his official Senate duties while Anna was at home. She and her family resided first at Canebrake and then in Philadelphia, visiting with her mother-in-law, Elizabeth Baker Clemson, whose own poor health was another reason for their trip. Even with her father in Washington during Christmas and the New Year, Anna was happily occupied at Canebrake in the midst of much of her family. In the completed new house that was "quite commodious and comfortable," they were joined by Clemson's younger sister, Mrs. Elizabeth Barton, "a great favourite" of Anna's and of her own younger sister, Cornelia. Writing to her father that Cornelia looked unusually well, Anna also observed that her mother was very fine and happy and of much help with the steady arrival and departure of company.⁵¹

One such visitor was her cousin, the former congressman Colonel Francis Pickens, who had been acting as Clemson's general agent at Canebrake in his absence. Pickens, who kissed her profusely at first sight and declaring that no brother could be happier to welcome her than he was, tearfully told Anna in private how "artful persons" had alienated her father and himself since she had been away in Europe. Making a last attempt at reconciliation with Calhoun, Pickens gave her an account of all that had occurred since the rift with her father over the Oregon question. Convinced of his repentance, she admitted to her father that, though undoubtedly Pickens's behavior had been influenced by ambition, the desire to prove his political independence and bad advice, she believed his denial that he had "slurred Calhoun" at a public meeting in Edgefield in June of 1846. Writing to her in response to her petition on Pickens's behalf, Calhoun said that he would postpone his reflections on the matter until they could see each other but avowed that he was not swayed by others in his actions, as Pickens had implied, and that he felt only profound

regret at the course their relationship had taken.⁵²

Her father's declining health, weakened by congestive fever early in 1845, was of much greater concern to Anna than the deterioration of his relationship with their cousin Francis. She urged her father to take better care of himself in a letter of January 27, 1849, the day after the receipt of the newspapers that mentioned his illness: "What will become of the country if you, who appear to be the only really honest & fearless politician, are not there to give them timely warning of the breakers towards which they are rushing?" The preservation of his health, she asserted, was important, not only for his family but for the whole country and for the South in particular. Wishing that she could be there to nurse him, she advised him to "wrap up warm" and keep his feet dry and not to exert himself too much. Although the daughter who loved him "more than any one else in the world" was sometimes so afraid that he would get used to doing without her and miss her less, Anna knew that he would always love her and appreciate her affection for him.⁵³

The Clemsons spent time in Washington and Philadelphia in March and April before going to New York in May, less than a week before their departure on the sailing ship *Northumberland*. With little enthusiasm for going about, Anna wrote to Calhoun, now back at Fort Hill, that she would not have done so had it not been for the accompaniment of her sisters-in-law, Elizabeth Barton and Louisa Washington, neither of whom had seen New York. Squired around for a few days of sightseeing by her mother's well-to-do bachelor cousin, Edward Boisseau, she begged off from an outing to have time to write her father. She confided to him her sadness as the time approached again to leave her "country & friends, & undertake such a long & dangerous voyage." With no excited anticipation for what she was to experience in Europe, she could only think of the pleasure of being reunited with her family in America and hope that it would be sooner than she thought. Her heart "too full to write" more, she prayed that God would bless all her loved ones at home and keep them in good health.⁵⁴

After six-weeks of travel that included a stopover in London, Anna, her husband, and their two children arrived, in early July, back in Brussels, where she received her father's response from Fort Hill to the woeful letter she had written from New York. He voiced his understanding of her distress at departing for such a distance for so long a time but hastened that she look forward to being reunited and not to humor herself in sorrows that served no purpose. In a personal postscript to his letter, he called to her attention that in the address he had dropped "the M & put the C" in place of her middle name, a change that he had earlier encouraged her to adopt.⁵⁵ Hereafter, her signature, Anna Calhoun Clemson, reflected his wish.

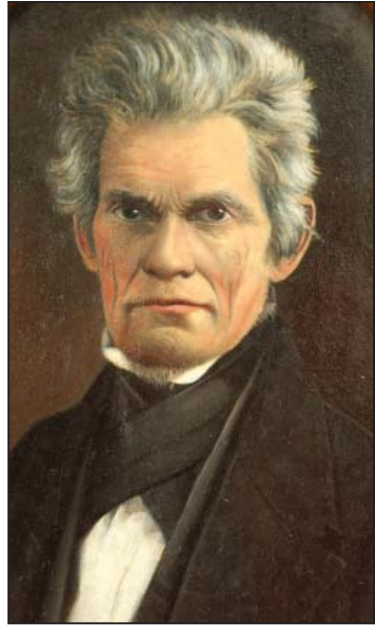
Constantly occupied with domestic details in Brussels, she postponed her correspondence until the middle of August and promised her father then to be more punctual. The continuing strife in Europe caused her despair over the chaos brought by what now seemed to her such "stupid movements" that she had given up trying to understand them. The Belgians, she thought, with the example of the rest of Europe before them, were right to remain calm and celebrate the tranquil state in which they lived despite their country's dwindling treasury and evident poverty. Belgium's international stature and internal stability had survived the threat posed by the 1848 revolutions, and, according to historian E. H. Kossmann, the people were proud of their "dignified calm" when confronted with the crisis of conflict throughout the continent.

Disgusted with European politics and pessimistic for the future of government abroad, Anna particularly pitied the poor Hungarians, whose fate (“a disgrace to the 19th century”) she described in a letter to her father at the end of October 1849. Russian intervention in support of Austrian absolutism had brutally repressed Hungary’s attempt at autonomy within the Hapsburg Empire. She feared an epoch of tyrannical leadership, believing that revolution and fighting had hurt the cause of rational freedom.⁵⁶

When Calhoun returned to Washington on the last day of November, Anna warned him not to work too hard, to speak only “*when necessary*,” not to go out at night or see too much company and to “live generously & drink wine & *warm toddy at night*.” She thought that if he would follow these rules and keep his feet and chest warm, he would go through the winter comfortably and be ready to enjoy the fine spring weather when it came. The upcoming session of Congress would be “stormy & decisive with regard to the future position of the south,” but she hoped that “our people will understand, & protect their rights, with firmness.” Controversy over the slavery issue, specifically in the territories acquired as a result of the Mexican War, seemed to have reached its climax at year’s end; and, in her view, to fail at this time would ruin the South’s future, leaving it without hope and leaving the country’s fate “gloomy indeed to those who wish well to humanity.”⁵⁷

Chided by Anna for his lack of correspondence from Washington, Calhoun replied kindly to his daughter that she must attribute part of the reason he had not written more frequently to the great amount of writing he had to do. He also reminded her of the fact that she had in her mother and sister two faithful family correspondents. Since their parting in the spring he had written well over 300 pages of his “discourse on the Constitution & government of the United States” and “revised, corrected & had copied [*sic*] the elementary disquisition on government” that was now ready for publication. As he had stated to her in his letter of June 15, he had “without fear, favour, or affection” hoped to lay “a solid foundation for political science.” However, Calhoun saw no prospect of any satisfactory adjustment to the increased excitement over the slave question. He was “exceedingly anxious” to be heard in the on-going Senate debate, even if what he intended to say had to be written out and then read by his colleague James Mason of Virginia. Calhoun had suffered a spell of pneumonia in January, and his strength was not sufficiently restored in time for him to deliver his speech on March 4.⁵⁸

In Brussels, Anna could not reconcile the fact that the papers from America, dated January 21, reported Calhoun was ill while his volunteer secretary, Joseph Scoville, did not mention the matter in a letter to Clemson just five days earlier. Urging her father to get someone, if he could not do it himself, to write her and her husband everything about



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himself, she insisted that he leave Washington and go home to Fort Hill to live quietly and fully in the fresh air. She felt more keenly than ever the trial of their separation and wanted so much to be near him to anticipate his every wish; she longed to hear that he was back at Fort Hill. In this letter, possibly the last one he received from his ever devoted daughter, Anna bade her dear father "Adieu."⁵⁹

The news of Calhoun's death in Washington on March 31, 1850, was communicated by his secretary, Scoville, via the Department of State, to the Clemsons in Brussels. The only family member present at the senator's bedside, his son John, later sent a moving account of their father's last days to Anna, who desired to know how the end came. In his letter to Anna, John described their father as the most affectionate of parents and the country's most illustrious and patriotic citizen. Having earlier mailed her a lock of Calhoun's hair, he enclosed in his letter a sprig of "box" taken from their father's coffin by Judge A. P. Butler of Edgefield, who begged that it be sent to Anna with his best respects and kindest sympathy.⁶⁰

South Carolina Senator Andrew Pickens Butler of Edgefield was first married to Susan Simkins, the sister of Anna's close friend Maria. Later, he would be the target, along with the state itself, of what historian Walter Edgar has called "a vicious verbal attack" by Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts in 1856. Slandered by Sumner for his support of slavery in the Kansas Territory, the aged Butler was ridiculed as well by his colleague, who mocked the Judge's tendency to spit while speaking. Angered by what Edgar has called "a mean-spirited speech" that even appalled some of Sumner's supporters, fellow Edgefieldian and Butler cousin, Congressman Preston Brooks, retaliated in defense of his kinsman and of South Carolina. Since the Massachusetts senator had already announced he would never accept a dueling challenge (considered a gentlemanly response to disagreement by southerners), Brooks resorted to a merciless caning of the unsuspecting Sumner as Sumner sat at his Senate Chamber desk. Vividly described by Pulitzer Prize-winner Robert A. Caro, in his *Master of the Senate*, the attack was even more brutal because Sumner's leg "became so entangled that he could not rise as the blows rained on his head and blood began pouring from his wounds."⁶¹

In a letter that Anna wrote at the end of June to her brother Patrick, she gave her own touching tribute to the family's patriarch and the man she adored:

Our noble father can never be restored to us. We shall never look upon his like again. In all history I find no man who combined so much talent, heart, philosophy and simplicity.... His life and death are bright and encouraging examples to everyone, for they prove that a firm adherence to truth and principle, will in the end be appreciated as they deserve.... Can we ever forget his sweet smile, and ready sympathy in all our pleasures and pains. He was our friend our guide our head and he is gone.⁶²