

Washington April 28th

My dear Friend

I had just written a long letter full of gossip to my dearly beloved friend your uncle, when I received your very kind letter. What I said to him I cannot recollect. My heart was so full & sad I wrote what came up in my mind without thought & dismissed it for fear I should be ashamed & destroy it. If I repeat something I said to him you must attribute it to the melancholy themes that we here can only think of. You ask for gossip. How can I give it to you. I am alone yes solitary & alone the only Southern woman left surrounded by hosts of abolitionists in battle array breathing vengeance & threatening desolation to the Country that gave me birth & dooming its inhabitants to the most horrible deaths from servile insurrection. Thank God in that they are mistaken. The servant will be true to the Master[,] & the Mistress would rather trust to their tender mercies than the ruthless monsters that would incite them to rapine & murder [.] You know I have always been for the Union loved it prayed for it stood for it alone in my own household. but it was the Union blessed with enlightened statesmen to guide it through the storm, not in the hands of fanatics who wish to uphold it by the power of the sword. Against a Union thus preserved my heart recoils & I am heart & soul with my native land in resisting the power of the oppressor. My only son is enlisted under the banner of that Country ready to fight its battles & shed his blood in its cause. May the Almighty protect him & crown the banner that waves over him with victory. But this is not gossip my heart is so full I had to let this off before I could get to lighter & to you more amusing themes. Gossip the town is full of it but Oh! What kind of Gossip everything low & groveling. The White House what was it what is it? It was the abode of grace courtesy & elegant hospitality. It is the abode of Jim Lane & his Kansas Brigands as the guard of honor of the chief Magistrate of this once great & glorious Republic. I cannot speak otherwise than kindly of a woman & say nothing of the Lady that has succeeded you, but gossip does handle her most unsparingly & its repetition would make you laugh if you did not weep to hear of such things of those holding the great places in this government. We are in the midst of an armed camp. Ten thousand soldiers now here twenty five thousand more expected. I am packing day & night to send everything I have in this District out of it leave nothing no not a thread that may remind those who would have it that I had an existence here. The glory of Washington has departed for ever. Its sun set in splendor & it will rise no more. Its last four years surpassed all others in stirring events and great display. I intend to hold those years sacred in memory. I will never again mingle in such exciting events. No further ones can equal them & I choose to recollect what I was & stand aloof from the future. I intended to go south amidst my relations & friends with my two daughters while my husband returned to [?] but here we are blocked in no outlet of escape. He cannot get north nor I south but go we must somewhere & that quickly for after to night I will not have a bed to sleep on under this roof. Oh! How my heart will sink when I leave it thinking of the past no hopes of such friends as I have cherished here ever being under my roof again. They say there will be war here & it looks like it. My Husband who I think is a good judge of these things thinks the Government has set a trap of itself by bringing an army here that can be surrounded & captured or destroyed. At all events it is a bootless victory to hold this place with a great army when the hearts of the people in & around it are at deadly enmity of the Government. I wish I could spend the summer with you where are you going? At present it looks like we may go with my



husband to New York & after he sails remain there until summer & then seek some quiet retreat This is our thought one day next we go south at once then waver between the two until we agree upon nothing this arises from the fact that we have no outlet to escape from the city except through Va & that is the way we do not wish to go south & cannot go north & human nature like me long for that we cannot get. I was disgusted & outraged at the low attack made on you as you left this doomed City in announcing your marriage with Mr. Carlisle not but he is a gentleman worthy of you or any other lady in the land but it was so base thus to strike both with no power of defense. He is still here but such a rebel that – I expect he will be ordered out of the City. But how thoughtless I have been about the business portion of your letter. When I commenced writing I forgot everything but the glorious past the horrible present & gloomy future. The cook I am sorry to say declines your very advantageous offer. I think she has made her arrangements to get married or I could persuade her to go. I have tried & failed greatly to my regret for you cannot get such a one anywhere. If you could only see the Capitol filled from basement to dome Senate & Representatives Hall with soldiers the greenest & dirtiest that have ever shouldered a musket. Falstaffs [sic] followers would be Napoleon guards beside them. Yet these are the men that are to conquer the South God help them when the conflict comes on poor southern soil their bones will quicken that soil into its former richness. You ought to see the turn out of the White House coat of arms on the panel. A.L. which is interpreted to be Almighty Liar above which is an Irishman called a d___d (chaken?) but really intended to represent an eagle & harness bought second hand from the French Minister [Ceurre ?] got it cheap covered all over with Mr. Merciers [sic] initials & coat of arms of France style of driving a furious trot horses at their utmost speed down the Avenue & back. Every body is running away from here. Mrs. Bright & family suddenly de camped yesterday, reason Jeff Davis is on his way here with a hundred thousand men. I don't believe it but if it is so a stampede of another sort will soon take place. The warriors of the revolution are not here yet or I am very much mistaken. The Ds. Lucy & Carrie send you their warmest love Oh! shall we ever meet again. My heart says yes my judgment no. If we never do you shall have my prayers that your way through life may be ways of happiness & your path the paths of peace. With my love to your uncle

I remain as ever

Your affectionate friend

M E Gwin

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