

VII

My Ever Dear and Precious Wife and Children

Once more Howards Pantry seated at the stand and writing to my dear and loved ones at home, yes though it may seem that I had abandoned it, that little far distant spot has a warm place in my affections, and the mere writing of the word home brought the tears to my eyes before I had power to restrain them. ~~I arrived~~

I arrived at the Agency last night after dark where I found letter No. 31 also a very good letter from brother Robert and sister Anna and the children. Clyde, Clifford, and C. R. all put in a slip. I was too tired to write in time for today's mail and so you must wait a little longer. I think Sarah Eliza writes an excellent letter for a little girl. I am always glad to get them, encourage Joseph to write, it will do him good, and I would be glad to get a letter from him and Mary R.

But I am not writing what you most want to hear, and I fear I cannot at present. I have not sent the money as I think I shall come home in the Seventh month and as I believe, on looking it over, I had rather pay a little more interest than run any risks in sending, so do not worry about that any more. If any of you should see J. Peet, Just tell him I expect to pay off that ~~x~~ Mortgage when I come home in the summer.

I will now turn to my late journey. I started alone to the camp on the 27th of last month, but my mules travelling against their will, went rather slow, so I could not reach camp that night and being but a mile or two from a Commanche camp, and knowing enough of the wild Indian Character to know that it was much safer, and that I would fare much better (in all probability) as a guest than as a neighbor, I drove to it when to my surprise whose camp should it be but White Wolfs, the most notorious of the Commanche chiefs as a raider and an enemy of the whites, whose young men are even now raiding with others in Texas. But by coming into his camp I had thrown myself upon his hospitality. In answer to his numerous questions I told him I was alone and unarmed. After conversing a little with those who were about him he said "The Sun will soon go away, Will you sit down by me and sleep?" I told him I came to do so. He added "When the Sun comes again in the east you can go on your road," then bade me follow a certain woman. I did so and she led me to his lodge, where I unharnessed my mules and they were taken care of by the woman, who then prepared supper, after which I returned to my ambulance and betook myself to sleep free from anxiety of a personal character. In the morning breakfast was provided after which I proceeded on my journey accompanied by the wife and one daughter of the chief who went with me until they could show me Kicking Birds camp. They then left me and I went on alone again, arrived at camp about half past 9 o'clock A. M. Found K, B. in a great twitter the Commanches having stolen some of his ponies, and gone towards Texas (ascertained by the tracks). He immediately sent three young men and myself to explain their business in case we should meet with soldiers, to follow the trail. We travelled (on horseback) till night before we got entirely south of the mountains, and camped on the great plains. While we were removing our saddles, my ear caught the feeble tinkling of a bell in the distance, to which I called the attention of my fellow travelers, without a word they threw their saddle blankets upon their horses, and making the sign to "Be seated" were off like the wind, leaving me alone with my pony and the saddles. In about half an hour, they returned as they went with two beautiful ponies, the one a pure white, the other a grey, and had not the grey one worn a bell there would have been no indication of human hands ever having been near them, as they were perfectly wild, having been for so long a time astray on these wilds that they could not be handled. One of them formed a part of our supper, and breakfast next morning. The other followed our horses all that day while we were continuing our course to the south, until we were in the midst of vast herds of buffalo and could follow our trail no longer. On that account we turned to the westward, and were soon running the buffalo at a fearful rate,