

Plantation June 14 [18]63

My Dear Wife,

Quiet prevails here at last, I mean about the dwelling house & yard. I am entirely alone. Caulk has gone for Julia. It is a great relief to be rid of the many who were so noisy and unruly. I returned from Lake City yesterday and slept alone here last night and expect to do so again tonight and indeed hope to do it more. It makes me feel more like attending to my thinking, planning, writing, &c [etcetera.] I could not somehow do it while there was so much turmoil and confusion. True all the houses over the branch are occupied, but they are quiet so far as I know, and give me comparatively little trouble. I think now that I shall visit Jacksonville next week and perhaps several times soon. We are in the midst of another Rail Road excitement caused by a move headed by Gov. Milton [Governor John Milton] to take up iron from the roads in East Florida and transfer it to roads in Middle Florida and Georgia. We are trying our best to prevent it, I passed several days in Gainesville and in Lake City, in both which places I met with Mr. Yulee [David Levy Yulee] who was very polite and treated me as I thought with marked attention and kindness, though it may be his way towards all his old acquaintances. It was full 20 years since we had met. I sold him our little brass cannon for \$40. I have sold the old dining room sofa for \$30. The broken marble top center table for \$20. One dining table with end tables for \$22.50. I find that I get along better sometimes by using spectacles. Will you laugh at me darling? Can I help it? At Lake City a lady sent Mr. Jeffries a glazed card with something written upon it that he could not read for dimness even with his specs on. Dr. Hartridge failed to make it out. They handed it to me and I could only make out a little of it and all of it seemed quite dim. I put on my specs and behold every letter was perfectly plain. They were certainly helps to read in that instance. I have sometimes thought that my pen was out of order or the ink unusually pale or the light very dim. I put on my specs and lo all is quite plain at the right focus. Remember I am old now speak it softly. I hope that more wisdom will come with age. One thing I know, my love for my dear wife waxes warmer all the time, and the happiness with which her unparalleled love and devotion blesses me becomes greater every year. I am as homesick now as I ever was and it is all because she is there to bless me.

I fear that I shall not be able to divide up the lands of this estate now, and that I shall have to come again to do that. To get things better regulated and leave Caulk in charge with full authority to do whatever may be necessary for preservation according to circumstances while I may be away, &c, &c, is about as much as I can accomplish now without staying too long away from my fountain of love and happiness. How glad would I be if you were here with me now, how we would enjoy this quietude. Mary cooks me something, Charley brings it over in a basket, arranges it on a little table, I eat, he carries it away, and then my pipe and my reflections all alone alone [*sic*] are my only companions. Yesterday Jerome and I went to pick berries and in a short time from high

bushes obtained nearly two quarts all blue. They are plenty now. I have had some plumbs [*sic*] preserved for you and Julia. Snir [?] is coming next week when I get the houses cleaned to stay a few days with me. She sends much love to you and Mary.

I am well pleased with my horse for the buggy. He is gentle, a fast trotter, and fat, but the long heavy journey to Tampa will diminish hi[s] flesh some, unless I travel slowly which I fear I cannot do when going home to my Darling Kate. I am still making plans to get you some flour but it seems that the prospect is not flattering. It is still high too in Lake City \$70 pr bbl. I hope that Morris has paid you the \$100.

Sunday night. I have had another quiet day only a few pleasant visitors, ladies and gentlemen, and I wished for my dearest love every moment of the time, and now I am all alone and going to bed alone – alone. I have received a nice letter from Mary E. and intend to write her, give my love to her and tell her to try her best every day to improve her handwriting, to make every letter careful and nice.

Monday all well.

Yours
[Ossian B. Hart]

Your dear letter of the 12 has just reached me. The train has gone down, I shall ride out to mail this and if there is any news note it to you.

Transcribed by Katherine Walters, University of Florida, 2007.