

1862

Chestabula Ohio

Wed May 14 - 1862

Emma

I have just received your letter, of the 11<sup>th</sup> ult. I presume you have now grown calmer, than you then were, and more capable of reasoning, as is your wont, upon matters presented for your consideration. You have, as I feared would be the case, (after I had sent my last) construed it in its very worst sense. It may have been strongly worded. I have no doubt it was. I did not, however, intend that you should gather from it, exactly the meaning, which it seems to have conveyed to your mind. I did not mean to say, that I expected to "die soon". I do not suppose that I have any special reason to apprehend my demise for several years to come, at least. Probably the shock which my nervous system, and in fact my whole constitution has sustained will materially shorten my life; and every person knows, that any, otherwise insignificant, eventually may, at any moment cause my death.

I do not expect to die soon, & I am not at all sure that I shall ever be healthy again. I do not expect to die soon, & I am not at all sure that I shall ever be healthy again.

So far, however, as the real purposes of life are concerned, I might as well be dead now: and there is little, if any, hope of my ever recovering, sufficiently to take any efficient part, in the battle of life. I do not hope ever again to be a man. I cannot struggle with men, or associate with women, as I once could. I am now, and must be, I am told, a cripple; not only a physical cripple but mentally disabled also. For so closely is the disease linked with the nervous organism, that, though I have tried to discredit and put away the unwelcome truth, I can no longer disguise, <sup>even</sup> from myself, the unwelcome fact, that my mind is impaired, its strength is waning.\* I feel, and know, that I should wrong you did I permit you to join your hope and your life to mine, under present circumstances and you must not tempt me to do it. It would be a sin of no slight magnitude. I should never cease to repent having done it. It is wrong for me to think of being a husband as it is no way probable that I ever can be unless at the price of

injustice to a wife. You wish to know if I could say to you what I have written without a pang. Surely I could not. The very sight of you would reawaken pangs almost too fierce to be borne. My hope will at once begin to feed itself on her own vain imaginings. I do not require you to comply with my suggestion and you cannot do not wish to, of course that ends the matter. Burn up the obnoxious letter but do not mourn that it has been written. As you will know it is tender thoughts of your happiness that prompted me to pen it. Cast the remembrance of it from your heart and guard me as you ever have done if it is your pleasure. But do not let the thought or hope of marriage intrude so long as present circumstances continue, and I have no hope that they will improve. Please Emma, do not ever again call me "noble" or "glorious"; do not speak of "fame" or "honor" in connection with me. I am not "noble" or "glorious" and I can never win "fame" or "honor", in the sense you use the words. Do not say you are proud if it pains me to read the words. The





Miss C. L. Kilton

Rushford  
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Nov 14

Robert C. ...

