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1837

# Letter to Mary A. Stevens, ca 1837 January 15

Oliver Winn Stevens

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W. Ville Jan<sup>y</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> 1837

Dearest M—

When I left you a fortnight ago I expected to see you before this time; but circumstances have conspired to prevent the gratifying of my wish. I fully intended yesterday to go down to C. and thence to P. but I was prevented from the fact of Mr Leonard's unexpected discharge of both of his clerks at once; the consequence is, that the principal part of the business devolves on me at present, and I suppose I must endure a more than ordinary degree of confinement until the services of a suitable person can be obtained, which I presume, will be in a short time. You can imagine dear M— how great a self-denial it must be for me to be deprived of the happiness of your society; but circumstances seem to call for this state of things; and I must submit as the more important I should always supercede the less. After all, I am much more favored than I should have been had I gone to Athens. Since, then, I have been disappointed in my expected visit; and in even sending you a letter the last week, how can I refrain from writing you a letter <sup>now</sup> if it be but short, hoping for an opportunity to send it tomorrow. Notwithstanding we live twenty miles apart and see each other so seldomly, be assured, your image is before me at all times. In the busiest hour of the day as well as in the retirement of the closet; in the moments of midnight-revery, as in the first dawning of the morning; do I remember and behold the dearest object of my affections. And this is not of recent existence: for years past my pillow might testify to the many wakeful hours I have spent in thinking of my dear M—. What cause have I for gratitude if I have any reason to believe that those feelings, which I could not but cherish toward my M— and which I have indulged for so long a time, are reciprocated by her. It is indeed difficult for

me to believe, even at this late hour, that so sacred and so en-  
dearing a relation, as that of two betrothed, does exist between  
us. No doubt, on thinking of the importance of the step you  
have already taken, not unfrequently you are shocked at the  
idea of having given your hand to another. This feeling is  
natural enough: and I imagine every modest and prudent  
female will experience it at times. But I am encouraged  
with the conviction that this step has not been taken  
rashly: you and I have been acquainted a long time; and  
if indeed either of us should every repent of the choice  
made, this thought may afford some consolation. However  
this may, we must leave it for futurity to determine: we  
must not forebode evil: let not the cup of happiness be  
embittered by the intrusion of a single thorn of this na-  
ture; but may it be unalloyed so long as our anticipated  
union shall continue. I know that I have weighed the  
matter well, and have determined to live for one object, and  
that is to enhance the happiness of my M<sup>r</sup>

I often congratulate myself with the idea of having so  
excellent a mother as yours; how few are so highly favored.  
Since I saw you last, I have often scolded you for  
withholding from her a fact so essential to her happi-  
ness. The apology you offered will hardly pass for a good one  
but I can make one for you which may exonerate you.

Do digress. I presume you are ready to inquire how I  
am pleased with my new employment. I answer. I am  
confident I shall like it much better than I antici-  
pated. Thus far I have found it sufficiently active for  
the enjoyment of health, and have had much time for reading; I am

pleased with my boarding-place; find Mrs and Mrs L.  
very pleasant. On the whole, I shall make the Sand  
hills quite an agreeable place at which to live: the presence  
of one alone is requisite to make me happy at any place.

Considering existing circumstances, I fear the present  
year—excepting a few days—will appear a long one to me.

In regard to the proposal I made to you when I saw you  
last, I have been led to think differently since I have been  
here. However, there is time enough to discuss that subject  
together.

A week ago, I received a letter from Jno. M.  
bidding me to his wedding, and apologising for not visit-  
ing me. I presume you will go of course; I wish I  
could accompany you, but it is out of the question.

All the time that I shall allow myself will be  
~~to come and see you: this I will not and~~ <sup>is sum-</sup>  
~~cannot~~ <sup>is sum-</sup> reasonably denied. Should you go, you <sup>is sum-</sup>  
probably see E. Hookman there, if you dare <sup>is sum-</sup> make her  
a confidant; give my love to her. I wish you to answer  
this by the next mail, as, in the event of your being at home  
this week, I should make another visit-effort to visit you  
if not I should postpone my visit another week. Until  
then I bid you adieu. My sincere regards to your mother,  
and believe me, dear Mary, your affectionate

Oliver W. Stevens

Miss Mary A. Stevens

Palmyra

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to