

[Written at top in different handwriting]
Feb. 1860

Tampa, Feb 8th 1860

Dearest Lottie

Your last kind letter was received in due time after leaving your pen, but I have been on the qui vive of expectation for some time past, and was beginning to feel very uneasy lest something had happened to one of you. But your Letter dear Lottie came to my relief and again am I happy in the knowledge that all is well with you, and that you are enjoying yourselves so much in meeting your old friends, schoolmates, and relations, affords me pleasant reflections. How much I wish I was with you, But tis useless to sigh for what is beyond our reach. He who is contented with what Providence bestowes [*sic*], posses[s]es great and increasing wealth. I am sorry ~~that~~ you have decided not to pay me a visit, although I know it would be expensive and fatiguing [*sic*] still my heart would hope, against my better judgment, for what it so anxiously desired. I have been talking to Ossian about my going home next summer, but he does not say much about it. I fear he thinks I had better stay at home. Our negrow [*sic*] Woman Susannah expects to be confined in June or July and will need some one to take care of her. And then here is Lou and her children, if I were gone she would not think it exactly proper to stay here alone with Ossian, and if she left here she would find much trouble to get as comfortable a boarding house and as cheap as we have been doing. I would like very much indeed to meet you at Savannah and go on together, but I fear it cannot be and I have not seen Oby in so long a time and his wife and children never. I would enjoy it very much, and have enjoyed the anticipation, although I do not expect to realize my waking dreams. And then here are my chickens, ducks, pigs, horses, all daily requireing [*sic*] my care, and experience has proved that when the cat's away the mice will play, and in the meantime who takes care of the house and yard? I can assure you in our southern homes, the Mistres[s] is a very important personage, although she does not actually ~~much~~ labor with her own hands, still she must do the head work and her presence is necessary to the faithful performance thereof. The various members of our household are all in good health at present, including horses, cows, pig (which by the way expects to be confined very soon), chickens, and darkies. Lou has been suffering with a very severe cold in her head, but is better now, her school is in a flourishing condition and her prospects very flattering for the future. I am happy to inform you our town is improving some what, we have a litteary [literary] club of which Ossian is president, we have also a glee club, composed of all the principal ladies and gents of the town. Lou and I are members and enjoy going very much, and as the object of the society is the improvement of our vocal powers we are more or less bennefited [*sic*] by it. We have also a new minister for the Methodist church, one in good health and quite intelligent and a tolerable good preacher, and in addition we have had some very interesting marriages and have several more on the tapis, one tonight, who knows but Tampa may yet win for herse[^l]f a name. We have also an icehouse nearly completed and we expect ere our warm weather commences to have it filled and ready to administer to our comfort in this sunny clime.

Do you know Lottie dear, in your last letter you did not tell me one word about our Mother? I suppose all's well with her of course, but read all through expecting of course some word from her or about her, and reached the bottom and not a line concerning one so dear to all of us, but more so if it were possible to those absent ones who cherish fond recollections which absence for years only strengthens and deepens, untill [*sic*] the ties which link our hearts together, are as immoveable, unchanging as time itself. Now Lottie dear don't think I want to censure you, for I do not. I know you have with in your bosom as fond and loving affections for your kindred as any one living, and you love our Mother quite as well as any of us, and you have her always with you, while I have been separated a great many years. Is it strange then that I should feel some disappointment on getting a good long letter from one of the family circle, to find no eagerly looked for words from her who gave me birth, whom I have loved in my absence from her, with a daughter's affection, untill that love is a part of my existence? When you write tell me all and every thing about her, is she much changed since I saw her last, has she more wrinkles upon her brow, has care there stamped its unerring seal, change is the certain [*sic*] doom of all things in nature, but a Mother's love that is He[a]ven born and withstands the inroads of time absence and death itself. Tell Ma I so often think of her and wish for her, while eating our nice vegetables on which we are now luxuriating, we have green peas in abundance, cabbage, turnips, new Irish potatoes, carrots, beats, radishes, onions, and sweet potatoes all the year round, in great abundance. We raise them upon our own land, and feed them freely to horses, pigs, cows, and every thing that will eat them, particularly little nigars [*sic*]. Tell Mama my flowers grow astonishingly, I have twenty or more rose cuttings sprouted, and a very pretty variety of other flowers such as pink gerraneums [*sic*], crape myrtle, woodbine, honey suckel [*sic*] &c [etcetera]. And it is a very great source of pleasure to me to watch them unfold their leaves, and expand into beautiful trees. Flower culture is becoming a passion with me, I used to engage in it a few years back, more as a duty than a pleasure because I felt my health required exercise in the open air, and my mind occupations and diversion from itself, but now that my health is good, very much improved indeed, the incentive is not the same but the interest I take much deeper and more substantial, now I love to nurse, watch, and tend them, because my heart is gratified by the silent homage they return me for my care, and in nurseing [*sic*] them I am learning lessons of humility, faith, love, dependence on Him, who cloth[e]s the Lillies [*sic*] of the field.

I believe I have not written you since we made our visit to Key West, we had a very pleasant time indeed all our old friends were very glad to see us, and loaded us with invitations to tea to spend the day and thus every moment of our time was taken up. We where [*sic*] there nearly a week, and did get through with all our calls and invitations. Lou also had a fine time, she and the children had many presents given them. We spent Christmas there, were very seasick going over and coming back, and quite glad to get home again. We are only 24 hours going and the same coming back, a fine large steamer with good accommodations.

I am becoming very much attached to Tampa, like it better as time advances. I never before in all my married life felt so well content and happy in my home as I do now. I

feel the force of that beautiful poetry every day of my life. Truly “There is no place like home, be it ever so humble.”] I was very much interested in the discription [*sic*] you gave me of Sister Abby’s family, and more particularly my little namesake, how much I want to see her, she must be a dear sweet little pet. Do give her a squease [*sic*] and a kiss for me. I wanted to send her something for Christmas and hoped to find something pretty at K[ey] W[est] but as the stores had all been burnt down I could not find anything. Give my love to Abby and all her family, and all our cousins, and I have not got room to say anything more. Do write me soon, tell Em I am looking for one from her every day. If she will write me I will answer immediately and tell you the ballance [*sic*] of what I want to say now. Love to Oby and family and to yourself and Em the same share of affection.

From your Sister
Kate

Transcribed by Nicole J. Milano, University of Florida, 2009