

4-14-1821

Letter to Mary Steinhaurer

Intrepid Morse

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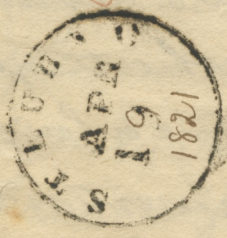
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Mrs. Mary Steinhauer
Chillicothe
Ohio



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Steubenville April 14, 1821.

Dear Mary,

And so my "pathetic complaints" the very dolorous repinings of my last letter "afforded you not a little diversion"? well, I had much rather you would laugh than weep, albeit the laugh were at my own expense; yet at the same time it must be confessed, I had much rather myself laugh with than be laughed at.

However, as Dr Johnson says one step beyond the sublime becomes the ridiculous, I only take credit to myself for having been too sublime, and will take care hereafter to keep within due bounds provided you will forgive the past flights of oratory so expressive (as I thought) of all the eloquence of grief on my part and so productive ^{it seems} of mirth on yours.

These puffy whinnings & sickly sensibilities are indeed contemptible, and I should despise myself were I obliged to descend to the stuff of novelists and romance for expression of my feelings. If on all mankind a common doom is passed if all are fools and lovers first or last I at least will strive to mix some wisdom with my folly. If with me that time already have arrived, I will endeavour not wholly to surrender the reins of judgment and reason into the hands of passion. I will be the philosophic, or rather the Christian lover whose affection is not bounded by time, but extends throughout eternity—whose esteem is not produced by the beauty of form, but by the graces of mind, and therefore shall exist undecayed and unimpaired when beauty is no more when mind alone survives.

Verily it is not good for man to be alone, I would have a friend
in my solitude; and like Adam, I would have that friend
an helpmate - spea, bone of my bone & flesh of my flesh.

Do you not remember an expression of mine in a sermon
on the creation of man? It was to this effect, Beneath his
arm, from near his heart a woman taken, and wherefore
but to teach him he should be her guardian & her friend.

I trust you are convinced of my friendship; when shall
follow the guardianship? when shall I be permitted to call
you mine? When will Providence remove the obstacles which now
divide our paths & prevent their joining into one? Do not think
me too impatient. No, I will be patient as the man of Rea for
a better wife than he had. I will be the calm, the rational,
the philosophic lover; whose passion, if it rise not into
ecstasies and transport, will be less liable to sink into despondency
& ^{depression} ~~depression~~ & bid fairer for permanent durability. — I remember
Covpers fable, 'Penning time anticipated'; and had a melancholy
example of its fulfilment before my eyes during my late
journey to this place. "Poor birds!" thought I, when the rain
descended, and the snow fell, & the ~~cold~~ winds blew, "poor
birds, how unwise & thoughtless have you been!" Thus are
the blossoms of hope & expectation chilled by the cold maxims
of prudence. And thus are we made wise at a less cost than
our own experience. Which of these sentiments is most appropriate
to the subject, I leave you to judge. For myself, I think both proper.

Some time since I was sleeping in a cabin, where the par-
tions were very slight, and awoke myself in ^{the} morning by saying
"Dear Mary! my own Mary." This trifling circumstance I should not
mention to any but yourself; and to you only as it proves ^{what is} the subject
of my thoughts sometimes by night as well as by day - in visions of sleep, as in day dreams.

And do not you sometimes think of him who is in journeyings
often encounters perils by land & perils by water, for the sake of the
Church of God and the perishing souls of his brethren? If the
present is to be the last year of my missionary life, by God's grace
and blessing, it shall be an active one & diligently employed.
Accordingly, since my arrival here, I have held service five
times in the neighbouring towns, Smithfield, Springfield, Wellburg
and Wheeling; and next week, expect to go out about twenty miles
west on a similar occasion and duty. Revd Mr Armstrong is
very popular among all denominations at W. & the church is
commenced on a large scale. His son is expected back from
England in July, & we hope will settle somewhere in the west.
I also look for two Clergymen from N. Y. in the course of the
summer. They were formerly my fellow students & Chums. ^{(Mrs.}
If one of them would take charge of A. I then could confine ^{con-}
myself entirely to this parish & St. James. All goes on well here.

If nothing prevent, I shall be in C. about the middle of June
but my stay will, of necessity, be short yet it shall be my
endeavour that Mr L. & yourself have a longer report from them before
Do not neglect writing to me early next month at A. and let me
know respecting the health of Mrs L. & of all your joys & all
your sorrows, if you have any; for I both rejoice & sympathize with
you, and feel a deep solicitude to hear from you daily were it possible.

Tell your dear Mother that if I become her son-in-law, her
daughter's happiness shall be my constant & earnest care; and
if we meet not in this world, yet it shall be our hope thro' Christ
to meet, with joy, in the world to come, never more to be separated.

And now farewell. May the good God ever bless & keep you!
May He cause the brightness of his face to shine upon you now & ever
is the fervent prayer of your affectionate & sincere friend, J. D. Morse