

My dear Mrs. Anderson,

Thanks for your dear letter – my heart is very warm is very warm towards the dear friends of the “days which are no more.” I shall always take a [missing] the dear little Minnie of whom you tell me such sweet things and I heartily wish I had some of the many relics of my precious child, little ornaments of which she had many, but strangers and everyone, it seemed to me, seemed to think they could not amount to much and urged me daily to give them away and I have not one left except a little silver-topped emery bad, which I will send the dear little namesake tomorrow with thanks to her good parents for the respect they paid to my precious dear child, and my prayers shall ascend for her future happiness here and hereafter. The news you give me of your deep heartsorrows which have settled over you. Your son first and then the chosen daughter of your heart born of your love and choice grieves me greatly. I have buried four sons and my precious daughter and can understand how the woman of old “could not be comforted because” her children were not. In my old age I am alone and in failing health. My daughter of course must be with her dear husband who cannot live away from Colorado Springs. I cannot live near them because the altitude is so great my doctors say I would die before the first day had passed as I have heart trouble to which a high altitude is fatal. So we are “so near and yet so far” that my life is a weary waiting one – however I try to interest myself in the outer world, try to have sympathy for everyone and reach, in a vague way, after the Heaven I hope to gain but for which I know I am all unworthy. I remember so well your strong honorable patriotic husband and what a pall his death spread over Memphis, the “brave fighting men of past” of the community – and how the sympathy of the community went out to you his disconsolate crushed widow. There is however a consolation in the grief of a man’s contemporaries to his widow and children. They have “called him worthy to be loved” and it is a happy memory in after years. I cannot imagine what could have ailed your daughter in law. If it had been heart trouble her pulse would have shown it. Could it have been paralysis of the spinal nerves? The son and daughter! I can offer no consolation under these blows to you that it is God’s will makes us know it was best for the dear ones gone to rest their hopes for heaven strongly implanted in their mind, but for you who are left behind my sympathy is intense and tender. Thank God however that you are able to live among your own people. I cannot – one hot day and my pulse does not beat, it only flickers. However I shall be eighty on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May, and I must soon “be blotted from the things that be” and then shall meet all I have lost below. One joyous feature of your life must be that you have your children’s children near you – mine are all separated from me by thousands of miles, but they are sweet young people. Varina the eldest is married to a right sweet hearted young Englishman who while performing a surgical operation pricked the finger of his left hand and blood poison supervened and he is with his wife and lovely baby visiting his mother in England until he gets back the use of his arm which I am happy to say he is recovering. Lucy White Hayes the other daughter is engaged to a fine young grandson of Hamilton Fish. Jeff is in his last year at Princeton and Billie the youngest, is at the preparatory school at Lawrenceville for Princeton which is about four miles from there. Mr. and Mrs. Hayes and Lucy are at Catalina Island off the coast of California and they are I hope enjoying it greatly. The difference in our mental state from that of animals when our children have us is that through God’s loving dispositions for our happiness we know and remember our children and can follow them with love and prayers so we have

many comforts and solaces here below. I am very glad to have heard from you and shall certainly send the emery bag tomorrow and a little card to the dear Minnie. Believe dear old friend

Always faithfully yours,  
Varina Jefferson Davis

Feb. 26<sup>th</sup>, 1906. Today is the anniversary of my 61<sup>st</sup> wedding day.

Transcribed by Christopher A. Baker, University of Florida, 2008.