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Greensboro
N. C.

A. A. Soule
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D. C.

Ebbitt House

CHAUTAQUA COUNTY NY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 208



CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY NY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2013

Ebbitt House
Washington D.C.

Greensboro N.C. Dec 18th /75
Saturday Night 9 P.M.

My dear Husband. — I have not written you a letter this week because I have been in such deep distress of mind that I could not bring myself to the task of unburdening my heart to you while you were away from me, but tonight I am determined to write you the occasion of my distress as your letter of yesterday, rec'd to night, does not give any intimation of your return. Some few days before you come home from Raleigh I began to have some very peculiar feelings in my bosom. For a day or two I thought I might have strained myself in lifting my plank up on taken cold, but before you

I came I began to fear it was something more serious. I cannot describe the feeling only that there was a consciousness all the time, that they were there, and sometimes a tickling sensation around the nipples, like I used to feel when nursing, as the milk rushed in, and I half a dozen times caught myself pressing my hands over them involuntarily to keep the milk from coming through my clothing. I looked in those books we have and found these symptoms often occurred within two weeks of pregnancy, though they often did not for two months, but the healthier the constitution, the sooner they were likely to appear. — With this knowledge you may be sure I looked anxiously for the return of my monthly periods which should have come on the fore part of this week. I seldom go over four weeks and much often a few days less and never over the day of the month. As it happened I knew just the date of last month, the 17th. I remembered it from Lord's birthday — I was very fearful though before you came home, that it would be some time before I had any such date to remember again, which was all the occasion I had for looking "so gray" as you termed it, I could

3
I not just see though how I had become
so, after escaping so many years, to get caught
just now, at this most unpropitious time, with
all our financial troubles on hand, and any
addition to the family exceedingly unwelcome
to say the least. I did not wish to trouble
you until I knew something definite, which
this week would determine. I thought if my
monthly period did not come by the first
four weeks, I might consider the matter
as settled that I was pregnant. The
came and passed, and no sign. Then I
put it off until the 17th yesterday - I
have been dreadful gloomy and nervous
all the week, and the news I had from
you did not tend to lighten my spirits.
The 17th came and passed, and still I
saw nothing of my menses - and last night
I gave up hoping it would come and settled
on the fact that I was going to have a baby
that I did not want and did not know
when I got, and that I had not intended
to have. I think I was in the deepest distress
I have known, since I was in the same condi-
tion, in the little log cabin, cold, hungry
and alone eight years ago. I pictured
to myself all the horrors attending that
time, which would be worse for me ~~to know~~
as I had so lately had so much of ease, affluence
and position, and I had one darling child that
might suffer as I did then. Oh it was terrible
what I went through when I made up my mind
to the fact that I was pregnant. I sat here alone

until nearly ten o'clock, after Lodie was
put to bed, on the floor before the fire, with
my head in a chair, just in an agony of
despair. - I heard them say something about
its being cold, and remember now, that
when I took Lodie to bed, everything in the
room glistened, like it used to in the North
- I tossed and tumbled all night and
before morning began to realize it was
cold and to think about my plants. As
soon as I heard the fire being built I got
up to see how they had fared, and found
all my cherished beautiful plants as
stiff as though they had been out of doors
with the thermometer at zero - I was just
completely broken hearted then. I took them
in the dining room and gave them a good
spraying in cold water, but they are too far
gone to be restored to any more beauty this
winter, though the roots may be alive. Poor
Lodie, grieved as much as I - I had no
idea she loved them so much -

Everything was frozen in the kitchen the
had no such freeze last winter. The dining
room was as cold, I gave Mr Thayer his
breakfast in here. Lodie ate in the kitchen, but
I could not swallow a mouthful. If I
had only thought of its being so cold, and
moved them from the window I could
have saved them. I did feel so badly - only
a day or two since some lady was here admiring

them and we counted nearly blossom
buds on the heliotrope and every geranium
had from two to a dozen, and now every
leaf is black, and dead - - -

I expect all the potatoes are frozen. I have
had no head to investigate and as we had
but a little wood, Wm could do nothing but
try to day to get enough in the boxes to keep
us all from freezing over Sunday - I sent
down and got Mr Sullivan to put up the stove
in the dining room and have got my poor
abused plants tucked around to night. I
think what little life remains may not be
extinguished - but it is not as cold to night
and will not freeze so hard -

And now I have the climax for you
After fussing and fretting around all
day, nervous enough to fly - I found
myself unwell to night, and how my
spirits lightened! - The horrors of the last
week have been dispelled as by a fairy
wand and the letter which it has been
impossible to write you before, finished,
and, as it is after ten o'clock I am off to bed
with a deadful backache.

God keep you Darling
Aub