

Boston June 20<sup>th</sup> 1865.

Dear Mother,

I have two letters before me, from you dated May 25<sup>th</sup> June 3<sup>rd</sup>, I should have read them before, but I have been very busy of late, working hard @ the store, through the day, when evening comes I reach my room, I do not feel much like doing any thing; letters have come rapidly, so much so, that I hardly know where to begin. You need not worry any longer about the Listing of your letters; I think I must have rec'd them all—

I am in very good health. The weather is very warm. Do not think over much about me. I have been enjoying the abundance of the North for the last 4 years, while you have been starving on the scanty means of a would be Southern Confederacy.

My salary does very well, for the present I can make the ends meet, & that is all. I expect to do much better next year, the money cannot come in any to fast for my aims, which I am afraid are rather exalted, my views are rather visionary when I bring them down & compare with what I can see around me, young men working hard year after for a small pittance, when by some bold Strike a fortune might be made in a day, I believe in striking while the iron is hot, & when

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Date: June 20, 1865

Description: Somers Sewall letter to mother, Boston

once started, to go to work with a will, I believe the best way for a young man to do, is to launch out alone, amongst strangers, always keeping a stiff upper lip, & one is all right, make your friends, as you learn them, such were the views I had when I left Portland, Oct' 1863 for N. Orleans. I came to the determination that I had been living on the bounty of friends long enough, & it was high time I was up & doing, for my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday drew near, so I cut a drift from my moorings in Portland town, & in steamer reached Long Island Sound, having reached N. York, I shipped aboard the Uncle Joe, doing Sailors duty on the passage & a pretty hard time I had of it. I gained no flesh, although I worked hard, but the experience was worth every thing, but I need not dwell on this old Story, as you have heard it from Father, Suffice it to say, I accomplished considerable by that Strike & at the same time missed a great prize, for while in N. Orleans, Merrill returned from the East & went to the Oil regions, if I had gone with him, as I certainly should had I been North, I might now count thousands & not pennies, & you all might come on this Sum<sup>mer</sup>. Doubtless Mr Willis could be glad to see you, he is growing old & his many cares weigh upon him, when he is sick, his Son has charge of his affairs, supposing the Old gentleman should

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die, Henry would take charge of his business, I would not want him to take charge of my property, if I had any, he don't amount to any thing, but father supports him, although his name appears in the firm, I think myself it is necessary that you should come on, to my mind there is considerable to be done, & I know considerable, I looked out for your interest as well as I could, having no experience, there is much more I might write on this subject, but it would give you no pleasure, & might pain. The explosion has indeed a terrible thing & a great loss to the city, I can form no idea of the extent of the damage, as I do not remember the topography of the city, we see in that an other of the dying struggle of the Confederacy, a bitter pill for Lucretia, she will get prettier enough soon I expect, to cure her of the queerest form of insanity that I ever know of, reason has left her, as it has all believers in the confederacy, I remember a rebel or a sympathizer, <sup>to</sup> could take the leading subjects of the day, discuss & reason open, & draw correct deductions, they are all sophistry, much gass, but no logic, the logic of events is the hardest & most convincing argument we can bring before them. I am afraid this does not interest you, but it shows what I am, & I mean what I say, & when I take hold of a subject, I like to keep at it until it is thoroughly exhausted, & perhaps I may do

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Some good, by convincing Lucretia of her error -  
it seems very strange to me, that her mind  
should be so completely led astray. It is  
hard for me to account for it. I have about  
made up my mind that she has lost her  
heart, & her reason has gone with it, all the  
rest remain true, consoling to think of. She  
wrote me a queer letter, which I rec'd a few days  
ago, & I speak of it, for it may be taken as a sort  
of antidote to it. She hesitates to tell me that I am an  
abolitionist. "It is dreadful to think of, I thought  
perhaps you might be a Unionist, but I do believe that  
you belong to the abolitionist." He! He! Ho! Ho! Ho! Ho!  
How dreadful it is! I look & appear & act the same  
as other people, ask her what her Father is? & what  
he has been these 20 odd years that he has  
lived in the South, dreadful is it not, but shock<sup>ing</sup>  
to relate this sprig of chivalry, a member of the F.F.A.  
is a daughter of an Abolitionist, think of that ye  
young <sup>soldiers</sup> covered with dirty grey, & fighting for self  
government, think of that ye proud Southern  
misses! do you care to associate with the daughter  
of an abolitionist! O! if I was only with you  
she would soon find out what a live one <sup>is</sup>  
claiming residence in Me. I have hailed from  
that State, since Mobile forgot herself, I am in  
no hurry to claim her rights of citizen ship, I am  
an enrolled voter at Portland, & I cast my first vote

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to help reelect Abraham Lincoln to the Presidency,  
thank God that so it happened, I could see  
his finger in it, it was the writing upon the  
wall, the Confedracoy had been weigh in the balance,  
& found wanting, "God's mill grinds slow, but  
exceeding small." The thought that so I cast my vote,  
will always be a proud one to me, in fact the greatest  
act of my life, for by so doing I helped to safe the  
life of the Nation & of my countrymen. I will send  
& tell you things that will make your eyes open  
I will dwell more at length on this subject when  
I write Lucretia, I must now go to bed, most eleven, &  
a hard day's work before me. 21<sup>st</sup> I shall finish this  
evening, & send in the morning mail, I feel very tired  
to night, have worked very hard, the perspiration fairly ran  
& I only had a linen shirt on, there has been some  
smart showers this afternoon, it is quite comfortable  
now. The end of this letter is going to be dull, I don't  
feel like writing, but it is a duty I must perform, & there  
must be no shirking, I wish I had a better photo' to send  
The one you have is not a good one, but you  
will see me soon, if you come on, & it will be  
far truer than anything I might send. I will take  
my vacation when you come on & go down East  
with you. I know of no better place for you to pass  
the Summer, than at Gardiner, it is a pretty place  
& you will receive a warm welcome. Mary I consider  
as an own sister, I think every thing of them, & you will

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enjoy yourself, if it be possible. I am afraid she  
found a very warm reception when she returned  
home from Mr Mitchel, in my letter. Almira &  
sister passed through here not long ago, on their  
way home, they looked as though they had been  
Service, they have had the care of returned prisoners  
from the slaughter pen at Andersonville & other places —  
have you read any accounts about those places —

As to the Pres' proclamation, I do not know  
of a piece of news that did me so much could as  
that did, I only wish he were more harsh, & severe  
hanging, confiscation & banishment, fairly root the  
devil from our midst @ once, Dan's should be  
made to walk the plank, after piratical custom.

There was a notice in the Herald the other evening  
about the meeting @ Mobile, but I did not see it —

I would like to have an acc't of it. I have had  
a watch some time, & a very good, although silver, bought  
with my first earnings, the Fall I went to N. O. — You  
are very kind indeed, & it is another prove of your love —  
I have thought since I have been away from home  
that you thought more of me than any of the rest,  
& that you bestowed so much of your love upon me,  
in fact more than I deserve. I have rec'd many letters  
from home, & very interesting ones, but there is something  
wanting, thus far you all have spoken very little  
about yourselves, how you lived during the war —  
how you all look, &c &c, nothing but enquiries about

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Myself, I am no one, tell me something about Sam,  
I think of him often, I believe I would give more to see  
him than any one in the family, except yourself—  
I have much joy when thinking of Abby, her letters  
please me very much, I can see a great deal of change  
don't let the others see this part of my letter, for they  
might think I was partial & so feel hurt, but you must  
tell them that a quite love, without manifestations is the  
truest & burns the longest. Does Sammy say pit on my  
shoe, I must now close, with much love to all, as it is  
growing late & I feel drozy slumber, slowly closing my  
eye lids, did you know that Mr. Moon was jocund,  
I did not, until to night I have a little book, beside  
me, "English Specimens, of the Greek Dramatic Poets" & that  
was one of the first sentences I read Clymnestra is telling  
the Chorus how the news of the Fall of Troy, was connd  
to Greece, it was by fires kindled on the heights one  
after the other, she says "Unimpaired the active flame  
Bounds o'er the line of Asopres, like the jocund Moon, &  
on Cithaeron's Sleep wakes a successin [~~crossed out~~]" A piece  
that more of his comes to my mind is the following  
Yet O! remember, nor the god of wine  
Nor Pythian Phoebus from his inmost shrine,  
Nor Dindymene, nor a Priest possessed  
Can with their sounding cymbals shake the breast,  
Like furious anger." I first saw that in Dr Johnsons  
writing, Don't you think the following verses are beautiful  
I am very fond of Poetry, have been kept in London for about  
two weeks, and

myself. I am no one, tell me something about Sam  
I think of him often. I believe I would give more to see  
him than any one in the family, except yourself —

I have much joy when thinking of Abby, her letters  
please me very much. I can see a great deal of change  
don't let the others see this part of my letter, for they  
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growing late & I feel drozy slumber, slowly closing my  
eye lids, did you know that Moon was jocund,  
I did not, until to night. I have a little book, beside  
me, "English Specimens, of the Greek Dramatic Gods" & this

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writing. Don't you think the following verses are beautiful  
I am very fond of Poetry, have been rap't in Goethe's for about  
two [?], over —————

Somers

Soft is the strain, when Zephyr gently blows,  
And the smooth strain in smoother numbers flows,  
But when loud billows lash the sounding shore,  
The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar.  
When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,  
The line too labours, & the words move slow;  
Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,  
Flies o'er the unbending corn & skims along the main.  
This won't do, I shan't get through to night, if I keep  
on, Good night, pleasant dreams, & a speedy reunion  
in old Massachusetts.

Your affectionate Son  
Somers Sewall  
28 Federal St.  
Boston  
Mass

P.S. Tell me something about my lady friends  
Miss M. L. G. & C. D. I thought much of Miss Mary  
D. J.

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