Wednesday, May 15, 1839 Letter from William Goodell to Josiah Cady (written from Utica, New York)

Dear Father,

Last Friday, I think it was, I wrote you a few hasty lines; by a Mr. Atherton, who called on me as he was returning to Attleboro from Ohio. I suppose I may take it for granted that you have received it, and yet I wrote you so hastily that I hardly know what I did write, by my \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and I may as well begin the story again.

On Thursday morning, May 2, at about half past 3 o’clock, the Lord was pleased to bless us with another fine daughter, who is doing well thus far, and her mother is comfortable, and in a fair way to recover in safety. Thus, when we feared evil, the Lord has covered us with the mantle of his goodness and mercy.

Our nurse, Mrs. Collins, had been in the family for a number of days previous. I went for the physician (Dr. Coventry) in the night about 1/2 past 12, and in about 3 hours was cheered with the voice of the newcomer. We had calculated on sending for one or two ladies who live in our neighborhood - but the nurse and the Doctor did not seem to think it needed to disturb them, and the event found it unnecessary. Maria slept in an adjoining room and slept soundly till morning, before she learned anything of the news. Mary Campbell, our hired girl, who slept with her, waked in the night, but did not get up till morning. So you see we had little ceremony on the occasion. The babe was washed in pure water and dressed before daylight, the doctor having left previously. After breakfast, the whole of our little family assembled in Clarissa’s chamber, for reading and family worship, which has been continued every morning and evening since. You will see by this one circumstance, the contrast between this time and when Maria was a babe. In the course of the forenoon the doctor called again. Called on Friday & Saturday, making 3 times besides the first night’s attendance, and then told us to call for him if needed - which we have not yet done tho’ I have once or twice consulted with him. We have had no watcher but the nurse, who gets along very well. Since the night the babe was born, I have not been deprived of an hour’s rest. We think the Doctor and nurse are both first rate, in their respective callings. Clarissa has felt no symptom of the faintness and palpitation that formerly afflicted her - except once, slightly. This was the second or third day, when she had some headache and nervous excitement. It seems her milk was about beginning to come, after which she felt better. She has taken no medicine except a little castor oil, a little valerian tea, and some herb drink once or twice - no other anodynes - no opium - no paregonic - not even camphor, except a piece of the gum to smell of, and a phial of camphor and lime water. So you see we have not needed the “except for medicine” in our renunciation of alcohol. Not the least particle have we had in the house, not even for bathing or in the form of a tincture, for many years. Clarissa has plenty of milk for her babe. For a time we thought it would become necessary to procure apparatus for drawing it off, that the breasts might not be \_\_\_\_\_\_. But the growing appetite of the new boarder promises, for the present, to save us form that trouble. A little warm vinegar and a diaculum plaster, the applications are all that the breasts have yet required. On the sixth day Clarissa experienced some symptoms of recovery which some of the good \_\_\_\_\_ had told her ought not to appear previous to the ninth day; lest there should be danger of a decline. On inquiry of the Doctor he told us not to be uneasy on that account, but let nature take its course.

On the ninth day, when she began to sit up in a chair, (as she continues to do, daily), the former state of things returned, and continues, with moderation, to the present time. On this account, and owing to some disturbance by night nursing, she gains rather slowly but regularly. She hopes to continue nursing the child, at least for the present. If her health requires it, we shall do otherwise, but to dry up her milk if it is not necessary would be a job better to be avoided.

Little Miss is tolerably good natured and quiet. Sometimes turns night into day and day into night, but is beginning to correct that bad habit. Her habit of keeping her eyes open by candlelight made them sore for a time, but she is getting over it. We call her eyes blue, but they are so dark that Mrs. Collins and Mary Campbell were inclined to vote them black. She is a round, plump, solid looking child - weighed 8 1/4 pounds the day she was born & seems to be healthy and sprightly. We think of naming her Rhoda Lavinia - Rhoda was my mother’s name.

We feel that we have abundant cause to be gratified to God for his mercies.

I should like to write on a number of other topics, if I had time and room, but must hasten to conclude. Our love to all our relatives and friends.

Affectionately yours,

William Goodell