

Near Monticello, Florida
 April 18th 1857

My beloved Kate

At the time anticipated I arrived at home safely and in perfect health, but I do assure you I had the loneliest trip imaginable and in an attempt to find a nearer route encountered numerous very wide and deep streams which I had to swim. The road or rather the trail I came was through a wild and almost entirely uninhabited region of the country and the four human beings whom I met were as rude and uncivilized as Patagonians.

My journey was so exceedingly monotonous that it presented few wayside incidents mostly of relation—one, however, I can not forbear to mention. I was necessitiously compelled to stop one night where dwelt a perfect friend, a wretch phrenzied [frenzied] by excess in intemperance. He had little left him, save a wife and five small children and a barrel of whiskey, the latter I am shocked to write shared much the greater portion of his time, attention and affection. His brain being heated with the fatal drug which had utterly destroyed his mental equilibrium as well as all the finer feeling of his nature, in his insane ravings he imagined that I was the Evil Spirit come to inflict the punishment he knew he so richly merited, but instead of being fear-stricken, he was constantly endeavoring to shoot me, by a fortunate chance, however, I wrested the gun from his grasp and broke it in pieces. Thus deprived of his weapon and fearing my knife which I had drawn he became more tranquil, still I was afraid to go to sleep so in an [unclear] of defense I sat until morning when it was a sweet relief and I vow a pleasure to bid adieu to my ungentle host indeed I would gladly have left before dawn but I knew not whither to direct my steps. There being no other dwelling within twelve miles and the road very dull. This scene was a most eloquent, pathetic, and efficacious discourse on the real loveliness of temperance. Some of the husband's conduct was so very ridiculous and ludicrous that I could not repress laughter, but when I contemplated the lot of that miserable woman and her worse than fatherless offspring my heart sank within me. I shuddered for her and 'twas vain [unclear] my fears, they flowed freely gushingly when she most piteously and tearfully besought me on bended knees not to plunge my knife into her poor villain's heart and said "I love him yet though he has always abused me!" Oh "how deep how imperishable is woman's love and how utterly devoid of honor, feeling, or gratitude the [unclear] who would thus disregard it! He is unworthy of the name

(page turn)

of a man or even the protection of the law.

(page turn)

I received a most cordial welcome from all my friends whom I found in eager expectancy of my return and have since been enjoying the sweetest repose after my long and wearisome journey at the residence of my most highly valued friend Dr. Bythewood. I shall resume my practice next Monday and I am gratified to state under auspices even more favorable than heretofore.

I have sent to the post office daily in expectation of my first letter from her who is first in my affections but in vain until yesterday when one was presented directed to me. I eagerly broke the seal and looked for the name I have attuned my lips to speak so fondly but finding it not began to peruse its contents and soon found to my infinite delight that I was not disappointed. These, dearest! were the happiest moments I have shown since our parting, nor would I resign the pleasure of reading your letters again and again for any consideration. You say I must not expect of you a display of fine sentiment, that you will only write true ones. Dearest girl! To me truth seems the only finery in sentiments than truth is their sole charm. It matters not in what garb an idea is clothed if it is the outpouring of a sincere heart. I abhor ceremony. I spurn form, I despise art. Sincerity is a jewel I praise above all else. I wish you always to write to me in that plain, free, unrestrained manner that you would to the oldest, truest, most devoted friend you ever had or can have, I desire nothing but the frank expression of the feelings of your naturally warm and pure heart, It affords me ineffable pleasure to learn that your mother does not think unfavorably of me for, believe me, that the whole measure of my terrestrial bliss depends upon your parents' consent to our union. I sincerely hope they will embrace the earliest opportunities of investigating my character, family, deportment throughout life &c and would most respectfully refer them to all who know me well, and hope my character will bear this minutest investigation unscathed and spotless and that no one will impale to me anything worse than they are already aware of viz. My not being a member of the church and this I am sure is no fault of mine. Regeneration, I think, begins with the most High and I know I am the last creature of earth who would resist the operation of his holy spirit with joy and gladness unspeakable would I [unclear] wide the portals of my sin stricken heart to admit the sweet influence of my religion but until I am conscious of a radical change of heart I would not dare to perpetuate so

(page turn)

unhallowed a mockery of God's own intentions
as to unite myself with his flock nor do I imagine
that any one could desire such a course.

I owe you many thanks. My Good Kate! for wishing
that it may be in my power to remove this objection
You can not wish for such an event more sincerely
than I do but now I can only promise you that
I will cherish every good imperfection and as soon as I
think it has become my duty will join the church.

(page turn)

I have also to thank you for reminding
me of my of my promises but at the same time I hope you
do not think it necessary. Have you not not more confide-
in me than to suppose for an instant that I would violate
any promise made to you under existing circumstances?
You can not imagine how much I desire your dear
company once more and the contemplation of the
distance between us and the long while I will be
compelled to remain here is most intensely painful
and were it not so great a sacrifice of my interest
I would visit you after but there is left me one
hope without which life would be charmless only
by death. Oh how sweet it will be to have my
lovely Kate always near me to have a companion
to whom I can entrust the innermost thoughts
of my soul and above all, one whose affection,
whose deep, abiding love is mine. I wish I could
find utterance for my appreciation of your
love, mine for you is indeed "a sweet idolatry ensla-
=ving all the soul." still I can scarcely realize
is it seems to me like a summer's dream.

Oh may it not prove so!

(page turn)

My own gentle Kate! I can not for my difference
any substantial reason why our union should
be deferred. If we are united in heart, why
postpone so long the legal obligation. Do let
me hear immediately your own opinions. Answer
with your usual candor will you not give
me full possession of my treasure during next
fall or winter at farthest provided your pare
=ents consent can be attained! I long to know
the earliest hour that you are willing to
become Mrs. I, and then we can try to get
your parents to agree. You can give me your
own views, you can answer for yourself and
I hope to receive another cherished letter
containing your response very soon –

It requires so much time for a letter to get here after it is mailed that I hope you will relieve my anxious suspense by replying immediately if you know how much unmixed joy your letters impart you would endeavor to overcome your aversion to writing for my sake.

(page turn)

When you write again give me all the news about your friends &c

Dearest Kate do gratify me by responding to these questions as early as possible and

Feel assured that I remains as ever

Your devoted and undeviating love

Thomas P. Jones

N. B. The [unclear] I promised to include for your Album are not forgotten and shall be forthcoming, [unclear] long

Yours always

T P J