CHAPTER II.

YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD.

1804–1828.


Little is known of the childhood or boyhood of William Barton Rogers or of his brothers. When Dr. P. K. Rogers left Philadelphia and removed to Baltimore in 1812, James, the eldest, was eleven, and the second son, William, only eight years old. The family life appears to have been a hard struggle with poverty and debt, and the boys had few luxuries. They enjoyed, however, the inestimable advantage of educated parents devoted to their welfare. The seven years of Baltimore life, as far as we know, passed without special incident. On some stray sheets of paper torn from an old ledger, William has given a glimpse of the family life of this period: —

"These pages formed part of an account book of my revered father, used by him while a practicing physician, and when his chief and favorite employment in the intervals of business was the instruction of James, Henry and myself. Henry was then too
young to be sent to school, — at least so my father thought. On this subject his views were peculiar, and I have ever regarded them not only as benevolent but wise.

"The same anxiety that led him to postpone mere book instruction to the natural development of the physical and intellectual powers in Henry's case caused him to restrict our attendance on school, at a later period, to half days. So that, with the exception of a short period during which James and myself walked about two miles to Baltimore College\(^1\) to receive instruction in Latin, we never spent any of our afternoon hours in school. Henry, I am sure, was exempt during the whole of his schoolboy life from attendance in the afternoon.

"It thus happened that our education was conducted in great part at home, and by the daily personal attention of our kind and judicious father; and to this cause I may justly ascribe the thoroughness of our knowledge on all the subjects which we studied, though in the apparent extent of our attainments we were by no means in advance of our playmates trained in the ordinary system of school drudgery, and confined to their books for the greater part of the day."

It is related that music formed an entertainment in the household, Dr. Rogers and his son Henry playing the violin and William the flute. The sons also recalled in after years the intense boyish delight of certain walks with their father into the suburbs of Baltimore on Sunday afternoons, with the glass of fresh milk drunk at some farm-house on the way.

While the family lived in Baltimore William was for a time employed in the china warehouse of Mr. M. F. Keyser. Here it was that he acquired a skill and

\(^1\) Probably Baltimore City College, the Public High School of Baltimore.
dexterity in packing china, which he never lost. In later years this accomplishment—for such, in his case, it really was—proved very useful in the packing of fragile fossils or other specimens. In after years he once excited the admiration of his family by packing a thin glass tumbler side by side with a heavy iron implement so skillfully that the glass arrived at the end of a long journey uninjured.

The appointment of Dr. P. K. Rogers to a professorship in the College of William and Mary in 1819 was in many respects fortunate. It formed an epoch in the family history, and promised to the anxious parent a relief from financial distress. It offered to him also the welcome opportunity of educating his boys, who were now rapidly approaching manhood.

Dr. and Mrs. Rogers with their children removed from Baltimore to Williamsburg in October, 1819. James, the eldest son, appears to have returned for a time to Baltimore, and to him William addressed the following letter which we give, unchanged, as it is the first of his letters which has been preserved. It was written at the age of fifteen:

WILLIAM TO JAMES.

WILLIAMSBURG, December 22, 1819.

DEAR JAMES,—I received your letter three days ago, and was glad to find that my second letter had met with a better fate than my first. Along with yours I received one from our very eccentric friend S. S.; he is at Rocky Mount in Franklin County, and, as he states, at the foot of the elevated Blue Ridge. The stile is such as might be expected from one who, with a few atoms of self-importance, possesses a world of good nature and affection. It is forcible, warm,
and now and then too florid, but his letter is replete with good sense, and displays an active mind as well as a benevolent heart. He is to have the superintendence of a farm, the property of one of his relations, and expects that his situation will be extremely pleasant and quite independent. He seems very desirous of establishing a correspondence with me, and frequently mentions you, always with the most friendly regard. The classes remain stationary and decorous; there has not been the least misbehaviour since the opening of the session, but the courses progress in the most orderly and agreeable manner. It were fortunate if the students were as remarkable for their talents as good nature, but it is not so; with the exception of about eight, there was perhaps never an assemblage of young men so totally destitute of genius and so miserably deficient in understanding. Yesterday (as Mr. Hawes tells me) Dr. Smith¹ inquired of a student what was the nature of a material substance, the answer was, "One which affects our senses and exerts reason!" Father asked the same person for a definition of a solid; after much hesitation, a good deal of muttering, and abundance of broken sentences, the gentleman answered with great philosophical gravity that it was "A—a—a body which was solid." The chemical class, however, advance as well as could be expected, and will no doubt bear a good examination; there are a few members in particular who answer extremely well, among these stands Robert Saunders.

Christmas is now fast approaching, when I suppose the inhabitants will enter upon the same routine of dissipation as is usual at this season. For my part, I intend to visit as little as decency will admit, and Mr. Hawes has joined me in this determination. Neither of us have yet been to Dr. Coles's or Captain Travers's; we took tea at Mr. Campbell's shortly after

¹ President of William and Mary College.
Mr. H. arrived, but have not been there since. We generally sit up until between eleven and twelve o'clock without inconvenience, and find the stillness of the hour to favour studies in astronomy. It is the most sublime as well as the most difficult of all the sciences; it requires intense study and great application, but by the joint force of these its difficulties are soon overcome, and its utility and beauty become more strikingly manifest.

We are all extremely well, but anxiously anticipating your return, in hopes of which and of your health and happiness I am,

Your very affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM B. ROGERS.

P. S.—Robert Saunders intends writing to you shortly, his father wishing such a correspondence for his improvement. If he writes, Father says you must not neglect to return him a friendly answer, and, should you have leisure you had better not wait for a letter from him.

Father and the children all send their most affectionate love to you, as well as to our relations in Baltimore. I must now bid you good-night as it is near my bed-time. Answer this speedily.

W. B. R.

The following "Report of Standing" addressed to Dr. Rogers shows that James and William were in attendance at William and Mary during the session 1819–20. It has been reproduced as a contribution to the educational history of the period; and it need only be remarked that the term "Society" was used as a synonym for "Faculty." Ferdinand Campbell, whose signature appears upon this facsimile, was the Professor of Mathematics and a great favorite with the students of the college, who characterized him in the following rhyme:—
AS those whose sons and wards are at a public seminary, must feel the greatest anxiety for their proficiency and their welfare, the Society have determined to send stated communications* one after each public examination, to the Parent or Guardian of every Young Gentleman pursuing his studies at this Institution.

In the opinions which the Society express, you may depend upon the greatest candour and impartiality, nor can they commit any mistake with regard to the acquirements of the Students, this being effectually precluded by the daily and semi-annual examinations. But although the Society omit no opportunity of informing themselves concerning the temper, character and habits of those over whom it is their duty to watch, yet it is obviously impossible for them to obtain in every instance, that accurate knowledge which is so desirable on these important subjects. Here therefore they are liable to err, and due allowances for this source of fallacy, accordingly are necessary. It is almost superfluous to add that the mistake, where there is one, will be generally on the favourable side. The error however it may be remarked must be slight, for it is deemed impracticable, for any young man to deviate widely and for any length of time, from the rules of propriety without being at least suspected, and even suspicions in an affair of such essential importance to the future welfare of a student, deserve the most serious consideration, and are accordingly stated. From this system, where Parents and Guardians have co-operated with the Professors, the most beneficial effects have already ensued; by means of it, irregularities and improprieties have been nipped in the bud, and that abundant harvest of vice and dissipation which might have followed, has been easily and effectually prevented.

Of your sons, the Society is happy to state, that they have been orderly, diligent, and attentive to their studies, and in Mathematics and Chemistry, have made the most flattering improvements. In Philosophy likewise, their progress is respectable.

The Society think you had better inform your sons of the foregoing opinion. This information it would be well to accompany with those commendations which such conduct merits, the applause of those we love and esteem being perhaps the strongest incentive to virtue.

By order of the Society,

Ferdinand J. Campbell Secretary

* Parents and Guardians are always specially written to by the President, whenever there is any occasion for his so doing.
"Here comes old Ferdy,
With rectilinear walk,
His head full of diagrams,
His pockets full of chalk."

In the summer following the removal of the family to Williamsburg, Mrs. Rogers was attacked by the fever which prevailed in the malarial climate of Lower Virginia and from which she died. The death of their mother was a heavy blow to the boys, but it seems to have drawn their father into relations with them closer, if possible, than before.

On the invitation of Colonel Robert Saunders, Dr. Rogers and his boys left Williamsburg after the death of Mrs. Rogers, and spent the rest of their vacation in the house of their host at Short Pump, Va. That this was a wise step appears from the following passage in a letter from Professor Campbell to Dr. Rogers:

Williamstown, October 7, 1820.

My dear Doctor, ... Although at the time of your departure I supposed that your family would have incurred no risk by remaining in Williamsburg, I rejoice now that I did not advise you to stay, and that you concluded on seeking the benefit of a change of air. For such has been the unhealthiness of this place that scarcely any of the old inhabitants have escaped from severe illness; and, to add to this misfortune, the physician on whom all are disposed to rely most (Dr. Galt) has likewise had a bilious attack, which has deprived them of his services for three weeks, and still continues to do so. ...

I saw old Kitt 1 the other day; the only thing he wanted was a little corn for the fowls, which I believe he got. We are mindful of you all every afternoon when we view your abode, or see Henry's ducks, who visit us every day.

1 A family servant.
In the autumn of 1821 James left William and Mary College to study medicine at the University of Maryland, in Baltimore. A correspondence now began between the brothers, which was continued as long as they lived. The following is important as showing their early interest in science, and also as an estimate by his eldest son of the father's attainments:

JAMES (19) TO WILLIAM (17).

BALTIMORE, November 9, 1821.

DEAR BROTHER,—In compliance with my promise of soon writing to you, I now sit down to write you a short letter, in which you may not calculate on anything new, except a new and in my opinion a rather singular opinion advanced by Dr. De Butts, which he delivered this evening, one which I think is wholly unsupported by any evidence. It is this, that no two bodies of heterogeneous character are presented to each other without thereby chemical union being produced; for instance, a drop of water applied to a plate of glass adheres to it by virtue of chemical attraction, or affinity; and that the different forces of this attraction are to be observed in all degrees, from the simple case I have mentioned to those in which the most powerful chemical attraction exerts its influence. In a word, what Father denominates "heterogeneous adhesion" is with him really a chemical union. I believe this opinion to be erroneous, inasmuch as there is in this case to be observed none of those changes which are said to be characteristic of chemical affinity. When you write me (which do soon) give me your opinion on this point. Dr. De Butts seems to have considerably improved as a lecturer since I last heard him, but yet he falls far short of Father. However, I think his lectures are sufficiently full for his class, for very
few of the members of it that I know are capable of comprehending one half of what he says. I have often, while listening to the Doctor, wished the students could hear one of Father's lectures on the subject, for they as far surpass the Doctor's in point of correctness, science and elegance, as the meridian sun does the evening star in brilliancy. . . .

Two months later James writes again to William, who appears to have been ill, and gravely records his impressions of his brother Henry,—impressions which, especially in view of the eminence which the latter achieved, are interesting:—

JAMES TO WILLIAM.

BALTIMORE, January 10, 1822.

DEAR BROTHER, . . . You will please inform Henry that, as he has arrived at that age in which he might write a letter, nothing would give me more pleasure than to receive a letter from him, in which I shall expect him to tell me what he is studying, and how he comes on in his studies. I have, I think, perceived in Henry that constitution of mind which is admirably fitted for success in this world, and which, if properly cultivated, would manifest genius of no ordinary cast. . . .

James, having been graduated in medicine in 1822, immediately opened an office and formed a partnership for medical practice with a friend. But he was not successful. His letters contain repeated and urgent appeals to his father for money for his bare necessities. The following illustrates not only the struggles of a young physician, but also the prospects and the lines of medical practice at that period:—
JAMES TO WILLIAM.

Baltimore, May 7, 1822.

Dear Brother, ... My partner and myself have had an office open now for more than two weeks, and in all that time have had only three patients, and those not promising profit,—prospects which certainly are not very flattering; but we are told the city at present is very healthy, unusually so. We have patience, however, if we have not patients, and are on the lookout, and endeavouring to do the best we can.

The weather is becoming very warm, and a fair prospect presents itself for bilious fevers. Indeed, I am oppressed in my winter clothes, and have no light ones to change. I'll thank you if you will tell Father this, that he may afford me, if possible, means of procuring some, at least, by the first of June. There has been a good deal of sickness of late in uncle's family. I bled no less than three of them within the last week, but they are all now nearly well. . . .

In May, 1822, an interesting event occurred in the delivery by William Barton Rogers, then only seventeen and a half years of age, of an oration at the celebration of the third "Virginiad," at Jamestown, Va. His friend, Robert Saunders, Jr., also made an oration, as appears from the following:—

JAMES TO WILLIAM.

May 30, 1822.

Dear Brother,—Looking over one of the papers of yesterday, I observed a description of the celebration of the Virginiad at Jamestown, in a letter addressed by a gentleman who was present to one of the Norfolk editors. He mentioned that two orations

1 The uncle here referred to was Mr. Alexander Rogers, a resident of Baltimore.
were delivered, by two very young men of the name of Rogers and Saunders, which he complimented very highly, but particularly the first, which he said was delivered by Mr. Rogers. The thought immediately struck me that it was you, as you evinced some talent for oratory, and the subject opened a wide field for the display of it. It made me feel a momentary degree of pride, until reading farther I saw that William and Mary did not participate in the festival. This made me doubt whether you were the person, or some other of the same name. My principal object in now writing to you is to ascertain the fact. The writer says he hopes to be able to procure the first oration. If it be yours, I hope it may be published, that I may get a look at it.

The following extract illustrates the character of this youthful oration, which may be found in full in the "Richmond (Va.) Enquirer" of June 4, 1822:—

"The first Virginian colonists bade a final adieu to the thronged land of their nativity. Having taken an affectionate farewell of their friends and dearest relations, they steered toward the ample shores of America. . . .

"As they sailed into the Chesapeake, they viewed this spacious bay with admiration and delight, and found themselves enclosed in a vast amphitheatre formed by the distant forests which skirted its blue waters. The jutting points of land opened, as they advanced, into broad extended shores, or retired as if by enchantment. While the eye surveyed the rich exuberance of vegetation, and the diversified tints of the foliage which painted the varied landscape on every side, the heart dilated with the exulting anticipation of unequalled felicity, and the enraptured imagination dwelt only on dreams of delight. Beauty and grandeur appeared everywhere around; and in the ardent glow of enthusiasm, the now joyous ad-
venturers represented the country as an earthly paradise.

"In exploring this interesting scene, they entered the spacious opening through which the Chesapeake receives the tributary waters of the majestic Powhatan. A permanent resting-place, favorable for the establishment of a plantation, was now sought; and the peninsula on which we are this day assembled was the spot distinguished by their choice; Jamestown, consecrated by their toils and sufferings, became the seat of the first colony within the present limits of Virginia."

The young orators of Jamestown were always firm friends. The following letter is given to show their boyish assumption of knowledge of life and men:—

TO ROBERT SAUNDERS, JR.

RICHMOND, October 13, 1822.

DEAR ROBERT,—I have not for a long time been more out of humour than I am at this moment. Fully an hour ago I came upstairs determined to write you a very amusing letter. It occurred to me that an occasional departure from my usual dull style of writing might prevent your being weary of my correspondence. Now, the cause of my ill-humour is this,—I have been sitting ever since in a retired apartment, ready to catch at whatever started in my mind that might afford you entertainment, but after trying to stimulate my invention by every means in my power I have been unable to elicit even a single pleasant conceit. Two or three snail-paced ideas have indeed crept across my mind, but they are not of the kind I want. I find my brains are too heavy and viscid; the little wriggling maggot that stirs up witty fancies is unable to move in them. Alas! I must content myself with my usual dull, insipid style.

I agree with you in believing that there is a great
deal of villainy among men. I fear few who consult their experience can believe otherwise. Young persons who have had little intercourse with mankind are not apt to be of your sentiment, however; they generally entertain a more favourable opinion of the world than ordinary experience will support. This arises from the unsuspecting benevolence which is the natural character of youth. Viewed through this medium, man appears encircled with the halo of every virtue. Experience draws a very different picture, in which the halo of virtue is changed for the veil of hypocrisy. This painful contrast is perceived more or less by every one upon first entering the busy world. I am prepared for it myself; but so long as my dear friend remains unchanged, I will be contented.

Dear Bob, I am quite impatient to see you again. It seems almost an age since I left Williamsburg. Indeed, as the time of our departure from Richmond approaches, the days appear to move more and more tardily. In one week from this I expect we shall be on the road; then my impatience will give me no rest until the journey is ended. The anticipation of again enjoying your company is delightful.

Your sincere friend,

WILLIAM B. ROGERS.

It will be observed that in October, 1822, William was in Richmond. Hither the father had come, partly to escape the dangerous climate of Williamsburg but, on this visit, more particularly to superintend the publication of his text-book. In the course of a letter addressed to Thomas Jefferson, Dr. Rogers refers to his son William, who seems to have been his assistant, as follows:—
PATRICK K. ROGERS TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

[About 1823.]

SIR,—I take the liberty of sending you a copy of a little work ¹ which I prepared for the use of one of my classes in William and Mary.

The students who attend our courses are generally very deficient in preparatory schooling, and a great proportion of them appear to be altogether incapable of steady application, from the want of early discipline. My “Introduction,” etc., was arranged in some measure with a view to the improvement of mental discipline; its plan being convenient for regular recitals, at the blackboard, or otherwise, and it is believed that familiar acquaintance with its contents may enable the student in natural philosophy (who is duly prepared in mathematics) to pursue more general reading with satisfaction and enjoyment, and to encounter future difficulties in the science with confidence and alacrity.

... I have followed what is, perhaps, a very common, and is certainly a very natural inclination. A professor who loves the science which he teaches will be fond of treating it in a manner as a favorite child, by dressing it according to his own fancy, and by presenting it in that attitude which he supposes may most effectually secure to it, at first sight, an approving glance or a kind sentiment.

The demonstrations of the 14th, 35th, 68th, and 93d propositions are by my second son, who is now in his twentieth year, and has a very extraordinary passion for physico-mathematical sciences. About half a dozen other demonstrations are taken without alteration from the writings of Dr. Robinson and Dr. Thos. Young. All the rest of the work is my own method and language, my several guides being Newton, Robinson, Monge, Young, etc. ...

¹ An Introduction to the Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy, by P. K. Rogers. Richmond, 1822.
In the letters of 1822 and 1823, there are frequent references to William's delicate health or actual illness; and the other brothers, as we shall see, were by no means robust.

**JAMES TO WILLIAM.**

**BALTIMORE, December 19, 1822.**

Dear Brother,—The receipt of your letter was to me a source of real pleasure, for I have nothing more at heart than your health and welfare. I only hope that your sickness may not lay the foundation for serious and troublesome complaints so often the consequence of bilious disease. However, you are under the eye of a physician whose parental care will not allow anything serious, if possible, to occur. A short time after I returned to Baltimore from the country, I was apprehensive, from a pain in my side, that I had not completely recovered from the attack I had while there; but I believe now I am perfectly free from any local affection.

For the sake of improvement I attend some of the lectures in the University, and particularly the chemical lectures, by which I have had an opportunity of testing Dr. De Butts's acquirements. Dr. Murray, whose works I have read, I have found to be his right hand man. I have myself made so much progress in this beautiful science that I would not exchange my knowledge of the subject for that of the Doctor. I have for the sake of improvement written an introductory lecture on chemistry, which I should like you to see, if I had any convenient way of forwarding it; perhaps in your next letter you may suggest some plan of doing so. . . .

William, until the autumn of 1825, spent his winters in Williamsburg, and from the following letter it appears that in 1823 he was giving much time to the study of the classics: —
February 27, 1823.

DEAR BROTHER, . . . I was pleased that your apology for delay in writing was attention to the study of Greek, and not indisposition, which I feared existed, and indeed I am not disposed to view this as a trifling one, when I consider your habits of close application, in which you are so abstracted from everything but what you are at, as to be very liable to forget answering such letters as mine, in which there are no points of interesting character presented to your reflecting mind. Your views with respect to the beauties of Homer I make no doubt are correct, for although I have not studied the Greek, I love that idea of the language (I know not how I obtained it) which enables me to conceive it possible that no English translation can retain the majestic sublimity of the original.

I am reading also, for the sake of improvement in algebra, a Latin edition of Euler’s elements of that subject, and for simplicity of style, clearness of conception, and accuracy of demonstration, he certainly cannot be surpassed by any. I never had correct views of this beautiful science, but since I have perused him I have been enabled to reason on abstract infinite quantity with as much precision as on determinate ones.

I am pleased Henry has made such rapid progress in his Latin, and that Robert is not altogether devoted to play.

I shall take an opportunity soon of sending you my introductory lecture by mail, that I may know whether you think me able to write introductory lectures. I read a short essay before the Medical Society of Maryland a few evenings ago, and from their conduct to me I judged they thought me in some degree qualified to write medical essays. The subject comprehended criticism on the popular use of mercury in
fever, in which I endeavoured to prove that this invaluable article was much abused by the alchymistic physicians of the present day, who have as they think found in it the long-sought-for Panacea, and for the benefit of humanity make it their unicum remedium, and dispense it with liberal and bountiful profusion.

In the next winter (1823–24) Dr. P. K. Rogers, in writing to Thomas Jefferson, states that William was engaged in mathematical studies:

PATRICK K. ROGERS TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

WILLIAMSBURG, March 14, 1824.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON, Esq.

Sir,—The polite terms in which you are pleased to express your estimate of that portion of my "Introduction" which has been printed could not fail to give pleasure to the writer. And the kind conclusion of your letter claims more than formal thanks: it is, in commercial phrase, a draft upon the affections, which the heart is ready and willing to pay. I intend to indulge myself in the high gratification of making a visit to Monticello next July, and regret that I could not without great inconvenience have done so last summer. With an ardent curiosity to see the University, considerations (I cannot call them hopes) are connected, which make me desirous to see you as soon as the duties in which I am engaged will permit.

There is something in the organization of William and Mary which, independently of its location or other permanent disadvantages, must forever prevent it from being prosperous or successful; and while I sincerely congratulate the friends of the University on their success in the late session of the legislature, I am inclined to think that when that institution goes into operation we shall scarcely have occasion to open
the doors of the old college. Even at present there is no reputation to be acquired here, and no encouragement to activity or zeal. Your comparative view of the merits of the French and English writers on mathematical and physical science is that which I have long entertained. Two great works, however, in the English language, those of Young and Robinson, may be regarded as exceptions to the general standard of the English writers on the various branches of mechanical philosophy. Yet, I confess, I am not a convert to the theory of light and heat which is so ably defended by the former,—the theory of undulations in a diffused universal medium. The latter, in his system of mechanical philosophy, which is delivered in the happiest style of an experienced teacher, avails himself of the best and latest investigations of his contemporaries of every country.

The fluxional notation and idea must undoubtedly give place to the differential, in England and in this country, at no distant period. The clearness and facility of the latter, compared with the obscurity and the difficulty of the former, in the hands of beginners, will soon fix the destiny of the two methods. The best Scotch mathematicians have already decided in favour of the differential method. . . . My second son has almost completed a translation of the "Eléments du Calcul Differentiel" of Bézout, for the use of his younger brother, this being the only elementary work to which he has access that treats the subject by the theory of infinitesimals. He has himself been engaged in reading the more abstruse and more perfect treatise in Brewster's Encyclopædia. Although we have a pretty large library in this place, we have very few books of real use to the profession, unless those on metaphysics, or what has been pompously denominated the philosophy of the mind, are to be considered as such. We have indeed the works of Bézout and Laplace, with several of the best treatises on chemistry, and the systems of natural and mechanical philosophy
of Young and Robinson, which, after three years of solicitation, were reluctantly imported and received last summer. And of course we have access to most of the old writers on physics and mechanics, from Archimedes to Newton. . . .

I have hesitated to trouble you with the present letter, aware that the correspondence which, at your advanced period of life, you may still find agreeable to sustain, must be with old and probably very distant friends. But reflecting that to read is less fatiguing than to write, and that an acknowledgment was really due for that assurance of welcome which you have been so good as to give me, I came to the determination to tender it in this form; and with my thanks for the personal favour and sentiments of purest respect,

I remain,
Your ob't servant,

PATRICK KERR ROGERS.

In October, 1825, William and Henry had both removed to Baltimore to seek their fortunes, Henry finding employment for a time with a retail merchant. Ill health, however, pursued them, as the following letters testify: —

PATRICK K. ROGERS TO HIS SON WILLIAM.

. . . Henry writes me that your indisposition continues unabated. I cannot, I am sorry to say, suggest anything promising of utility beyond what your own experience would direct you to. It is to be hoped that a hard winter will do you service. . . .

WILLIAMSBURG, October 17, 1825.

DEAR WILLIAM,—I regret exceedingly that I have not yet received any communication from the bursar. I have feared that some of you may have been in
want of necessary articles to meet the inclemency of the season. There is now no expectation from Christian\(^1\) until he comes to Williamsburg at the commencement of next month to make his usual settlement with the faculty. This delay of salary has given me unusual concern, as I had made your aunt Ramsay expect some money at the opening of the course, and as it is high time your uncle had payment for board. Both claims must be attended to in the beginning of next month. As I do not now expect to receive any money from Christian until he comes at the first of January, I have enclosed thirty dollars, with the view of providing any article which either of the three—James, Henry, or yourself—may particularly require. Shoes and good warm socks are indispensable, and unless Henry has got already supplied he must want a couple of flannel shirts.

I have been much disappointed in not receiving a letter from any of you by yesterday’s mail. I am anxious to know how you and Henry come on in your new engagement [teaching], and how the business consists with the health of both. If you are able to continue those duties it will be a very important circumstance; you may, by a dignified and kind deportment to the boys, lay a sure foundation for an independent establishment for yourselves at some future day, should it suit in respect to your health.

I had hoped, on your receiving my last letter, or at least since Henry and you entered on your academic duties, to have had a letter of information. Do not fail to write immediately on receipt of this, or, if you should find it oppressive to do so, let James or Henry write. . . .

Your affectionate father,

P. K. Rogers.

\(^1\) The bursar of the college.
The rising University of Virginia now threatened the slender prosperity of William and Mary College. It was therefore proposed to remove the latter to Richmond. The following letter of Dr. Rogers refers to this proposal, and also illustrates the pecuniary difficulties of a professor's life in a poorly-endowed college:

PATRICK K. ROGERS TO HIS SON WILLIAM.

WILLIAMSBURG, January 16, 1826.

DEAR WILLIAM, — I send enclosed an order of the bursar on the Bank of Virginia for one hundred dollars. This day he laid his books before the Society for settlement, and the dividend to each of the professors was unexpectedly small on account of the expenses in fitting up the college, and the additional salary to be paid out of his collections. I received only two hundred dollars, fifty having been deducted for rent to the 5th of July last. He has, however, pleasant news for us. Large amounts of interest long due will certainly be paid during the spring, and he assures us that he has not the least doubt but that, between this time and next July, every cent of arrears due the professors will be paid to them. There is remaining, after the present payment, about thirteen months' salary due to every one. This will be very fortunate for me if it is made good. But there will be strong pulling at the next convention in different directions: offices to be divided, professorships to be put down, removal and no removal of the college. Keep these things private. I shall have much curious communication for you and your brother when I go on to Baltimore, which I am afraid to put on paper. One thing is to me certain: the college will not, in any time to serve us, be removed from its present location.

Desire Henry to write to me frequently. He is the
youngest sojourner, and therefore I feel particularly desirous to know how he comes on.

Of the enclosed sum it will be proper to give your aunt Ramsay at least ten dollars, and make such payment to your uncle as you may all judge right, and apply the surplus to the use of those of you who most want necessaries. I shall be happy to find on my arrival at Baltimore that you all are to each other kind and liberal, and that your health and happiness improve. James should have a keen lookout for himself; an unfortunate squall in this place may render me unable to give him any important assistance.

I remain your affectionate father,

P. K. Rogers.

The proposed removal of William and Mary College to the city of Richmond, referred to above, was advocated because of its unhealthy location, and also in the belief that only by its transfer to a larger and wealthier community could it compete successfully with the new "University" of Thomas Jefferson.¹

In the autumn of 1826 the two brothers, William and Henry, opened a school at Windsor, Md., some fourteen miles from Baltimore. Robert, now thirteen years old, left his father and joined them in Windsor, attending their school and living in the family of Mr. and Mrs. Fitzhugh.

WILLIAM TO HIS FATHER.

Windsor, November 3, 1826.

Dear Father,—I have seated myself in the midst of our school to write to you. I cannot, therefore, bestow much study on my letter.

Henry is much as usual,—still troubled with dys-

¹ See U. S. Bureau of Education: Circular No. 1, 1887; The College of William and Mary, etc., pp. 58–61.
peptic symptoms, and occasional pains in the breast. Robert has had an attack of the croup, but through the kind care of the family he is now well, though not able to come to school. . . .

Our school has been nearly stationary since we saw you. We cannot expect to make much more than a support in our present situation. The profits of the school would be sufficient to satisfy one of us, as it would enable him to lay by something for the future; but, as by the present arrangement they must be divided between us, they will not enable us to improve our circumstances. However delightful the place and society, we therefore cannot regard the situation as a permanent one, at least for both of us.

Since you left town I have made inquiry respecting the situation which Dr. Webster spoke to you about, and which I declined applying for. I called upon Dr. Stewart, who gave me particular information on the subject. The gentleman who wanted a tutor is Mr. W. Garnett, the husband of the lady who teaches a very celebrated female school in Virginia. He has three sons, whom he wishes to educate at home. They are to be instructed in Greek, Latin, English and Mathematics; and the tutor is to receive a salary of four hundred dollars and his boarding. The salary is handsome, and to one in my situation is very enticing. From the importance attached to the classical instruction, I fear my qualifications would hardly be sufficient. Mr. Garnett observes in a letter, from which Dr. Stewart read a passage, that the person whom he employs must have great patience, for he must be content to teach without the use of the rod or emulation. My present situation is truly delightful in every respect but one: it is not sufficiently lucrative. But for this I would not change my abode, with the same employment, for any other in the world. I have felt anxious to have your opinion again on this subject, ever since I heard that the place was still
Mr. Garnett is a visitor of the college; perhaps you may have seen him in Williamsburg. Teaching is much less profitable in Maryland than in Virginia. There, a classical teacher may in a few years lay up what will enable him to obtain a profession and begin the practice of it; here, unless he is so fortunate as to become fashionable in the city, he can only realize a support. You may, perhaps, hear of some situation in Virginia that would be desirable. If you should, please inform us.

I remain your affectionate son,

WILLIAM B. ROGERS.

N. B.—Do not from this letter infer that I am displeased with our present situation. I am highly pleased with it, but I feel that I ought to look to the future.

W. B. R.

In January, 1827, we find William delivering lectures before the Maryland Institute in Baltimore, and from his "Introductory" lecture quote a few sentences:

"The general considerations which I have thus presented are such as the scene before me is calculated to suggest. I shall now conclude my preliminary observations with a few remarks relative to this institution, and then proceed to topics more immediately connected with the subject of the succeeding lectures. I need not in this place enlarge upon the usefulness of popular courses of scientific instruction; with respect to my own department, this, I hope, will be clearly evinced in another part of the present discourse. Of late years, the public mind, both in this country and abroad, has been much interested in the subject. In many places institutions calculated to render useful science attainable by the mass of society have been established; and such is the growing im-
pression of their value that their number continues yearly to increase. Our own city has not been backward in this career of improvement. The Maryland Institute is, I believe, the second in point of seniority in the United States, and has now been upwards of a year in successful operation. During this period the public has had an opportunity of testing the advantages which it proffers. And may not its friends believe that the laudable sentiments which led to its erection have been more extensively and permanently impressed upon the public mind by the evidences which it has already afforded of its useful character? May they not hope that it has become, and will continue to be, an object of the kind regard and fostering care of our philanthropic citizens; that it will be cherished with the guardian attention which was in ancient times bestowed upon the vestal fire whose extinction was thought to be ominous of evil; and that, being thus enabled to diffuse the light of useful knowledge, not only among ourselves but to distant places, it will, by the invaluable results to which it may in time conduce, assist in irradiating with splendour the city which gave it birth?

WILLIAM TO HIS FATHER.

Baltimore, January 25, 1827.

... My lectures continue to be well attended. On Monday night the room was crowded. I am at present engaged with the subject of astronomy, and have already delivered four lectures upon it, in which I have been much assisted by an admirable tellurian which has been loaned to me. It would be difficult to give you an idea of the beauty of this instrument. It was constructed by an ingenious young mechanic in this place a few years ago, and has since been in the possession of a teacher of a female school. It has suffered much injury from the ill-usage it has received, but is still of great value in illustrating many impor-
tant points in astronomy. It exhibits with great precision the relative motions of the earth, the moon, and Venus around the sun. The orbit of the earth is a horizontal circular ring, about six feet in its exterior diameter and six inches broad, upon which the signs of the ecliptic and the months of the year are inscribed. This ring stands upon four legs. The sun is a large gilt globe placed upon an axis, having the proper obliquity to the ecliptic. Venus is a silvered ball. The earth is a small terrestrial globe of about the same magnitude as that which we used to attach to a string and move around a candle. The parallelism of the earth's axis to itself is maintained in all positions, together with the diurnal and annual motions. A brass circle encompassing the globe in a direction perpendicular to the ecliptic presents its face always to the sun, and serves in a striking manner to distinguish the enlightened from the dark hemisphere. This instrument affords a clear explanation of the phenomena of the seasons, and the variations in the lengths of days, the equation of time, the apparent motion of Venus and the other planets, and a variety of other interesting particulars. As a means of illustration, I think it is infinitely more useful than an orrery or planetarium of the same magnitude. Embracing but a few planetary bodies, it is simple, and the movements it exhibits are conspicuous at a distance. I wish you could see it in operation. I am sure you would desire to have one among your apparatus.

Dr. Vethake is lecturing on the gases. I confess I do not admire the plan of his lectures. He first reads the lecture from a manuscript book, and concludes with the experiments. Do you conceive this a judicious course? It is objected to by many members of the class.

James is well and apparently in good spirits. He is a great hand at analysis. Mr. —— is becoming more of a saint every day. He is the most disgusting canter
I have ever seen. Although he is a member of the Institute he seldom attends, preferring to be present at prayer-meetings, class-meetings, etc.

I have become acquainted with Dr. Howard and Colonel Long, of the U. S. Engineers. They are very amiable men. I have been surprised to see the crudeness of their scientific knowledge on some subjects. Where principles are concerned, I have the vanity to think that I could sometimes set them right. . . .

Windsor, January 30, 1827.

Dear Father,—Henry received a letter from you about three weeks ago. It was a very interesting one to us. We had been desirous of knowing the state of the college, and it gave us full information on this point. The playfulness of some parts of it delighted us, for every indication that you are happy gives us pleasure. We congratulate you upon having an agreeable companion in Dr. Wimer.1 The amiable disposition of that gentleman must be particularly pleasing from the contrast it forms with the very opposite character of his predecessor. It is like a mild, vernal sunshine succeeding to cold, changeful, blustering weather. It really gives us great satisfaction to know that you can have society congenial with your taste. . . . As —— has but one student, I think he can lecture from no other motive than the love of talking, which is with him a very powerful passion. So fond is he of the music of his own voice that I really believe, rather than omit lecturing, he would harangue the desks and benches. I believe his lectures have often transformed his hearers into objects hardly more intellectual. How I pity the luckless wight who must sit singly for three long hours listening to ——'s soporific discussions! . . .

1 President of William and Mary College.
HENRY TO HIS FATHER.

WINDSOR, January 8, 1827.

DEAR FATHER,—William had expressed a wish to write to you shortly after the receipt of your pleasing letter. I therefore deferred writing until I could have something worth communicating. . . .

As I have lately felt a slight recurrence of my dyspeptic feeling, Mr. Fitzhugh has, with his habitual kindness and attention, given me the use of a horse whenever it has been practicable. Indeed, I can never feel sufficiently grateful for the disposition to oblige us which they have all so continually evinced. A few weeks ago Mr. Fitzhugh procured from his brother in Baltimore the loan of a very fine-toned violin for my use. William has borrowed his cousin's flute, and with the aid of some of our old music we could enjoy ourselves extremely. As it is, we frequently play in unison. I begin to look forward with impatience for the return of summer, that it may afford us the never-failing pleasure of your cheering presence. . . .

The prospect now arose of a professorship for William in the Maryland Institute in Baltimore:—

WILLIAM TO HIS FATHER.

BALTIMORE, March 14, 1827.

. . . My principal object in this letter is to inform you that a respectable appointment will probably be offered to me, and to consult you with regard to the propriety of accepting it. You know Mr. Craig has been lecturing during the winter on Natural Philosophy in the Maryland Institute. Having resolved to remove to the Western country he intends to resign his professorship, and to endeavour to dispose of his apparatus to the Institute. I have lately had several interviews with him, and he has told me that if the Institute buys his apparatus he will endeavour to have me ap-
pointed his successor, if I desire it. With this view he has spoken to several of the managers, and there is much probability that the place will be offered to me. There will be some salary given, but for the first year or two it will be small. The institution is already more prosperous than was at first anticipated. There are at present 600 members, and they will no doubt greatly augment. Mr. Craig seems very anxious that I should obtain the place, and had proposed me before I knew anything of the matter. Henry thinks I should eagerly embrace this offer if it is made. I wish to know of you if you think I should accept the appointment. Am I competent, and in other respects would it be proper? I wish to do exactly as you will counsel me.

The appointment, however, was postponed, as appears from the following letter from William to his father:

Baltimore, March 31, 1827.

Dear Father, . . . I have been disappointed in my expectation of obtaining a situation in the Institute. The managers after a great deal of delay have informed Mr. Craig that they cannot purchase his apparatus. They have been endeavouring to collect money for this purpose, but without success. I think if they possessed a proper spirit they would buy it at their own expense, rather than permit the institution to be without it. Had they purchased it, I would certainly have been appointed. As it is, I presume no appointment will be made.

Our school at present is small. Permanently we cannot look for more than a decent support from it. We are both very well contented. I confess I would have been better pleased with a station in the Institute, and I felt much satisfaction in the anticipation of an employment so congenial to my taste. It was with great pleasure I read your account of the improved condition
of the college. Nothing would be more gratifying to me than to see William and Mary attended by numerous classes and enjoying the reputation it deserves. . . .

One reason for William's anxiety to secure the place in the Maryland Institute appears in a letter from Henry to his father, dated April 13, 1827. Henry's treatment of the professional outlook is also suggestive:

HENRY TO HIS FATHER.

. . . William has apprised you of the failure of his hopes with respect to the Institute; nothing further has transpired, and I think nothing will. The managers have resolved to purchase a less expensive apparatus, not thinking it advisable to buy at present such unnecessary and costly instruments as a telescope and microscope. Whether they will apply to William or not we cannot tell, but some one should be appointed, and that soon, and I know of no other individual here who is at all competent to fill the station. They appear, however, so little interested in the prosperity and so incompetent to the management of the Institute over which they have been placed, that I fear it will soon fall through. It would have been a fortunate circumstance for us both had William been successful, as I might then have been enabled to lay by a couple of hundred dollars every year towards acquiring a profession; but now, being associated together, with the expenses of two and little better than the income of one, we cannot look forward to anything higher than a country school, the proceeds of which are both small and precarious. The school yields us at present about five hundred and fifty dollars, and we may calculate on an average of five hundred. This, it is true, is amply sufficient for every present expense, but the future is also to be thought of. Our duties are light and our leisure considerable; we think, therefore, that were we
once entered upon the study of a profession we might prosecute it with considerable facility and but little expense. We expect shortly to have our lodgings and our school removed to old Windsor, where we can prosecute any study with far less interruption. We would be glad, therefore, to have some certain and definite object in view, but it is difficult to fix upon the choice of a profession, both law and medicine are so greatly overdone. In Baltimore there are no less than ninety graduates in medicine. This is enough to destroy all confidence of success. The law likewise has its difficulties, but there appears to be in this State a better opening at the bar. To a young man, there is little prospect of success in medicine unless he settles in an unhealthy neighborhood, and to us health will always be a matter of the first consideration. William says he will write to you soon, and deliver his thoughts pro and con at greater length. I believe he has abandoned all thoughts of the Institute. James has received a proposition from Mr. Tyson, but what it is I do not know. I suppose, however, he has written, and you know more of the matter than I do. When we saw him last, which is some time since, he appeared to think that his prospect in the country was a gloomy one. . . .

JAMES TO HIS FATHER.

April 20, 1827.

DEAR FATHER,—I am now at Windsor, which place I have visited for the purpose of consulting my brothers upon the same subject I desire to consult you upon. Isaac Tyson, the chemical manufacturer, is desirous that I take the same office in the factory which I had last summer. He is willing to dispense with a written contract, and would substitute in its place a promise to the same amount. With any honest man, the one would be as obligatory as the other. He has made arrangements so as to change
the situation of the experiment room to a more airy and agreeable part of the premises, and also to improve the manufacture of chlorine, so as to render it not so unpleasant to the operator. He is willing to allow only 350 dollars salary the first year and 400 the second.

Upon reflecting upon my present prospect and situation, and consulting with my brothers, I have thought I should accept the situation. For a long time I have had no practice to attend to.

Your affectionate son,

JAMES B. ROGERS.

The summer vacation at the college followed and appears to have been uneventful, except for the death of Dr. Wilmer, President of William and Mary. At the opening of the college session in the autumn, an Introductory Address was delivered by Dr. P. K. Rogers. Beginning with an eulogium of Dr. Wilmer, Dr. Rogers proceeded to a careful consideration of important educational questions. From this part of his address a few characteristic paragraphs are quoted:

"In the most extensive acceptation of the term, Education comprehends everything — whether systematic or accidental — which contributes to develop, improve, and determine the powers of the mind, the tendencies of the passions, and the affections of the heart.

"To promote the happiness of the individual, to raise him to the higher standard of worth and excellence, to render him not merely a harmless but a valuable member of the community of men, to give him the disposition and the power to be useful to his companions in the frequently difficult and cheerless journey of life, and to prepare him for the happiness of a future world, are the great ends to be kept in view in the education of every human being. And this is equally true whatever
place in society he may occupy, from the humble walk of the cottager to the throne of national authority. . . .

"The advantages derived from the science of natural philosophy are of two kinds, indirect and direct. The former consists in a happy discipline of mind, a conscious satisfaction in the possession of a species of knowledge which increases our power and independence, enlarged views, and a chastened and well-regulated imagination. . . . While the study of natural philosophy restrains the thoughts within the limits of reality, it at the same time affords abundant scope for the sublimest conceptions, and the most excursive flights of imagination. Carrying us beyond the boundaries of sense, it weakens each selfish feeling, by interesting us in everything around us. It is the best preparation for the study of mind; for the rigour with which its researches are conducted, and its cautious mode of reasoning by induction or inference from ascertained phenomena, check that rage for verbal disputation which has, from the time of Plato to our own, impeded the progress of the human understanding. . . .

"Metaphysics, in an extended sense, may be considered as the science of ultimate induction. . . .

. . . "It is impossible to draw a definite line between physics and metaphysics as applied to external things; nor is it by any means necessary. But in all our general theories, whether philosophical or physiological or theological, the mind rests at last on some ultimate conception which is purely metaphysical."

Early in the autumn of this year William was a second time appointed to lecture in the Maryland Institute.

WILLIAM TO HIS FATHER.

Baltimore, October 31, 1827.

. . . I have just received a reply to the note which I addressed to the Committee of Lectures of the Institute. It will not be in their power to afford
more than two hundred dollars to each lecturer. This sum will be guaranteed, and they will be enabled in time to enlarge the salary. They expect two lectures a week for three months. I wish to know if you would advise me to accept the situation on these terms. . . .

BALTIMORE, November 11, 1827.

. . . I had determined to engage in the Institute before your letter reached me, and had informed the managers that I would accede to their proposals. . . . After I had written to you to request your opinion, I regretted having done so, and thought that you would be best pleased that I should judge and act for myself in the matter. Henry’s health at present is as good as it was in the spring, and he is confident of his ability to conduct the school alone.

BALTIMORE, December 9, 1827.

. . . I delivered my introductory lecture on last Monday. It was received with the most flattering applause, and although my colleague, Dr. Vethake, is an experienced lecturer, having been a professor at Carlisle, I believe I did not sink on being compared with him. On Thursday I gave the first lecture of my course, which I have understood yielded great satisfaction. I spoke extemporaneously, assisted by a few heads methodically arranged. . . .

BALTIMORE, December 27, 1827.

I am progressing with my lectures in the Institute, and I believe the class is well pleased with them. Our philosophical apparatus has not yet arrived, but we expect it daily. Henry has seen a list of the articles which have been ordered for the Institute, and has probably enumerated some of them to you. I long to obtain the handling of them. If I had the use of them at present, I am confident that I could give great éclat to our Institution. As it is, though I do not possess a single philosophical instrument, my lectures are very

1 Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pa.
well attended. My class is at least as great as that of my colleague, who has a tolerable chemical apparatus at his command. I make great use of the blackboard, and manage to communicate the more obvious principles of the science pretty clearly by means of drawings and diagrams. My last lecture treated of uniformly accelerated and retarded motion and projectiles. In the preceding lecture I exhibited the experiment of the guinea and feather by means of a small air-pump, which was lent me by a member of the class, and this is the only important one which I have been able to produce since the commencement of the course. . . .

HENRY TO HIS FATHER.

BALTIMORE, January 1, 1828.

. . . Though labouring under the great disadvantage of want of apparatus, William is still able to command large and even increasing classes; that of yesterday evening considerably exceeded two hundred, a larger assembly than any they hitherto had had. It appears that the lecture-room can contain only about three hundred persons. I cannot refrain from expressing my surprise at William's great success, aided as he is by little more than the blackboard and chalk. . . .

WILLIAM TO HIS FATHER.

BALTIMORE, February 19, 1828.

. . . The course in the Institute will soon terminate. Dr. Vethake will conclude his lectures on Saturday week,—the 1st of March,—and I shall finish nearly at the same time. The want of apparatus has compelled me entirely to omit several subjects in my department. This, though a matter of regret to me, may prove advantageous to my course in the winter, as it will enable me to give it an air of novelty. I have really been surprised to see my lectures so well
attended, though entirely destitute of the usual attractions of a popular course. Last week I lectured upon the tides and the theories of the earth. I took occasion to expose the absurdities of Captain Symmes's hypothesis, which had gained many advocates in Baltimore, and my criticisms appeared to excite much interest in the class. There is some talk of connecting an English and Mathematical School with the Institute. It is highly probable that this will be effected in the ensuing spring. Should it be soon, the managers are desirous that I should undertake the management of the school. They will meet on Monday next, when I shall receive more definite information on this subject. I think when I have completed my course I will pay you a visit. I wish to see the old college, and particularly your apparatus-room, and I am desirous of examining the electrical instruments which you have constructed.

HENRY TO HIS FATHER.

BALTIMORE, April 12, 1828.

... I have been less punctual in writing, as William has personally and by letter informed you concerning my health and whatever else it would interest you to know. I was pleased to hear that you advised my joining with him in the contemplated school to be established in the Institute. This change of circumstances will be highly acceptable, as I foresee, from its present declining state, that I would have to relinquish my present establishment in the country. My connection with William, though it must for the present be in a subordinate capacity, will eventually redound, I think, to my advantage. Even now his reputation is considerable, and the approaching winter will no doubt augment it. ... William is at present engaged in maturing a scheme for the regulation of the school, to be offered to a committee of managers for their approval. ...
To the Committee of the Institute:

Gentlemen,—In obedience to your request, I submit the following hints towards a plan and regulations for the High School about to be established in the Maryland Institute. . . .

1. The aim of the school being to impart such knowledge and to induce such habits of mind as may be most beneficial to youth engaging in mechanical and mercantile employments, the study of mathematics will be an object of primary attention, and will, it is expected, be pursued to a considerable extent. The earlier classes will be instructed in arithmetic, reading, writing, grammar and geography; the more advanced, in algebra, geometry, mensuration, surveying, navigation, perspective, etc., and perhaps in English composition. The latter grade of scholars, after having made a certain proficiency in their mathematical studies, will be taught the elementary principles of astronomy, mechanics, natural philosophy and chemistry, and will be permitted to attend the lectures in the Institute in aid of their scientific studies, as a reward for their diligence and improvement.

2. Classical studies are not within the scope of the school.

3. The number will be limited to fifty.

4. To obtain admission into the school, the pupil must be able to spell correctly, read with facility, write a fair hand, and perform arithmetical computations at least as far as the rule of three.

5. The price of instruction will be eight dollars per quarter, in which the expense of fuel, pens, slate-pencils and other stationery, and books, is not included. . . .
The subject of railways was now beginning to be actively discussed, and William early contributed to the popular interest in the subject by experimental lectures on the principles involved.

HENRY TO HIS FATHER.

Baltimore, May 3, 1828.

... William has lately delivered to very crowded assemblies a couple of lectures on the subject of Railroads, which have greatly roused the attention and gained the interest of the people here. By the assistance of some beautiful models, he rendered them both instructive and entertaining. Indeed, such was the eagerness displayed by the populace to become better acquainted with the principles of an undertaking in which they are all interested, that the lecture-room could not contain more than half of those who endeavoured to gain admission. This he finds has operated favourably in advancing his new undertaking, and when the August holidays shall have freed the children from their existing engagements we expect an accession that will fill the proposed school to our limit of fifty. William will write in a few days, informing you more particularly of the progress we are making. . . .

WILLIAM TO HIS FATHER.

Baltimore, May 19, 1828.

Dear Father,—I received your letter of the 14th this afternoon. I believe the "low spirits" of which you complain is inherent in the family; for Henry and myself are sometimes affected with it, although we have never been able to assign a reasonable cause for our depression. It is not to be wondered at that in your situation the mind should occasionally fall into this state. It is the natural consequence of the monotony of a village life. But I hope a visit to Baltimore in July
A VISIT TO PHILADELPHIA.

will exhilarate you. I should have written to you before this to inform you of the progress of our plans, but I was desirous of first ascertaining our prospects of success. I am pleased that it is now in my power to tell you that they are encouraging. We opened school on Monday last with ten pupils, and the number has since been augmented to seventeen. In addition to these, we have the promise of many others who, being engaged in other schools, cannot with propriety be withdrawn until the expiration of their current quarter. These included, our list numbers about twenty-four. This is not a bad beginning. . . . I have no doubt that in less than six months our school will be in a very flourishing condition. The school-room, which is one of the lower apartments in the Institute, fronts on Charles Street, and is airy and tolerably commodious. Our hours of duty are from eight to half after eleven in the morning, and from half after two to five in the afternoon, making six hours in the day. Robert, who left the country last week and boards with us at Mr. Trego’s, has entered the school. He appears to be perfectly satisfied with the change, and is in good health and spirits. The week before last, Henry and I paid a visit to Philadelphia for the purpose of inspecting the High School of the Franklin Institute. We remained there two days, and would willingly have prolonged our stay if it had been in our power. Philadelphia has greatly increased in extent and beauty since my boyish days, yet I did not feel altogether as a stranger in it. I soon became familiar with its streets, and recognized many scenes of my juvenile frolics. I visited the parts of the city in which we used to reside, and felt a peculiar interest in viewing the house in Ninth Street and the old University. We could not obtain an interview with Uncle James¹ until the morning of our departure. He

¹ Mr. James Rogers, a merchant of Philadelphia, often referred to later.
treated us with cordiality, and expressed a wish that we would make a longer stay in the city. He is quite gray, but nevertheless appears to enjoy almost youthful hilarity. He inquired particularly respecting your health and situation.

**HENRY TO HIS FATHER.**

***Baltimore, June 7, 1828.***

... James is quite well. He is actively employed in the discharge of his duties, which require, indeed, through the day, an unremitting application. I think he displays, from his success in many delicate and complicated processes, and from the certainty and accuracy of his final determinations, no ordinary acquaintance with the difficult operations of refined analysis. Indeed, I have no doubt but that he will one day be among the first practical chemists in the country.

I feel my impatience to see you rapidly increasing as the time draws near, and find myself daily and almost hourly estimating the shortening period which must elapse before that time arrives. Secluded as I am in a great measure from any society in which I could mingle with any degree of comfort, and debarred from any substitute I might find in books, from the oppressiveness of the season and the effects of the confinement attendant upon school, I am continually wishing for your enlivening company. I feel an eager longing for those cheerful moments which an intercourse with you has never failed to bring. I believe I shall never cease to look to you as a guardian spirit. The sense of security which I always have when possessing your advice has afforded me many of my happiest hours; and, now that I am embarking in an arduous business, the value of your counsel will be highly prized. I hope you will bring with you your violin and music. ...
DEAR FATHER,—We have been expecting a letter from you for some weeks, and have become apprehensive that you are unwell. I hope you will write to us immediately. We look forward with pleasure to your arrival in Baltimore, and our impatience increases as the time at which we expect you approaches. We are all pretty well, though some of us are enfeebled by the warmth of the season. Robert is quite hearty. Henry and I have found our engagement very fatiguing. We have recently instituted a plan in the school which enables us to relieve each other on alternate days. The mode in which teaching is usually conducted renders it as servile and laborious an occupation as that of a ditcher. Teachers in our cities find it necessary to devote the whole of their time to the concerns of their occupation. Some of them keep their schools open for more than eight hours in the day. Surely their health must ultimately sink under such confinement. We are employed in the school only six hours, and find this period sufficiently long.

James has a companion in his chemical engagements,—a young gentleman recently from France, a pupil of the celebrated Thénard. He is the most scientific young man I have ever met. With an intimate acquaintance with chemistry, theoretical and practical, and a knowledge of all the important principles of physical science, he combines a large fund of general information. We find his conversation very interesting. He is able to describe from personal knowledge many of the distinguished scientific characters of France and England.

You have perhaps heard of the solemnities which are to take place on the 4th of July. On that day the construction of our railroad will be commenced. A procession, in which all professions, dignities, and trades will be embodied, will march through the city.
to the spot (about two miles from town) at which the great work will be begun. The spectacle will no doubt be imposing. The mechanics, merchants, farmers, doctors and lawyers have been busy for the last two weeks in making arrangements to unite in the procession. On this occasion the Freemasons will display all the decorations and paraphernalia of their order; the carpenters will exhibit the implements of their trade and a house moved on wheels; the sailors, a full-rigged ship, transported in the same manner; and it is said that the manufacturers will work a spinning jenny and loom as they move along, and with the aid of the tailors will produce a summer coat before the procession has arrived at the point of its destination, which they will present to old Mr. Carroll to be worn during the ceremonies of the day. Mr. Carroll, who, in consequence of the estimation in which his public services during the Revolution are held, is called upon to officiate on all occasions of general interest, is to break the first ground for the railroad with a silver trowel and pick. I must now close with affectionate wishes for your health and happiness.

As has been stated in the previous chapter, Dr. P. K. Rogers came northward this year as usual and was stricken by malarial fever at Ellicott's Mills, Md., where he died on August 1, 1828. How great this blow was to his sons will be understood by those who have read the preceding letters. Two months after his death, in the autumn of the same year, William was chosen his father's successor in the chair of Natural Philosophy and Chemistry in William and Mary College, and thenceforward became, in large measure, the head of the family.

Hon. A. H. H. Stuart, a pupil of Dr. Patrick Rogers and a life-long friend of his son William Barton Rogers, has kindly supplied some recollections of
Dr. Rogers, and of life at William and Mary in 1824–25, as follows: —

"About the middle of October, 1824, I left my home in Staunton, Va., to become a student at William and Mary College. I was then seventeen years and a few months old. The Faculty of the college consisted of Dr. John Augustine Smith, President; Dr. Patrick Rogers, Professor of Chemistry and Natural Philosophy; Ferdinand Campbell, Professor of Mathematics; and Judge James Semple, Professor of Law.

"Some delay was caused in the commencement of the exercises of the college by the great celebration of the surrender of Cornwallis, which was held at Yorktown (twelve miles distant from Williamsburg) on the 19th of October, and was attended by General Lafayette.

"The professors were all men of ability and admirably qualified for the duties of their respective positions; but the financial condition of the State and other causes tended to reduce the number of students in attendance to about thirty. This paucity of numbers led to a more free and familiar intercourse between the students and the professors, and with each other, than would have existed if the number had been larger. There was no regular curriculum in force, and each student was at liberty to select the studies he would pursue. . . .

"Dr. Smith, the President, resided in a spacious brick mansion, known as the 'President's House,' situated on the north side of the lawn of four acres which lies in front of the college. Professor Rogers occupied a similar house on the south side of the lawn, and known as the 'Brafferton House.' The other professors lived some distance from the college.

"In 1824 Professor Rogers was a widower. His family consisted of four sons, viz., James, William, Henry and Robert, all of whom, in after life, became distinguished scientists and professors. James, the
oldest, had completed his education and left Williamsburg before I entered college. . . . William had graduated with great distinction a year or two before I entered college, and was looked up to with the respect and almost reverence with which college boys regard those who have won high college honours.

"Henry was, I presume, near my own age. We were classmates and friends, and, although it so happened that we did not meet in after life, I noted with great pleasure every step that he made in his onward progress to the success and distinction which he so richly merited. Robert was, during my sojourn in Williamsburg, an active, vigorous, and sprightly schoolboy, apparently thirteen or fourteen years of age. In form and features he was much more like his father than either of his brothers. My most vivid recollection of him is as a diligent flyer of kites on the lawn! He, like his brothers, attained great distinction.

"Dr. Patrick Rogers, at the time I became acquainted with him, was about sixty, or possibly sixty-five years of age, and a man of imposing presence. He was about six feet in height and was massively framed. I presume he must have weighed from 180 to 200 pounds. His hair was as white as snow, and his complexion ruddy and healthful, and contrasted beautifully with his snow-like hair. His face was distinctively Irish in its general appearance. His manner was deliberate and dignified, but courteous and affable. In temperament, I judge, from the readiness with which his face would flush with each emotion, that he was sensitive and excitable. He was devotedly attached to and proud of his sons, and on more than one occasion I was struck with the interest which he showed in the amusements of Robert. . . .

"Dr. Rogers was a very learned man, and a most able, faithful instructor, and seemed desirous of keeping pace with the events of the day. As an illustration, I will refer to a single interesting incident.
About the middle of the session, the newspapers of the State were teeming with accounts of the mysterious ringing of the bells in the elegant mansion of Colonel John Taylor, of Mount Airy, in King George County. The bells would commence ringing violently all over the house without any visible human agency, or cause for so doing; and there was much speculation as to the true cause. In a few days thereafter, when the doors of Dr. Rogers's lecture-room opened, the eyes of the students were greeted with the extraordinary spectacle of a whole system of bells, in different parts of the room, ringing in concert, without any apparent cause for their activity. After we had looked for some time at the wonderful spectacle, they were suddenly and simultaneously silenced, and the professor then proceeded with a delightfully instructive lecture to show how the result had been accomplished, by currents of positive and negative electricity, thereby explaining all the phenomena connected with the Taylor mansion on scientific principles.

"Dr. Rogers lived a somewhat secluded life, mingling but little in general society. His time was devoted to study, the society of his sons, and the direction and supervision of their education. He enjoyed the reputation of being a profound scholar, and I can bear testimony that he was a careful and faithful teacher, singularly successful in his illustrative experiments before his class."