

Rochester N.Y.

Thursday morning

May 24 - 1861

Emma

Your present and the letter accompanying it came yesterday. How shall I thank you for those pretty slippers, my love? They have been examined by every one in the house, except Nellie, who happened to be away, and pronounced beautiful, superb, luxurious. Every one has pronounced me a fellow to be envied, not only in the possession of the slippers but also of the hand that worked them. They are decidedly superior to anything of the kind among the boys at No 3, and when I get them soled will, I think, quite take the shine off, from all the slippers I have seen in the Union. Mary will be sure at once to tack on the piece of cloth, when I have them buttoned and I am going to have a piece of drilling put on the inside of the front part, if they are large enough, to ~~make~~ <sup>make</sup> them stronger. There is but one fault that even my fastidious taste and critic eye can find in them, and that is, that they are a trifle, just a trifle, too nice. I shall be almost afraid to wear them. I do not think they are too small though I am afraid they are not large enough to admit of the piece of drilling inside. If they are not I will leave them just as they are and be very careful of them, as I certainly shall be anyhow for they are too precious mementoes of your

to be treated otherwise. I am glad that the working of them has been a pleasure to you Love, and the fact that it has will very much increase my happiness in the wearing of them. I think the embroidery is very nice and the pattern just about as neat as could be.

I am sure Millie's modesty need not interfere with her acknowledgement of anything so nice as that. Please tell her that I think it highly creditable to her. I think Rosetta would like it very much and if you would rather you may enclose it in a letter to me and I will send it to her, or you may send it directly to her, just which you prefer. Before I write again I shall probably have them in wearing condition.

Afternoon

I left your letter to go to College this morning. I had been there but a short time when I was compelled to leave my head and eyes ached so badly. I however went back to Mathematics <sup>at</sup> 11 o'clock, hoping to recite as I had that lesson well and did not want to get the next. It was lost labor though for Prof. did not call me up. My eye aches horribly now but I want to write all the afternoon and guess I will. — I am sorry, very sorry, that "the household at Cherry Grove is a sad one." I am sorry too that any remark of mine should have contributed to deepen that sadness. Drive, my Emma, to throw off all dismal forebodings (though I trust that before this time all cause for forebodings, has vanished). You must, as you well say, leave the dear ones for whom you fear, where we all are, in the hands of God. There is this great privilege which the Christian has, which takes away the burthen of affliction and rolls a flood of joy and happiness on the believing

soul, viz that he may build a Bethel out of his sorrows, which shall bring him nearer to God.

You know my favorite hymn by which all griefs great and small are lightened to my heart, which brings penitence or Affliction always brings from my lips. Let me recommend it to you, "Nearer my God to Thee."

Similar to this is the thought of a French Poet. <sup>j'adore</sup> "Pour moi, je chanterai le maître que Dieu through it be the Cross  
Dans le bruit des cités, dans la paix des déserts That visiteth me.  
Couché sur la rive, flottant sur la mer  
Au déclin du soleil au lever de l'Aurore." Still all my song shall be  
Nearer my God to Thee  
Nearer to Thee."

Though it is more applied to another purpose I don't think it would be at all wrong for the Christian to apply it to himself.

You say Emma that if you should get bad news from Edwin you would come to me for comfort. If my sympathy can give you comfort in affliction you know that you have it to the fullest extent. I was really startled Emma when I read your letter. The account of Edwin's illness, the sadness at Cherry Grove, all was told me so much as if it were your husband, that it seemed for a moment as if I were in the great whirlpool of Life amidst the roar of business and the rush of cares, with your happiness and all, embarked with mine and only my arm to guide our frail bark over the wild waste of waters. I don't believe that anything ever seemed so real, so startling to me before. It seemed as if the time for action had come, that I must put my arm around you and let you lean upon me. I believe that for a moment I must have been pale, and really frightened to think how near Life and death I was unprepared for.

and ~~know~~ its duties and struggles I am;  
for when I found myself, so to speak, I was sitting  
there on the bed with your letter crushed in my hand,  
my teeth clenched, and drawing my breath hard and  
quick as if some terrible enemy were before me.  
There was a wild joy mingled with my feelings then for  
somehow it seems as if there were in me a strength which  
I know not of, which could meet obstacles, and overcome  
overcome them. Be that as it may I am determined to be pru-  
dent in one thing, and never take up more burdens than I  
can bear. I am yet in the mind over that money and told  
them tonight that I had concluded to negotiate a loan  
of a dollar or two and send a demanding letter every day -  
till I got it. As to the author of that book, My Gove, I cannot  
say who it was. I have forgotten the name and ~~as~~ it is  
shot at hand I cannot learn it. I am not in the least  
inclined to find fault with your conclusion in regard to  
learning from me in regard to such things, instead of read-  
ing from works upon the subject. You may be sure that whatever I learn  
will be communicated to you with all the frankness which has character-  
ized our late intercourse, "just as if I were your husband." Truly Emma,  
our intercourse and relation is sweet, since our mutual confidence  
and familiarity became so full and complete. May it ever be so and  
may we ever vindicate the truth of the adage "that to the pure  
all things are pure." I hope that before you receive this your sorrow  
will be turned into joy" if it be so if it be not, come to my bosom my  
love, my darling, and all the comfort and shelter it can afford shall be thine.  
You are my wife on all but name, and so far as I can bestow you  
shall receive all that a wife could claim. Give my love to all at the  
house and think me ever as heretofore  
Your affectionate  
John Gibson

Miss E. L. Kilborn,

Conneaut,

OHIO.

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY NY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2013

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