

Decr 30th 1858

Dear Milton

You very very interesting & most welcome ^{letter come} to hand a few days since, Frank, Stephen & myself had just arrived from Texas, where we had been more than a month. I should have written to you before this, but we were all invited to spend the Christ holidays at Dr. Hesters. Stephen & I, by Frank's request ^{went} over to Taylor County for Fanny Betty Helm, a daughter of uncle William, to accompany us. She is a very pretty & an accomplished girl; plays on the piano splendidly & sings like a Mocking bird; tell papa uncle William looks younger than he did 25 years ago & is doing better than he ever did in his life; has a rich farm, some living negroes, gets a good practice, lives very well & is out of debt full of fun, reads a chapter every morning & night & preys after explaining in his dry way the Chapter, he is a member of a debating society & never fails to make a speech; his wife is devoted to him & thinks his superior hand to find. I reckon you are tired of this, but as I know it will ^{be} very interesting to papa you will excuse me, as I am determined to give you all the news in this section that can possibly interest you. It is now 3 O'Clock at night & I am alone in my office save little Frank who is asleep in my bed he was threatened last night with something like the cramp he is now nearly well - Frank & Stephen left this morning for Taylor County, in a Buggy with two splendid horses. The latter goes over to look at a farm of 500 acres which is offered for cash at a reduced price - if Frank thinks the land will suit he will buy. I will now give you a short account of our visit to Dr. Hesters. Turn over

imagine a large party getting ready for a Christ frolic 76 miles
 distant on ^{the} Friday morning before; the servants awoke us at 2 O'Clock
 one hour sooner than we wished; however we all arose & after
 breakfasting & getting all things in readiness we started for Canton.
 it took a wagon & four mules to carry the baggage & 3 ne-
 -gro men who had to bring back the vehicles, Frank, Louisa,
 Eugenia, & Fanny went in the Carriage, Stephen, Little Frank
 & myself in the Buggy. we had 12 miles to go to Canton & the
 roads deep & muddy. we reached there an hour before the Cars
 left, but we spent the hour pleasantly by a good fire at a
 hotel near the depot. we took the Cars to Jackson distant
 26 miles, from thence we took the Cars to Vicksburg distant
 50 miles. however we stopped at the four mile station this
 side within a few hundred yards of the Dr^r house, his
 servants & Carriages were there waiting with himself for us.
 in a few moments we were surrounded with the most af-
 -fectionate friends & relatives each vying to show the most kind-
 -ness. Our entertainment far surpassed anything I ever saw
 every claim contributed something for our feast. I will not
 attempt to particularize. we remained there until Monday
 W^m Henry & his wife will go to their farm near Statches
 in a week or 10 days. his wife is the sweetest & most affec-
 -tionate creature I ever saw - & with all beautiful, he is
 truly fortunate, his grandfather is very wealthy & they
 have bright prospects before them, the house is nicely
 furnished, abundance of corn, pork, mules, Oxen, Cattle, hogs
 sheep & every thing that a farmer could ask with 25
 work hands. if he does not become immensely wealthy in
 fifteen or twenty years it will be his fault - although once

are not considered wealthy in this country unless they own
worth 50000 dollars. at 3 O'clk on Monday we all left
for Jackson where we had to remain until 4 O'clk
next morning as the evening train from New Orleans
had left for Canton 10 minutes before we arrived.
it was 6 O'clk before the morning train from N Orleans
arrived - we reached Canton to breakfast & in an hour
the servants arrived with the Carriage. Frank is in
the habit of giving his servants grand frolics on Christmas
& the 4th of July - they had holiday but put off their
grand entertainment until we arrived it took place
yesterday & last night, they invited Dr. Dunlavin
negroes to the feast, negroes never visit in this country
except on those days & then only one family are allowed
to come, Frank made or allowed them to dance in
his portico, the musicians 3 in number his own men
& very good fiddlers stood in the hall & the folding doors
thrown open & the large windows & the parlor &
Chamber afforded us an opportunity of seeing them
dance, there must have been 70 - or 80 of them &
I have never seen a happier party - Laura says that
Osway & Martin danced as gracefully as any white
gentleman she ever saw, they danced several hours
& retired to the quarter & kept up the frolic until
3 O'clk the Overseer then broke up the party - I
will give you an account of our trip to Texas on
tomorrow as I am getting very sleepy. good night - Frank
had about \$200 in silver distributed among his servants
he gives a dollar for every Bale of cotton they make

Frank, Stephen, & myself left for Texas on Saturday the 16th of Nov^r -
 left Canton at 7 Ock A.M. in the Cars, & reached St. Orleans at
 6 the same evening, distance 206 miles - took a hack which so
 landed us at the St. Charles hotel, not surpassed by any for
 magnitude & splendor in the world & only \$3. a day for board
 so much is very cheap taken everything into consideration. we
 went to the theatre & Museum that night, on Sunday we went
 to the Episcopal Church, heard a fine sermon & saw a very
 fashionable congregation, sat down to our dinner at 4 O.
 & retired about half after 5 - everything is conducted on the
 Paris customs, the Gong sounds at 3 - & dinner last until 6
 supper lasts until 10 Ock. as no one is ever in a very great
 hurry - I forgot to mention that lunch commences about 12
 is removed just before 3, we feasted between times on fine, lean
 fresh fat Oysters, so you will not be surprised when I tell you
 I am fatter than I ever was in my life & my complexion is a
 good, as it was when 21. On Monday morning we embarked on
 board the Splendid Steamer Charles Morgan for Galveston, fare \$15 -
 piece, we had a very pleasant trip until we got in sight of the
 City, when a severe storm drove us out to sea & great fear was
 felt by some for the safety of the vessel, however we rode out the storm
 & got into port 24 hours after the usual time. from Galveston
 took a Steam boat for Houston distant 75 miles fare \$3 - we on
 cat one meal on that boat but it is given up by all travelers
 that it surpasses anything in the world - every delicacy that
 the Sea & Land can afford - ice cream, custards, jellies, cakes
 of every kind fruits & nuts from every clime in super abundance.
 The St Charles Hotel is nothing to compare to it, we reached Hous-
 ton - about day break - pulled in a hundred yards of the hallo-
 field of San Jacinto. I will have to get another sheet & make two
 letters of it

Sunday May 2^d - 1859 -

From Houston we took the Cars to Hempstead distant fifty miles
fare \$2.50 - from thence to Austin in stages distant 150 miles
fare \$16. besides meals, - 9 passengers inside & 3 on the top be-
sides the driver, road muddy & very deep in the Brazos and
Colorado bottoms are passed through some very rich & highly
improved country. San Felipe, Washington, Fayette, Bastrop,
& Travis we were out 2 nights without sleep. Austin had
greatly improved since I was there, indeed it is the prettiest
place of its size I ever saw about 4000 inhabitants. all
the houses nearly are built of white lime stone which is easily
sawed into any shape, lofty hills surround it & the clear,
bold & beautiful Colorado runs by the side of it, we remained
there a short time to rest & then hired a carriage & 2 fine
horses, took a surveyor with us stops a way to find the
land that I purchased of one W. W. Thompson in 1841
we were told that it was in a mountainous country & indeed
to look in that direction from Austin it looked like a sure
foresaid mule would hardly reach there without many lumpy
tumbles & of course we had awful forebodings about where
we should spend the night - judge our surprise when we
found a road running through the farm that we could
travel 8 miles an hour on & I believe Mr Duff Green
would travel 12 with more ease than he could & from
Evergreen to Galveston & now I must tell you how we fared
that night. about 3 miles from my farm we spent the
night with an accomplished gentleman, highly educated, very
handsome & wealthy, he came out to meet us dressed in a
full suit of black, hat & boots of the latest style & urged us

to spend the night with him, we accepted his invitation with much
 pleasure. in a few minutes he & Frank recognised each other
 they had been intimate friends 18 years ago in Mississippi, we
 had a delightful time of it, his name is Morse, has a wife & one
 child a son 15 years old, he is well pleased with that portion of Texas,
 although he has suffered severely for two or three years with drought
 & myriads of Grasshoppers; they eat up every vestige of his corn last
 year after it got knee high, he then planted a field of 160
 acres & Frank, Stephen, & myself went with him to look at his
 crop & I knew you will be surprised when I tell you he had
 four Corn houses full & 8 pens he must have averaged 60
 bushels per acre & he declares he only worked it once, his horses,
 Cattle, sheep & hogs were as fat as stall fed animals in Virginia.
 I have not descriptive powers sufficient to give you a correct idea
 of ^{the} transcendent beauty & richness of the league I own in that
 neighborhood, Mr Morse says it is the best league in Texas
 taking everything into consideration, health, scenery, water, more
 than 2000 acres of it lies almost level with not a stone on it,
 & the soil exactly like that on Old Caney. We rode over the
 whole of it in a carriage altho - it is called a mountainous
 County. There is not an acre that is not covered with the richest
 curly Mesquit grass, that keeps green all the winter; we
 can raise a thousand mules & horses, also cattle, sheep
 & hogs, it is a perfect paradise for all kinds of stock.
 The streams are clear as crystal & abound in trout & fish
 of various kinds, I was told by a gentleman that you could catch
 hundreds in a day, & you can see them as they dart to your
 hook. We left money in the hands of Mr Morse who promised

To build a house on it in the course of a month, he has Carpenters & Stone masons who can do very good work, The whole farm can be enclosed with White lime stone rock at less expense than cutting, mantling & hauling rails from a distance. Timber is scarce, but plenty for all necessary use - we employed a man by the name of Gary a fine fellow to occupy it & to attend to our stock. We returned to Austin & remained there 10 days, the Methodist Conference was in session, they had about 100 preachers - Bishop Pierce of Georgia presided, he is a splendid man, handsome, eloquent, pious, & accomplished, we traveled with him from Austin to N. Orleans on his way home, we remained from Saturday night until Tuesday evening in the City, it is crowded & very gay you would never judge from appearance of things there now, that the destroying angel had passed through it so recently. Stephen & Frank returned from Yazoo on Saturday. The land he went to look^{at} did not suit, we shall leave for Texas on next Thursday if we all keep well go to Vicksburg & take a Steamboat for N. Orleans, they charge as much for negroes on the Rail Road from here to N. Orleans as they do for white persons, which would be a head. We left N. Orleans half after 6 Ock p.m. & arrived in Canton by 9 Ock a.m. breakfasted & got to Frank's before dinner, One of Eugenia's beaux was there Col H. a great favorite of us all he had a splendid present for us all - knowing Stephen & my fondness for smoking he brought us the richest Merckham pipes - mine is the richest thing I ever saw pearl handle set with jewels - Stephen's is not so costly but very rich & rare. Eugenia the handsomest bound book he could find in N. Orleans a history of the most distinguished ladies in the world. Little Frank a nice Carriage & horses that run all around the room by winding up & etc.

I am in hopes Eugenia will fancy him yet, he loves her too much
 when a woman finds that out, they are very apt to turn their wily darts
 on fresh victims. Supph, Frank, Louisa, & myself, are in favor of - it.
 Think him a splendid catch for any girl. Will you ever summon
 courage to attack both of these long letters at one sitting? I trust not
 tell Mary I have not change my mind about her. Tise as present
 when she comes out - she could make \$1000 a year from her dairy
 & poultry yard - The Tavern keepers about in Austin say that
 they frequently pay 50 cents a pound for butter. The Germans are
 too lazy to milk & churn. They live without work - there is one
 thing I can say for Mississippi & Texas they are the most temperate
 Countries I ever saw - would you believe when I tell you that there
 is not a Tavern or grocery where you could get a glass of spirit
 in Canton a place nearly as large as Warrenton in Jackson.
 The Capital of the State there is only one place where a gentleman
 could get a julep or any kind of Ardent spirit - negroes
 are born & raised in this Country that have never tasted a drop
 of spirit. I am truly thankful for this - tis the same thing in many
 parts of Texas. Bishop a place larger than Warrenton - not a
 house where spirit is sold. The same in Sagrango & Bates
 -ville & indeed pretty much all over the State. Celestine has
 six on a grand scale, but they are taken very high. Apothecaries
 keep bottle brandy for emergencies - tell Sumner I am de-
 lighted to hear that he has become such a student. I feel cer-
 tain that he will succeed in his profession if he will only persevere.
 Remember us all most affectionately to pa, ma, Mary, Ann Sumner,
 Miss Margaret & all of my old acquaintances black & white - please
 let me know in you next (which I wish directed to me at Austin) what
 Cousin Henry Hight has done with William. I would like to buy
 him at a fair price. Lucy & her family send a great deal of love
 to her daughter Malinda & husband, & all of her other relations &
 friends - I feel very anxious to know what kind of a crop poor Billy
 Berryman made on Evergreen & also how Jerry's crop turned out
 on Vermont - if you ever see him give my respects to him & tell
 him to come to Texas, that he can make \$5 there to one where he
 is & do work half as hard. We shall no doubt see Chas. Amison soon
 in Austin - Billy Brown is there, the best pleased fellow you ever saw &
 reason is making money. Little Frank is reading a Chapter in the bible he loves
 his love to you all. I say how much pleased he would be to see you all
 I have not seen a particle of snow this winter it has rained a great deal
 I must now close by begging you to write me just write another letter I have a
 read it over a dozen times & so affect Mrs. J. P. H.