

Lewisburg March 13th 1849

My Dear Brother,

In consequence of my being ill I was compelled to delay answering your letter until now.

I was very ill all last week, so much so, that I was confined to my bed all the week. But I think now I have very nearly recovered; and as the season will close with ^{this} week, I shall hunt and fish a great deal, which amusements are both very pleasant and very conducive to health.

Freely from the school house, and all restraint being thrown aside, and the eye of the school master no longer resting upon me, and those volumes of antiquity being thrown aside, I will feel like ^{a bird} escaped from her cage, which gazes forth instant with our eye that does not flinch, upon the resplendent sun even at mid day in summer, when the heat is oppressive to man and forces him to seek some cool retreat beneath the wide spreading branches of the trees with opaque foliage.

Then she mounts to the ethereal regions and cuts the liquid air with her vibrating pinions, until she has gained the height desired, then glides along calmly and smoothly in the blue expanse above, her wings out stretched and motionless.

She feels that she is free, that she has liberty, which is dear to every thing.

I expect to spend my vacation in Mansel; at cousin Allen Capertons, The Salt Sulphur and Uncle Bradisons I will have about four weeks vacation. In that

time, I will be entirely recreated, both in mind and body.

Then when the next session begins I can enter upon my studies with undiminished energy and zeal. Having refreshed my self entirely, and having hunted and fished and sported enough, I will then return to my studies, and learn more by half than if I could not have had any time for recreation.

Aunt and Cousin are in Richmond yet, they will not, I suppose return from there until some time next month.

The weather is warm and pleasant; and I think the winter is over, but it is exceedingly cloudy which makes it very disagreeable walking. The sun is setting clear which is the sign of a fair day tomorrow; but no one knows how long it will remain fair, the weather is so very changeable. At night it may be very clear and warm and before morning there may be a deep snow on the ground.

The weather here is as changeable as the wind.

You said I must write you three letters in return for the long one, you wrote me. Now, really I think that an unjust and unfair demand; to require three letters for one. I demand of you three cows for one, why? Because my cow is a little larger than yours. I admit your letter is longer than mine was or will be, but My Dear Sir you must not expect so long and so instructive epistola from one of the juniori as the seniori. But I suppose you think and reason differently; but, no entendo it.

A man in Texas, that land of flowers, where every thing breathes the spirit of poetry, can afford to write a longer letter, than a boy pent up in an old academy all day.

He has more to write about; his spirit is free and can
take her loftiest flights. But shut up in a miserable
old building, with nothing to excite the imagination but
old desks and benches, (which by the by you know are not
very excitable objects) one's spirit becomes enfeebled and
cannot be freed, until he is freed from that place.

But I will be free in a short time, and whilst seated
on the bank of some streamlet beneath the cooling shade
I will think of the ^{the} do of the poet.

" In genial Spring beneath the quivering shade
Where cooling breezes breathe along the mead
The patient fisher takes his silent stand
Intent, his angle trembling in his hand
With looks unmoved he hopes the scaly breed,
And eyes the dancing cork and bending reed "

Brother have you really any intentions of going to California
in search of gold? Are you willing to hazard your life for the
gain of a little shining dust? You have heard of the mar-
velous tales from that golden region, as it is styled, your
imagination has been aroused, you have pictured to
yourself gold scattered all over the ground, already in
your fancy you are a rich man, you have gold in abun-
dance, more than you can make use of. But go to California
and your glorious dream, your golden vision will dissipate
like mist before the coming of the bright King of day.
But admit there is gold in abundance. You have a wife.
What will you do with her? Certainly not take her with
you. Can a tender woman endure the hardships and fatigue

and say to her methinks I know her, although we have never
met; but that I hope the day is not far distant, in which we
will meet. Give my love to Father, all my brothers and sis-
ters, and friends. Your affectionate brother

A. M. Erskine

Col. M. Erskine
No 3 Letter
A. M. Erskine
Dated March 12th 1844
Recd April 15th 1844

Josephine Macdonald's City

Mr Andrew M. Erskine

Read and return
safely

of that perilous journey. Can she live among ruffians and bar-
barians? (For all that go there turn complete barbarians; and
kill each other for the sake of a little gold.)
I am young to give advice to you, but let me as a brother
advise you not to go. Remain at home and enjoy that great
domestic felicity with your beloved wife.
Give much happiness rather than all the gold Calicut
men can produce. As it is late I must close. Write soon
Give my love to my sister (your wife, I know not her given name)