

Iowa City April 27 1864.

My Dear Husband,

Your very very welcome letter came today. I had been expecting it several days as the Herald of a later date had come to hand. — we don't get the papers only once in about 4 days, & then they come in a batch. — & it is somewhat the same way with letters. — there is some carelessness at the office here I think.

It is strange Marcellus could not tell you ~~what~~ what Shackelford said, especially as he could tell him of having met you in Havana & what your plans were in coming on.

— You ought to have written to Lewis Salmon to know if you had any cotton yet on the rivers or all stolen or captured, then your plans could be arranged more definitely. & should you go to see about it: — go right to Gen Gilmore, show him your passed documents &c & he no doubt will grant aid & protection to get your cotton, they are at last the proper ones to apply to, as they have time to bestow thought on it & will see the validity of the claim, & the right of union men to exact protection of the Gov. — especially when they take time to steal from the rebels.

I see you are embarked in stocks somewhat — my judgement is too inexperienced to advise, yet I must caution you from risking too far, as what you now have in hand is our all: if those bank bills could be invested now in good Southern real estate, it would realize something for us some day, but in the event of subjugation, they will be worth then no more, than now. for instance the best banks of Tenn & Louisiana are worth

about 50¢ on the dollar. I may be mistaken. & hope I may prove so. I am sure that I don't wish to undertake the trip & would only to save it from ruin.

Hugh is studying like a Trojan, all of his time out of school he is applying himself to his studies. — There is considerable to stimulate his ambition & he has some ambition too. — the quarter will be out in two months or less & then there is a long vacation of two or three months.

— in order to make cheap, boys from a distance club together of four or six, rent a room or two & hire some one to cook & wash for them; girls do the same way; there are two with a room in the Summit House boarding themselves, they bring their room furniture from home. These two are from Muscatine. Poor things, — it is a poor board of it, sure enough; they have not had a spark of fire for more than a week, so it is poor living, they do their own cooking, when they have anything warm, they are now living on baker's bread, crackers & butter, they say once in a while they get so hungry they are obliged to cook something warm, but they don't do that often. — their provision costs them about \$1.50 per week, apiece, they say, &

Sometimes as low as a dollar for each. — this does not include wood & lights. — so you see our board compared to theirs is very cheap, for we get a good fare, of a plentiful variety for health, wood, lights & furniture at two dollars a week for the children & they eat like birds.

I am sorry you don't get good butter & biscuits like we do. — in fact all they have is good & cooked homelike.

Ellie is going to school & likes her school-marm very much; she lets her come home as soon as her lessons are paid. — She wants to learn fast to

get to write a letter to her Papa. She says, I hear her now coming in from school. in two weeks more the free ward school closes & a select school is opened by one of the teachers in the building. I shall send the little boys & Ellie then & they will be together, as it now is, they go to different departments, from bus & she feels very timid alone, that is among strangers.

Hugh's term closes July 1st & then comes a vacation of ten weeks. if by that time you have been successful enough to retrieve our folly in coming out here, I will go back & live in the vicinity of N.Y. or you may make your trip to Fla. & get us located in Jacksonville for the winter; I live in some such speculation all the time:—it is so far out here & expensive traveling that you cannot afford running back & forth & therefore when our retrenchments will admit of it, we must be nearer to gether: if we were within a distance that you could come & see ^{us} once a week I would be very well satisfied. I am getting along tolerably cheerful now:—for the first few days after you left; it seemed impossible for me to stay here & time would not pass away. but the children are interested & seem happy & I am pleased to see them run around where there is room to play, on the ground. & my time passed much more comfortably.

Tell Melis. I am glad to hear there is one, amidst all this turmoil of bitter passions & strife who can turn aside to drink of the still waters of peace, filled with holy resolutions for the future. This tearing loose from a well ordered & happy home, & thrusting ourselves out into the cold where there is no sympathy or warmth of human affections (& even if there was, would not be congenial to a homesick foreigner;) leaves

us weary, worn & exhausted & I fear often a rebellious spirit
usurps the & destroys the gentler emotions & finally hardens the
heart, to all holy aspirations. The generation of this ~~day~~
are "a living explication of the deterioration of morals by
this strife & I ~~am~~ alas make of one this generation too weak to stand
alone, am borne down the turbulent, boiling stream.

I will write two or three times a week & you must also, it
is one bright streak of light, in this daily monotony. — Yet don't
think I fret constantly, for I am really more cheerful than I
at first, thought possible. I wish you also to be cheerful, you
cannot have a free mind for business, if weighed down by care, & health
will take care of itself if cheerfulness is habitual.

It is a great relief for Alton to be self
supporting & that raises my spirits, & his prospects seem
brightening. He has fine business qualities, & only needs to be firm
to be successful. All are well, will write in a few days
again. Your affectionate wife

E. A. A.

You must excuse this writing, there seems to be two or three kinds of
ink in the same bottle, thick & thin, pale & black. Something like the
man in the ditch with two voices, &c.

Since writing above I rec'd yours
with Edie's pictures in it & the inclosed one from Mr Wilson.

You see what a kind Southern friend offers to do.

I opened the envelope to send this to you. I shall not answer

Mr Wilson's letter till I hear from you. I wrote to him I should want
to carry the three youngest children I want.

Mr Wilson's letter reached
me in eleven days from the Am. Ex. Co. It may be that J. S. Bridge Smith's
place would suit you & it may suit you to answer the letter either ⁱⁿ person or
writing.