

Greensboro N.C.

My dear Aunt:

Your letter, written from Darwin's was received a few days since. On my return from holding Court in Randolph County I found it awaiting me at home. —

I was not a little surprised at your statement that you had not heard from me in a long time by letter, as I have addressed several letters to you during the past two years, none of which have ever been returned from the "dead letter Office", and none of them, answered. As to not answering Darwin's letters I have the very best reason, for not having done so viz: that I never received one from

him. As far as I know he never blotted paper in addressing me.

You say that you learn that I am "doing well &c". It would have pleased me better if you had written before and without waiting to inquire as to my prospects. I am, I thank God, prospering well. Through the blessing which has rested on my own endeavors, and the earnest faith and hearty co-operation of my beloved wife, I have been enabled to out-ride the storms of adversity. There was a time when the iron entered deep into my soul; when the little property which I had hardily obtained was taken from me, by misfortune and fraud, and those who were dearer to me than life itself, were brought face to face with want. I remember, and remember bitterly

the dull weary months, when in contentment and almost despair, I struggled on, hoping against hope, as it seemed to recover what I had lost and to add somewhat thereto. Those were bitter days, harsh grinding days, - days of toil and darkness, days of dishonor and defamiation. They were days passed in a North Carolina log cabin, fighting for the right with only my faith in God and justice, and the love of my faithful wife to cheer the future. I had no friends then. I did not ask any one's aid. I bore almost uncomplainingly the seeming misfortunes which had gathered over me, & darkly - I did want some words of sympathy from those who should have been friends, at such a time. I did not get them, however. My letters remained unanswered, and no more attention was paid to me by my relatives, than Jezebel's carcass got.

Among the dogs. — The sunshine  
came after a time. Did you ever  
read Job, XIII verses 10, 11, and 12 thought-  
fully? They describe most graphically  
my own metamorphosis. From be-  
ing poor I have become moder-  
ately rich. I have a pleasant com-  
fortable and happy home, and am  
worth about \$20,000<sup>00</sup>/<sub>100</sub> with a sal-  
ary of \$5,000<sup>00</sup>/<sub>100</sub> per annum. From  
obscure I have sprung into note.

As Byron says — "I woke one morning  
and found myself famous." I hold  
one of the highest and most honorable  
positions in the State and have gathered  
some of the richest fruits of my pro-  
fession. More than that I have the  
honor of knowing that I am the  
second man who has ever held such  
position in this State before the age  
of thirty. And still more in this  
high and difficult position I have

a greater measure of success  
than I had ever anticipated.  
Foes have become friends and cen-  
sure has turned to praise. Even as  
I write there is a rumor that I  
am to receive the highest honor of  
my profession in the State, — a  
seat upon the Supreme Bench. I  
do not expect it, but very many  
of those who were but recently my  
bitter enemies, are warm advo-  
cates of my appointment. In  
a strange land, without friends  
without fortune and without position  
— by the blessing of God — I have  
achieved them all. For them I  
am grateful, for I know that  
God has bestowed them upon me  
in His inscrutable Providence.  
Through the instrumentality of

that pluck and brain which  
he endorsed me with. Outside  
of a loan from my father-in-  
law I have never received a-  
bove \$500.00, all told from  
any one, except as I have earned  
it, I am proud of it. What I have  
is mine because I have won it. It is  
not mortgaged by another's favor.  
I am glad to see "Hon." written before  
my name, because I have worked  
for honor and distinction in my pro-  
fession and have received it. You  
hope that I am grateful &c, I am grate-  
ful, to God, to the few good friends, who  
have prayed and waited for my success,  
to my own good right arm, and to my  
active brain. I hope to enjoy these  
blessings humbly, using and not  
abusing what God hath given me.  
I know, Aunt, that you have al-  
ways wished for my success, but

I reckon your faith had grown  
rather weak until you heard the  
reports from Ohio & well it is  
not to be wondered at. I do remem-  
ber correctly, ~~It~~ it is now about  
twelve years - no eleven - since  
you saw me. I am not old now  
and must have been quite a boy  
then. (And those twelve years - your  
wounds, imprisonment, - you at  
the North, can ~~not~~ realize all that,  
but then came Reconstruction,  
which you know no more than  
if it had occurred in Asia. Great  
developing causes, great animating  
impulses there, and add to them ne-  
cessity and it is no wonder that  
the boy has grown into a man  
greater than you anticipated and  
has outgrown all promise of his  
youth. I know it must seem al-  
most incredible to you, it does to me  
and I have seen every step of the change -

But here I am, such as I am, and  
it seems a sort of strange dream to look  
back upon that twelve years ago.  
Physically, it has touched me very lightly.  
I seem almost as young in appear-  
ance as then - Wife who is lying on  
the sofa by me, and who ought to be  
a judge of such matters, says -  
"About as young, only your beard  
is a little heavier" - I don't know  
how she knows, for except my  
mustache and a goatee my  
face had nearly always been beard-  
less. My heart too is as light and  
my laugh I think a bit more  
brisker than ever. I am a-  
fraid Time has not dealt so kindly  
with you. I