Washington, January 1st, 1839.

My dearest wife,

I open my correspondence in this new year with a letter to her who (more than all else in the world,) endears a year to me. — I have just cause for gratitude to Heaven for the past and for the present. My health is good; your last letter assured me that yours and our boy's was: with no obstacles in the way of any of my aims in life which a manly perseverance may not surmount: crowned with the possession of a woman who fills my imagination! What should presumptuous mortal ask beyond this? —

My spirits have not been exactly good of late. The rumor of John's difficulty which you mentioned in your letter is entirely correct. He wrote me a short letter by Mr. Prentiss who did not reach here till the 18th of last month, informing me of the fact, and referring me to Mr. P. for the particulars, which I have since fully learned. Had the time been sufficient I am not certain that I should not have set off immediately for Vicksburg. But the time fixed was the 29th of December, which, in the condition of the river

at that time, prevented my undertaking it. The circumstances, however, which led to the challenge were such as to put it out of any reasonable expectation that my presence would have effected an accommodation — I was gratified to know that John was the party challenged — the terms are thirty paces with rifles — which almost cuts off hope that both can escape, or perhaps either — It will be a week yet before I can hear from Vicksburg, even by express. You will no doubt hear before I do — I am in a state of inexpressible anxiety about it — I wrote to John the day I received his letter; and was assured by the post-master that so-ing, as it did, by express, it would reach him the day before the duel. I of course did not undertake to express any opinion on the affair; and simply said that many good men had occupied his situation, and that I expected him to behave on the occasion like a man; expressing, too, my confidence in his escaping unhurt — But poor fellow! he may have fallen —

I inclose you two fifty dollar notes. They will be preferred by the merchants to our own money.

Most affectionately
your devoted husband,
R. K. L.

P.S. Ie.

Jan 1st 1839

25
72
25
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26
90
100
365
875
740
5
745
115
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1632

2000
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3650
130
2480
200
2500
121450
121121

450
121
200
771

200
121
821

450
821
121

H. S. R.

Jan. 14, 1839.

My dearest wife,

I have just read — in rapture — your letter of the 6th, after your return from riding. You are a sweet girl to be so well, (a thing, you know, that I always guarrel with you when you are not.) And Jonie! he grows so fine. And Maggy! she too flourishing. I am a blessed mortal, I don't care if I am as poor as the devil. What is wealth? Shew! the wealth of the Continent couldn't buy for another as much happiness, as I have in you "without money and without price" — I'm pretty tolerably well satisfied with my state and condition; but, (you and yours out of the way!

I might be in a particularly ~~b~~lace condition. You see in what my treasure consists: it is committed wholly to your charge — cherish it <u>as you love me</u>. If I were un-called, I wouldn't be worth a curse — Say to Joseph "Son, do you love your Father? Is Father a good boy? Does the little pitiful want to see his poor Father? What does he want Ma to write to Father?" and write to me verbatim what he says in answer — Good bye — Write often — Love to all — Most devotedly yours,

R. H. L.

S. M. M.

WASHINGTON CITY
JAN
14

R. H. Menefee

Mrs. S. Bell Menefee
Lexington
Ky.

Not looked over

Jan 14 1839

H. of Reps. Jan. 16, 1839.

My dearest wife,

I am the last man in the world to make a severe remark; but absolutely I am a little disposed to complain of not getting a letter from you to-day. Judging from the last Dates I have, I thought that about this time you might have had very plausible excuses for not writing; but I was not disposed to allow the sufficiency of the excuse, after the very injurious (not to say boasting) letter which you wrote after your return from Mrs. Pindle's. Yet — after all — what is the use of my trying to complain of you; when I know that the very moment your letter comes, it will contain an excuse more than sufficient. I am, therefore, in haste to make my complaint before the arrival of what will take away all foundation for it. For it must be remembered, that

the most plausible objection I could urge against you as a wife, is, that you could not afford me an apology for complaining of you: (what, I think, and always did, you should have done occasionally, simply for the gratification of your husband.) I hope you will take time to consider of this only grievance of mine; and, if possible, consent to remove it, by stooping to something, if not mortal, at least not quite so angelic. I'll swear, Sal, to what I say, not only in ascribing this perfection to you; but in acknowledging the complaint as made by me —

But I must stop — Farewell — Say to Jeanette, 'Tader says what shall he send to the Jutifuls' by the next letter?' — I'll send it, if I have to frank a riding-house. Give me his wish exactly as he makes it —

Love to all — Most devotedly, R. Wilde

S. Bell.

WASHINGTON CITY
JAN
16
DC

R. H. Menefee

Mrs. S. Bell Menefee
Lexington
Ky.

Jan 16th 1861

Town of R.

Jan. 23d, 1835.

My dearest wife,

I feel it to be my solemn duty to write to you from this spot on this day, for fear I should be disappointed in writing to you a long letter to-night. Consider yourself, then, as written to; your husband well; and (what is more than all) dead-dead-dead — d, (if the thing be possible) in love with my dearest best — prettiest — mother-of-the-Gracchi wife! — I appeal to your imagination for the balance — you know what I would write if I had time — Devotedly,

R. W. E.

R A Kempe

Mrs. S. Belle Kempe
Lexington
Ky.

Committee Room, Jan. 28, 1839

My dearest wife,

I am waiting for a majority of a committee to assemble, and rather than be idle I choose to drop you a few lines. You must tolerate me in writing such a multitude of letters, because I cannot (except very rarely) write long ones — which can only be compensated by a flock of short ones. If I have counted right, you will receive in about a week from this present writing as large a gang of letters as you have seen of swans in all your life. This is the comparison which Homer adopts to impress the idea of number, and why should not I? Who is Homer, but an old long-bearded Heathen with his eyes punched out, who died and was of course d — d a thousand years before Christ! Shew! I don't value him a cent! — Farther than civility. He talk of his "beauteous Helen!" a hot-blooded wench who couldn't, without melting, look at a forty man! But "I was not with the dead" Spirit of Homer! depart in peace! Then he moved

shade who hast cast into the shade all mortals that followed thee since! — Read the Iliad, Sal, if you feel like it; and, if you don't like it, read it or not just as you please. It will teach you every thing: the most heroic mode of having a child, in particular ——— I intend to write you a letter nearly as good and quite as long as your last, not a great while from this time. — In the meantime, farewell — Love to Ma Peggy & all — Kiss the Jupiton, and ask him again what he says to Father: —

O Sally
I Nancy
Give you a kiss
And so end this — letter —

Most lovingly,
R. H. L.

S. B. M.

R. H. Kempfee

Mrs. S. Bell Kempfee
Lexington
Ky.

H. of R. Jan. 30, 1839.

My dearest wife,

A mortal speech (for length and dullness), is going on, under cover of which I propose to show forth to you a little of my mind. Imprimis: You are not to expect, henceforth, more than 7 or 8 letters per week, because the business of the House is growing very oppressive; nor, little as they are in number, will "that little be long", as the hymn says, —

"We want but little here below
Nor want that little long." You

remember the balance. — Well, I mean to write pretty ~~tolerably~~ often, but at the same time pretty tolerably short. But, sir, to proceed: I do hereby aperver ~~otherwise~~ and avow that the letters I get from home are worth to me $84. a piece, and are so frequent that I am likely to be enriched by them. I will enclose to you in my next an arithmetical table showing the calculation ~~by~~ which

this exact value ($84.) is reached. It is as absolutely true, as pure mathematics can render it: to wit, dead certain. I hope, as you, from the little circumstance of being my wife, are materially interested in the increase of my fortunes, it will present a new inducement to the frequency of writing. $84. at every crack, no small operation — I'm a great mind to send you my table by this letter. It's powerful funny and middling profound, I can tell you. But you shall have it to-morrow.

——— I was at this stage of my letter when yours of the 24th was placed in my hand. O! it is as delicious as —— as —— sweetened whiskey! You are a most capital woman, to be sure. But what of that? That is a thing I never denied, and always did —

As to Mr. McRedd's proposition, inform him that I never enter upon as grave matters as that referred to, without sleeping with my wife a night or two beforehand — for consulting purposes alone, of course. — But

present him my acknowledgments for his kindness, and inform him that I will take his suggestion into the most respectful consideration, and, either by letter, or personal communication when I get home, give him the result at large ——— But I am writing a long letter from a place which expressly forbids it under your orders —

Most devotedly,
Yours,

S.B.M —

R. H. Menefee

WASHINGTON
JAN
30
D.C.

Mrs. R. H. Menefee
Lexington
Ky

Rec'd Feb 3 1863

51 x 47

H. of R. Feb. 1st, 1839.

My dearest wife;

Owing to my manifold promotions (such as being on the august Committee on Patents, &c. &c.) I am so constantly occupied that I have at no time such perfect composure to write to my sweet-heart as when in this House. Can they infer my abstinence from public affairs in matters of debate &c., from the circumstance of writing from this scene of eternal strife. - I have no doubt in the world in writing now except to tell you what delightful reflections I had last night. I had sat up - alone - busily engaged writing till half past 12, when I went to bed not because I was at all sleepy but because I did not deem it decent to keep later hours. Well, I was under a high and very delightful nervous excitement; not like the coarse intoxication which earthly spirits produce, but like what you might imagine to be produced by the immortal nectar of the Gods. And of all the enchanting visions of my wife-child-the whole family scene - I then experienced! I was

so fully sensible, too, of the delights I was enjoying. Like one who, in addition to bliss, is made doubly blissful by the consciousness of his bliss: delight heaped on delight! And what do you think occurred to me? I actually thought of your hysterical fit at the last session when you burst out in a great cry! and very coolly considered whether I was not a little hysterical myself! — What pleased me most was, the different attitudes and dresses — all familiar and exactly true to nature — in which you were presented. I remember that I preferred that ~~which~~ of a picture of your Mother with a child in her arms, in the parlor at Lexington. — All this, I have reason to believe, was produced by the impressions which your last most charming letter made on my imagination. So that you may, if you please, simply by administering heavy and frequent portions of that kind, entirely supplant my thirst for mortal liquor — by the divine exhalations from your letters.

— I sent Joiette a pour hence by my last letter. I now send him $10. which you must have changed for him, and administered in sums

not exceeding nine pences — By the way, you must not let Jaintt eat sweet-meats. Tell Nannie that I say so; but say not a word to Jaintt as coming from me, for I suppose it would ruin my character in his estimation — Give my love to Ma Peggy, the widow Mitchell, &c. —

As to yourself, what shall I say? Merely, to remain just as you are and always have been — the sweetest — best — prettiest gal in the Republic, loving hardest, and hardest loved —

Yours,

N. Hale.

S.W.M.

House of Reps. Feb. 11th, 1839.

My dearest wife,

This is Monday morning aft. the a Sunday on which I did not write you a letter; for which flagrant sin of omission I need mercy and accordingly ask yours. I will make the earliest atonement I can, by writing now —

You must know, then, (taking up the historical department of our correspondence,) that on Saturday evening I did the President the honor — the distinguished honor — of dining with him. I was treated (for some cause to me wholly unknown) with signal attention — an attention bordering on the distinguishing. I drank his wine with a familiarity, not to say thirst, which must have surprised him not a little. He inquired after you — my age — the number of our children (which last inquiry, by the way, I answered by saying two, sir — taking it as certain that Mag., by the time of the Prez speaking, must have been born.) The information I gave him I flatter myself was quite satisfactory and not without a tinge of the interesting. I would suggest to him if the information was not such as he desired, that he can have

another opportunity on the same terms; which I will take occasion to intimate to some confidential friend of his. —

The most interesting information I can give you is that but three weeks of the session remain! I almost wish I could annihilate that little in the chain of Time Eternal. I am becoming discouraged and sad: like a plant long deprived of the light and heat which sustain it. I have made myself quite comfortable thus far; but I protest, my dearest, that my expedients for comfort are nearly exhausted. My only medicine is wife — children — home —

I have just received your short letter of the 4th of Feb., in which (tho' short, as you admit) it contained the interesting fact that Maggy was expected to be had in 2 or 3 weeks from that time. If she means ever to be born, it does strike me that it is quite time she was at it. She is clearly an annoyance to you; and that she is — in her present premises — likely to prove equally so to me, is most certain. If my consent, therefore, is requisite to her being plot in a state of hadness, why, you have it most readily — But it is short letter day — Lil Jeanie to keep my foot; for I did send him $10. to be made into 10. pences — Farewell, my charming wife. Love your master; and think of him all the time —

Most devotedly,

R. H. L.

S. B. M.

W. A. Menefee

WASHINGTON CITY
FEB
11
D.C.

Mrs. Sarah Bell Menefee
Lexington
Ky.

Feb. 11th 1837

H. of R. Feb. 15th, 1839.

My dearest wife,

I have received a letter from you daily for several mails; in which you show yourself to be a good girl, very good — This is a sweet morning, and softens my heart most amazingly towards my blossom "that blooms far away." But several weeks must be struggled (for I am engaged in a war against time in which no quarter is shown, nor respect paid to the kind of arms or modes of combat;) yet it is delicious, whilst I sit here and look at each letter as I write it, to imagine that every advance my pen makes towards the end of the line, is a shortening, to that extent, of the space which separates me from the arms of the most charming wife that ever blessed a mortal's life! It may seem to overcome this wicked space by slow degrees; so it does. But still, it keeps strongly and, in a certain sense, practically before my mind the idea of travelling home; — not home is not the word: travelling to my wife — But as our correspondence may possibly be in point before I grow too old to seek another wife should you die, I am a little reluctant to commit myself by written professions of undeviating — lightening — hot — devotion to you. This is one of the restraints which the excellence of your letters (by making their publication naughty) has imposed —

51 x 27

I am glad, dearest, that affairs have been so managed at home that Joseph still loves his father; for I expect that he and myself will associate a good deal after I get home. From your account of him, I shall seek his conversation as the wise men of Greece did that of the sages of other countries. What a wonderful prodigy he must be! to imagine that his father is at Aunt Betsy's house getting hickory nuts in the woods! That, I understand from you is his firm conviction — Can't you beat into his head something like an idea of where I am and what I am doing? — You tell me that Mag. is in a state of much uncertainty as to the time of her appearance in this vale of tears; but that she ~~[illegible]~~ shall make no difference in your letters — as you have made arrangements for a deputy after you shall be unable to write in person —

— Present my compliments to Cousin Elizabeth — and inform her that I am very glad you are not in a situation to see company of the masculine gender, and that, consequently, her husband (of whom I have felt some little jealousy) is excluded from your presence as a matter of course.

— Love to Ma Peggy — Aunt Betsy — &c. &c.

Most devotedly,
your husband,
R. H. Menefee.

Mrs. S. B. M —

R. H. Menefee

Mrs. S. B. M. Menefee
Lexington
Ky.

Aug. 13 1861

Washington, Feb. 15, 1839.

My dearest wife,

I have just returned from a night session of the Senate (now ½ after 8,) and so near the hour of closing the mail that I am obliged to write a short letter — In the first place, if I had not solemnly renounced the right of complaining against you for any thing, (having, as I have, again and again, confessed that you are never in fault,) I think I should "submit a few remarks" in opposition to the failure of the letter which I expected from you by the mail of this morning. But, dearest, perfectly certain that it ought to have come, it makes but little difference. Formerly such a thing greatly distressed me — because it seemed to imply neglect. But now (after your devotion has been attested by years of blameless love,) the regular time for receiving a letter brings you, with all your charms and

excellence nearly as vividly before me as a
letter. Mail day is with me something of a re
ligious observance: Habitually and all the tim
in love with my wife, that day becomes one of
devotion! and how fervent my devotion is,
you full well know. Idolatry is sinful,
suppose; but when you are the object of it, it
becomes the most horrid sin that mortal lips
ever sipped! — that profaned affection which
I know I feel and which I feel an equa
pride in exposing in my letters (as I have d
more than a thousand and one times), is sanc
tified by the reflexion that the object of it ma
at this very moment, requires all the tenderness
which all that affection could bestow. Yet p
haps it is as well as it is. You are with
best of mothers and the kindest friends. A
faith in your husband, and fear not!
— But you will be disappointed in a l
if I do not send this — Farewell, my d
est Sarah — Love to all — With perfect de
Yours,
R. H. Henry

S.B.M.

Feb 15 1859

Mrs. S. Bell Monroe
Irvington
Ky.

Mr. Monroe

Not found for
Mrs. H.

House of Reps. Feb. 25th, 1839.

M dear Sal,

This is Monday evening of the last week of the Short Session... [some personal remarks about his hopes of coming home very soon] ... I said this was the last week of the Session; so it is. But do you know that War is waxing probable between the U. States and G. Britain over the North Eastern boundary question? and that it is quite probable the President will convene Congress in April? Should this actually occur, it will hardly be worth while for me to go home. Besides, the travelling is inconvenient at this season of the year. It will be too late to obtain your opinion before the 4th of March, whether the fatigues and dangers of so long a journey should be incurred for so small an object, but if the called Session should be had, I will write to you, and await, in patience, your determination in the premisis -- But, seriously, our relations with G. Britain are growing quite portentious, and an extra session is much spoken of; not to be mentioned by you, however...

[¶ of personal messages]

Most devotedly,

Your husband,

R. H. Menefee

Superscription: Mrs. R. H. Menefee, Lexington, Ky.

[See Biographical Dictionary of the American Congress, for account of Richard H. Menefee.]

House of Reps. Feb. 25th, 1839.

My dearest Sal,

This is Monday evening of the last week of the Short Session. I expect to sleep no more until I get home. Even then I expect to be startled out of my slumbers by a great intruder into my family. That you should receive any more letters is accordingly quite out of the question. Should you receive one or two, it will be so far, extra; for which I shall expect due compensation. — I said this was the last week of the Session; so it is. But do you know that war is waxing probable between the U. States and G. Britain over the North Eastern boundary question? and that it is quite probable the President will convene Congress in April? Should this actually occur, it will hardly be worth while for me to go home. Besides, the travelling is inconvenient at this season of the year. It will be too late to obtain your

opinion before the 4th of March, whether the fatigues and dangers of so long a journey should be incurred for so small an object; but if the called Session should be had, I will write to you, and await, in patience, your determination in the premises — But, seriously, our relations with G. Britain are growing quite portentous, and an extra session is much spoken of; not to be mentioned by you, however — Be a good wife. Remember how happy you can make your husband — how supremely happy you have made me — how happy I am by you; and be forever as you ever have been — Farewell, my dearest. Kiss my children — Love to all.

Most devotedly,
your husband,
R. H. Menifee

S.B.M.

R. A. Menefee

FREE

FEB 6
20
DC

Mrs. R. A. Menefee
Lexington
Ky.

Feb 27 1848

House of Reps. Feb. 28, 1839.

My dearest Sal,

I do not know that I have since I left home had any real use for you until now. This is Thursday before the close of the Session — the period of paying bills — making calls — drinking whiskey — hunting H. H. And of all the spectacles that mortal eye was ever required to endure, my room is the most hideous! Books — papers — documents — letters, answered & unanswered — clothes — razors — and God knows what more: all in utter and, it seems to me, irredeemable disorder! O! for my wife! that I might flee from the horrors of these things; and make her arrange all! — I believe I shall buy a large box, and fetch every thing into it, nail it up, and leave it in despair!

If there was time, I would most willingly incur the expense of your coming to Washington to have your services both in the way of work

and consolation, in this horrible emergency — But I must endure it — Good bye — Pity me. — Love to Foolipuls & Mag — I will come home in a good humor as you ask — Hope to be at the <u>having</u> — My dearest Jennie.

Most devotedly,
your ever
R. H. Menefee

S. B. M.

R. A. Kempe

Mrs. S. B. L. Kempe
Lexington
Ky.

H. of R. Mass. Feb. 28, 1839.
1/4 to 4 P. M.

My most inalienable Sal,

I wrote to you this morning; in which I informed you — God only knows what — The House takes a recess now from 3 to 1/2 past 4 in the evening — as it sits all night — I am now in my seat a few minutes before the House sits, and of course improve the occasion to write to my blossom — Oh! what delight I feel to know that I shall in 10 days be with you. You say I'll be mad because you will be sick. Sal, you act the dog when you say that: you know that I will sit by you — tenderly — devotedly; rejoicing in the privilege of testifying my adoration of the only saint that inhabits the Earth! The call that speech, dear-est, or a puff is raised — right on the spot — then comes the d— d House — The House

will come to order" means Mr. Speaker Polk! Well, I must stop – Farewell my charmer – Love to Ma Peggy – Kiss my children – Believe me as ever, devoted

Yours,

S.M.M. R. Hale.

R. H. Menefee

Mrs. S. Belle Menefee
Lexington
Ky.

Yours most obedient
humble
Servant,

R. H. M—

To her High Mightiness,
The
Nonpareil
of her sex;
The standing
Rebuke against
the other known
Wives;
The Apple of her
Husband's Eye;
His [illegible]
He[illegible]ure,
His position
His Hope.

S. B. M—

R. H. Kempe

WASHINGTON CITY
DEC
25
DC

Mrs. S. Bell Kempe
Lexington
Ky.

Dec 27 1861