

Flourice April 2^a 1863

My dear Mark.

I venture to to address you for the first time. Having got over the awe I have heretofore felt in the presence of an American Minister - a dignitary of the first water - and in my eyes, but now - alas - either my eyes have become dim - or the lustre of the title is gone - but he not offended - if I take you yourself - nearer home to me - only doubting the value of the sitting - our Country is truly in no condition - just now - to receive Company - (most beautiful and promising one - she is now down - and groaning under a loathsome disease - Doctors and Nurses only - should be admitted to her presence - near the bed - she lies exposed before the whole world - and what is worse - some of her own children - stand near - and delight in lifting the curtains which ought to cover her nakedness - of these a writer signs himself "Manhattan" is most conspicuous -) But the worst of all is - that such scandals are tolerated in our land of liberty.

Do what you see - and feel as you feel. My dear friend! - we are in an awful fix! - we are in the same boat, undergoing a terrible fermentation - and how we shall come out of it, depends on the amount of pure spirit in the liquor! - Every nation has had to undergo this trial and we are now upon ours - The fermentation is powerful without a parallel.