

WASHINGTON, D. C.
April 19, 1865

My Dear Wife,

Today has been the saddest day of my life, if indeed one day can be sadder than another of the sad days that has shrouded the nation in gloom.

I have no words to express what I feel and how much I now long to fold you to my bosom and mingle my burning tears with yours for the loss of our greatest, best & most kind & loving friend Abraham Lincoln. Now that he has gone to the Spirit land we realize how much we loved him and how worthy he was of our love and confidence.

I was in Richmond on the night of his assassination. The next day in the afternoon I went down to City Point & met the sad news. I was so stunned by the blow that I could not realize that he was dead until I saw him lying in the Guest's chamber cold & still in the embrace of Death. Then the terrible truth flashed upon me & the fountains of tears was broken up and I wept like a child refusing to be comforted, remaining riveted to the spot until led away by those who came in for the purpose of placing the body in the coffin. I felt that a mountain load had been suddenly lifted from my heart. I had never before realized the luxury of tears & I never before wept in the bitterness of heart & soul, and God grant that I may never have cause to so weep again.

After recovering my composure I sought the presence of poor heart broken Mrs. Lincoln. I found her in bed more composed than I had anticipated, but the moment I came within her reach she threw her arms around my neck & wept most hysterically for several minutes, and this completely unmanned me again, but my sympathy was to her most consoling, and for a half hour she talked very composedly about what had transpired between her and Husband the day and evening of his death, which I will tell you when we meet. She says he was more cheerful and joyous that day and evening than he had been for years. When at dinner he complained of being worn out with the incessant toils of the day, and proposed to go to the Theatre and have a laugh over the Country Cousin. She says she discouraged going, on account of a bad headache, but he insisted that he must go, for if he stayed at home he would have no rest for he would be obliged to see company all the evening as usual.

Finding that he had decided to go, she could not think of having him go without her, never having felt so unwilling to be away from him. She sat close to him and was leaning on his lap looking up in his face when the fatal shot was fired, his last words being in answer to her question "What will Miss Harris think of my hanging on to you so?"-"She wont think anything about it"-and said accompanied with one of his kind and affectionate smiles. Yes, that look & expression is stamped upon his soul too indelibly to ever be effaced by time, and its recollection will never fail to soothe and comfort

her in her hours of darkest affliction. God in his mercy will sanctify this personal & National affliction for great good, and this is my greatest and almost only consolation under the terrible bereavement.

I feel that there is no selfishness mixed up with my sorrow. The loss of Mr. Lincoln will not affect my personal interests unfavorably. I have good reason to believe that President Johnson will do all for me that President Lincoln could or would have done, but the great attraction for remaining here has been taken away, yet it would not be right to refuse to stay here as the representative of our Pacific interests in the Departments, should the Delegation insist upon it, as they undoubtedly will. At least, so says Judge Williams. The matter wont be settled untill Mr. Harlan takes charge of the Department of the Interior on the 15th of May. This was the understanding between Harlan & Mr. Lincoln when I left for Richmond. It may possibly turn out that Johnson wont ratify the arrangement, but I don't think he will refuse. The general impression is, that he will, as nearly as possible, carry out Mr. Lincoln's policy & plans. In other words, finish up the work the immortal Lincoln had begun and so nearly completed. The great body of the Nation will demand this of him.

You must my Dear, Dear Wife bear our separation with all the patience possible. Let us thank God that we are permitted to commune together in this way, and that should it be we do not meet again on earth, that by his all prevailing grace and mercy we will meet in Heaven.

ANSON.

P. S.--I forgot to tell you that I followed the hearse in the funeral procession in the third carriage as one of the family. This place was assigned me by the marshall, as I suppose on the suggestion of Mrs. Lincoln. I was seated with the mourners in the East Room where the Funeral Ceremonies were performed. I send you a copy of them enclosed--The sermon of Doctor Gurley.