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Sunday morning March 16, 1851

My Dear Child,

I have been daily expecting Edward [*her stepson*] and by him a letter from you and Virginia but I will not wait any longer although I have nothing new to write you, yet I always feel as if I had just had the great pleasure of a conversation with you when I read. We have been unusually well with the exception of colds. Your Father has been quite complaining he thinks he is sick but he is old and he cannot enjoy or endure as much as he did and he feels it if he was sick. He lays down a great deal relies on Roger for everything. They have been sewing oats and clover and plowing for corn. I have done but little in the garden. I think if the weather is good I will put in all my seed that ought to be in this week. I have had the yard swept and white washed a little about the front porch and then I sat down on the step and thought with a sigh what is this for? Oh if I could but see my lovely dear very dear children off the river with all their children how glad I would be. I do love my children with a pure disinterested faithful love, as does all mothers I suppose. Oh I do want to see my lovely Antonie so badly, he is so smart and lovely. I wish I did not love him as I do. I love the dear sweet innocent little one too, but he can't call John to breakfast and kiss side face and put his lovely hands, on his head when you slap him and do so many things that is so endearing. How is John? I often think of his unbelievable industry and wonder if he does not really love to work. He will wear out himself too soon, I pray he may have each day his full portion of happiness unalloyed. You must make your house pleasant to him when he returns from his fatigues you must be all that a genteel sweet girl can be to him.

I was in Winchester a few days ago. I did not get much. I wanted some garden seed and some other little articles. I dined with Mrs. Keith, but I learned Dr. F family were ill. Old Mrs. Keith has been ill for eight weeks he told me. I called to see his poor old mom he looked as if "the days had come when he had no pleasure in them." I have been expecting Papa and Sister H down all the week but have not learned why they did not come. I shall expect Collett during the present week and anticipate much satisfaction. I do wish he would call to see you if I can get a horse to drive I will go to Lexington to meet him. I got a letter from him a few days ago he said he learned it was reported his house had failed but that he did not go there to break to make himself or friends wealthy, and would endeavor to pay all who had demands against him.

Must I tell you what, I am doing. Tell John not to laugh it is all I am able to talk about. I have made Antonie a pair of pants and I am making him a little bobtail pack to wear after he takes off his winter clothes of dark calico with long sleeves - and your stockings are done and I have had them under my cushion for a week and if Edward does not come, I will try to send them by Collett. I have kept candles and I am now molding a box for you and Virginia. 4 doz apiece they are white and nice. And the pickle is all waiting yet Caroline says she will try to make a better cake next time. And Priscilla says she does wish you could come in and spend the evening with her. She has such good light rolls for supper now that she is so glad Mr. can't eat any other kind now. He used to want everybody to he don't light bread. Jack is about as he has been.

Pamelia is well, and Caty and Abram complaining [*the slaves*] Willie [*Collett's son*] is going to school to Salem – Thornton [*her husband's "man"*] carries him on the old roan every other morning and he stops one night at Mr. Spencer's. He likes it right well. Rebecca and [*her husband*] Mr. S [*Spencer*] came over Friday evening just as I was straining my milk and stayed until 9 o'clock. She rode over this morning she and the sweet little sons were well. She was going to church today but it is so muddy I can't ride about it makes me sick.

Well I had stopped for dinner and it is now over and all done. I will finish we do not have a great deal to eat, we have turnip tops and bacon and some nice fresh beef and eggs and everyday have apple dumplings. Edward's barrel did not have many pickins and the rest were fine looking Carolinians' [*a type of Pawpaw fruit*] and we saved them for dumplings. I have the dining room cleaned at night and Kitty sets the table and puts in wood for morning and we have our breakfast about 6. We have coffee and light rolls and beef steak and a boiled egg apiece – about 10:00 I have a cup of tea and a piece of cold bread and I just wish I could see my dear lovely affectionate child come in with Brooking in your arms and Antonie waddling along, I would eat my snack cheerfully.

Rebecca does not come over so often as she ought. She is confined to the old lady [*her mother-in-law?*] is quite complaining now, she is not always well. I do not visit any – I have not been to see Polly Long since I saw you. I have just been walking over the garden. The Lilacs are so full of bloom, or buds and the white lilac is so pretty and so many sprouts and so many Azaleas. I wish I could be down with you to plant some down where Mr. Gex will improve. Tell him I want to buy Mrs. Turner's when she sells. I hope he will not interfere with me in the purchase. They have been "wedding" in Winchester. Mary Brosfield to Bob Winn and Hetty Tayler to a Mr. Gibson of Oldham county. No news in the neighborhood,

I believe did I write you that old Randal Blackwell was dead – Mrs. Blackwell is not convinced yet as I have heard of. You must collect all the silk pieces you can for our quilt and if you find any suitable ribbon you must get some – tell Molly I will save all the small pieces for her. What must I get for you when I get my little summer notions? I do not think I shall buy much. Your Father was at Mr. Didlake's a few days ago and told them to lay by a fine silk coat for me. I told him I had rather have the money and divide it between Virginia, you and Rebecca. I will not stint myself "through certain." Have you and V any light colored kid shoes? I saw some nice ones for common purposes at Doct Keith's at one dollar, good ones. I sent by Collett for stockings and I will get gloves and handkerchiefs when Doct Keith's good comes. How is Doct H [*Oscar Hamilton, husband of Mary Gex*] and how's Mary G, I hope he will live. [*he doesn't, he dies the next month, 29 April*] My love to Mr. and Mrs. Gex and all the family and to Caroline Craig when you see her. My kind love to Betty Mosen and Josephine and their husbands. To Elizabeth and Mr. Craig – Tell Mr. Craig and John, I hope by the summer they may find time to come up for you and V. As often as you can now, so you comfort me for I must see you I won't always be here to enjoy your dear company and all that is dear to you is to me - your interest is mine and your God my God and where you are there I desire to be.

Roger [*her son, Henrietta's brother*] is well, and confined to his farming employment, talks but little but I think he is affectionate but too silent. I like some expressed, as well as felt. Farewell

my dear child may the Lord bless you and yours is my prayers and kiss John and the lovely sons and V and all.

M.

I am writing in the drawing room it is clean but looks lonesome indeed – write soon and lengthy

–

Lord love you

Write me how John done with his boat load.

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