Arcola: Ala: May 31st 1872

My Dear Daughters
Pattie
& Mary

Day by day my conscience rep=
=roaches me for neglecting to write, oftener to my dear children & friends in California — But really I find myself so heartless, so thwarted in the great purposes and pursuits of life, that I have not the courage to write; more especially as I have nothing cheerful to say, and perceive nothing hopeful in the future. —
Whether from my indiscretion, or mismanagement, I cannot but regard the poverty and obscurity that have overtaken my family, as the results of my agency — It is unwise "to grieve after spilt milk — regrets are vain and idle, but the fear that "all this struggle, & misery, & bitterness of soul, may have been caused by neglect of duty on my part, strikes me to the heart. When I compare the past, and present, of our social condition, my spirits die within me — gloom & sadness overwhelm every sentiment of hope of cheerfulness which the future may suggest. Time, you say, will adjust and regulate all this — very true — but where will it leave us, and those whom we love? Had we never removed to California we might have been

better off, or had we fortunately bought land at even $10 per acre, in Santa Barbara, or some other grain growing portion of the State, we might have been still better off; for wheat growing in California is the most profitable agricultural pursuit in the united States where the annual product of 20 bushes per acre can be realized. This country is degraded, wretched, and miserable to the last degree — the bottom rail has got on top at last, the spirit of chivalry of manhood and self respect has dwindled so low, that cuffy is courted, flattered, patted on the shoulder and caressed by many, many, many, whom we once thought, could never be made to stoop so low. The present labor system (for a share of the crop) makes cuffy a partner, and thus puts him on an equal footing with the employer. —

To all who can possibly make a living in California, I say, stay where you are — for, had I the money & the health to remove to any grain growing portion of your State, I would not delay an hour — The decline in this country is obvious to the most careless observer — Wm Burly Jones can ride through any region about us and stop a thousand hands from their labor to hear him make a speech on any specified day —!!

P.S. How where is good Mrs Dennett & her husband? We hope they are doing well. How many of the fruit and vents are living — Have a comfortable garden? We have

Caroline & her two little ones (So key at School in Demopolis) spent the winter with us, but will have for Montrose in July to spend the summer & fall with Rebecca — Ellen & Charlie I will try & send to Gadsden where her sister lives — Wife and I will take the hazards of chile & fever, (as we cannot have our home to care of servants) by falling back on Dr Ruffin & Ann, during August & September, so that I can give an occasional supervision to home affairs, Annie Lomax will go to Greenesboro: to her sisters. We have been urged, most kindly, to spend the summer at Montrose, & we have also had two invitations from N. Carolina, one from my good brother, & the other from Mr Griffith; so thank God though old and poor we are not forsaken — We had a pleasant visit from Mr J. Sledge wife & baby, who spent a night & day with us — the baby has caught the pretty from the mother — but Jimmy has grown very good looking himself — We are pained to learn that Sam Lomax has a return of his epilepsy — poor fellow, how my heart bleeds for him —! We also hear that Zack Hall had the misfortune to have one of his arms so seriously injured on the rail road, as to make amputation necessary — poor fellow he has my sympathy. The crop reports from your region are good, for the first time — hope no

disaster may attend them.

We want to see all your children, Betty as tall as her Mother! Sallie almost as tall as her! Miss Winnie learning to sew doll dresses, Little Soph walking & talking — Lee & Stud, great big boys, not afraid to ride any horse — Johnny Pleck and Owen, contemplating a visit to San Francisco — how time rolls on and what changes we meet. We suppose that Dr Means has his children with him in the city, and doubt not he is doing well in his profession. The Dixon's, we hear, have also gone to the city & are doing well. — If our destiny had thrown us upon a few hundred acres of productive farm land — how different our situation might have been to day!! By gones are by gones, & I think God that things are no worse with us than they are —

Poor Isabella & Sophia are both at the laboring oar, and struggling as best they can, with the difficulties of their situation.

Present me kindly to my old neighbors Dr. Borden Major Reading & Mr. S. Borden (whose father called on me a short time since. — Our household unite in love to you all. God bless & preserve you all is my daily prayer — Your affectionate father C. Strudwick

Arcola, Ala: May 31st 1872

My Dear Daughters
Pattie
&
Mary

Day by day my conscience reproaches me for neglecting to write, oftener to my dear children & friends in California–But really I find myself so heartless, so thwarted in the great purposes and pursuits of life, that I have not the courage to write; more especially as I have nothing cheerful to say, and perceive nothing hopeful in the future.

Whether from my indiscretion, or mismanagement, I cannot but regard the poverty and obscurity that have overtaken my family as the results of my agency – It is unwise "to grieve after spilt milk – regrets are vain and idle, but the fear that "all this struggle, & misery & bitterness of soul, may have been caused by neglect of duty on my part, strikes me to the heart– When I compare the past, and present, of our social condition, my spirits die within me–gloom & sadness overwhelm every sentiment of hope of cheerfulness which the future may suggest. Time, you say, will adjust and regulate all this–very true–but where will it leave us, and those whom we love? Had we never removed to California we might have been

[new page]

better off, or had we fortunately bought land at even $10 per acre, in Santa Barbara, or some other ~~grain~~ growing portion of the State, we might have been still better off; for wheat growing in California is the most profitable agricultural pursuit in the United States where the annual product of 20 bushes(?) per acre can be realized. This country is degraded, wretched, and miserable to the last degree – the bottom rail has got on top at last,– the spirit of chivalry of manhood and self respect has dwindled so low, that cuffy is courted, flattered, patted on the shoulder and caressed by many, many, many, whom we once thought, could never be made to stoop so low. The present labor system (for a share of the crop) makes cuffy a partner, and thus puts him on an equal footing with the employer.--

To all who can possibly make a living in

California, I say, stay where you are for, had
I the money and the health to remove to any grain
growing portions of your state, I would
not delay an hour – The decline in this country
is obvious to the most careless observer – Mr. Busby(?)
Jones can ride through any region about us and
stop a thousand hands from their labor to hear him
make a speech on any specified day – !!
[new page]
Caroline and her two little ones (Sophey at school in
Demopolis) spent the winter with us but will leave
for Montrose in July to spend the summer and fall with
Rebecca– Ellen and Charlie I will try & send to Gadsden
where her sister lives–Wife and I will take the hazards
of chill and fever, (as we cannot hand our home to
care of servants) by falling back on Dr. Ruffin &
Ann, during August & September, so that I can give an
occasional supervision to home affairs. Annie
Lomax will go to Greenesboro: to her sisters. We have
been urged, most kindly, to spend the summer at Montrose,
& we have also had two invitations from N. Carolina,
one from my good brother, & the other from Mr. Griffith.
I thank God though old and poor we are not
forsaken–We had a pleasant visit from
Mr. J. Sledge wife and baby; who spent a night &
day with us–the baby has caught the pretty from the
mother but Jimmy has grown very good looking
himself–We are pained to learn that Sam
Lomax has a return of his epilepsy–poor fellow,
how my heart bleeds for him–! We also hear that
Jack Hale had the misfortune to have one of his
arms so seriously injured on the railroad, as to
make amputation necessary–poor fellow he
has my sympathy. The crop reports from your
region are good, for the first time – hope no
[new page]
disaster may attend there—
We want to see all your children,
Betty as tall as her mother! Sallie almost as tall
as hers! Miss Winnie learning to sew doll dresses,
Little Soph walking & Talking–Lev & Strud,
great big boy, not afraid to ride any horse–
Johnny Plick and Owen, contemplating a
visit to San Francisco–how time rolls on
and what changes we meet. We suppose that

Dr. Means has his children with him in the city,
and doubt not he is doing well in his profession.
The Dixons we learn have also gone to the city &
are doing well. – If our destiny had thrown
us upon a few hundred acres of productive
farm land how different our situation might
have been today!! Bygones are bygones, &
I thank God that things are no worse with
us than they are–
Poor Isabella & Sophia are both at the
laboring oar(?) and struggling, as best they can,
with the difficulties of their situation.
Present me kindly to my old neighbors Dr. Borden
Major Reading, & Mr. J$_c$ Borden (whose father called
on me a short time since. Our household write
in love to you all God bless & preserve you all
is my daily prayer–Your affectionate father S. Strudwick

[top of final page, upside down]
Your mothers health is much as usual–but never good– she is
very feeble and her vision my impaired–

[top of third page, upside down]
P. S. How & where is good Mrs. Dennett & her husband?
We hope they are doing well. How many of the fruit
and vines are living– Have a comfortable garden? We have.