Delphi, Indiana

Thursday April 20th, 1865

My own dear Henry,

One week have I been denied the pleasure of writting to my dear husband. I have not been able to write. You perhaps recollect I wrote of the cold I had taken, how it had settled in my head, how I had suffered with the earache. At first I was very deaf, and suposed my ear would gather. But as it did not and the pains asumed the shape of neuralogi pains, so I doctored for the neuralogi and within the past week it has changed about and my ear is now gathering. I have suffered so much pain that I am quite reduced. I do not feel as well and strong as I did when baby was a month old. Dr. B. was in to see me day before yesterday. He tell me when the gathering breaks and my ear begins to get well, I will then grow strong again, not before. Tis nearly four weeks now since I was first taken with this pain and during that time I have not had one good nights rest. My ear is so much worse at night. I think that in the course of a week this gathering will break, then I shall begin to get better. I have been drinking ale and today have commesed taking tincture of iron and am feeling a little stronger this afternoon then I have for a few days past – Do not allow yourself to grow uneasy about me, I am confident I shall be all right in a few days – I have been this minute that you might not be unnecessarily anxious about me.

Our darling boy is very well and very good. I kiss him very often for papa. The little fellow is now lying in the cradle by my side, kicking and crowing in the highest glee. I have purchased him a carriage, a very nice one for the price, twelve dollars. I got it at Higgenbothom’s. I was thinking of getting him a carriage when I should go to Logansport. I went to the establishment where they were making them there. I saw some quite elegant ones, prices from 30 and 45 dollars. I thought that almost too elegant for us, so on my return home got one at H’s. I have not been well enough to take him out in it yet, but he has had several rides in the house and is quite delighted with the movement.

I forgot to tell you in my letter of the 12th that I had purchased you a simple though a useful anniversary gift with which I think you will be pleased with, when you come home. When you come home! How I love to think of that time, write of it, speak of it.

Yesterday will be a neverforgotten day all over our nation as well as in our own little town. There was a “Funeral Oration” at the Court-house, of our late President. Mr. Edson delivered the oration. The Free Masons, Fenian Brotherhood and Odd Fellows formed a procission. The “Home Guards” and the band taken the lead. After the organizations, a carriage in which rode Revs. Edson and Cunningham. Mr. Schermerhorn was Marshall of the day. The doings are to be printed, also the oration, I will send you a copy. The ceremony was very solemn and impressible. I did not go out. Mother went.

Everybody seems so impressed with the awful calamity which has befallen our country by the assassination of our President that they scarcely know what next to expect. Yet Johnson may be the man to close this war. I ernestly hope he is. Tis true this murder seemed more terriable to happen just at this time when the future was beginning to look brighter. The shock was awful in the extreme.

My dear husband, I sincerely sympathize with you, in regard to the unpleasant situation in which you were placed at Court. I know you must have been made very unhappy by the occurrence. I am confident you were in the right.

Your letter of the 11th tell me you have some more of my letters. Hat\* wishes me to tell you to inform Ben of fact that she writes him every week. She wishes to be remembered to you. Ben writes that he don’t believe that she writes to him, as he does not get the letters.

Your fond loving anniversary letter I received this morning. It gave me just such a feast, as I anticipated. Such praise and love from you, dear Henry, fills me with an earnest longing to become a worthy and faithful helpmate to my noble husband. There is nothing so sweet to a wife as praise and love from her husband. It convinces her that her husband considers her his wife, his equal, not what some men think of their wives as their slaves.

I have some good reading on hand now, two books of Gail Hamilton\*\*, one “Gala Days”, the other “A New Atmosphere”, both good instructive books.

I am very tired from writting, this is the first day I have attempted it for a week. I think I shall be able to write you again by Sunday. I hope so at any rate.

Henry, I must tell you before I close that you have made me so very happy of late by writting such good letters.

Good night,

Your Laura

Mother sends love.

Postscript from the top of page 1:

The day before I came home from Logansport, your mother\*\*\* gave me a new calico dress and also baby one. I do wish you could have seen baby this morning. He woke before five oclock. I was quite amused to hear him crow and see him kick and trough his hands about. He is always very merry in the morning. Each day I see something new in him to admire. He is indeed a darling child and I am proud of him. Laura

*\*Hat is her elder sister Harriet “Hattie” Mason Pickard, who married Benjamin Pickard. They lived in Delphi, Indiana, and Anna Laura Mason met Richard Henry while visiting her from her home in Jamestown, NY. They married from the Pickard’s home, and when Henry rejoined his regiment, she continued living with her sister until Henry was mustered out in May 1865, after 4 years of fighting in the Civil War.*

*\*\*Mary Abigail Dodge (March 31, 1833 – August 17, 1896) was an American writer and essayist, who wrote under the pseudonym Gail Hamilton. Her writing is noted for its wit and promotion of equality of education and occupation for women. She was an abolitionist.*

*Henry’s mother, Mary Herrick Pratt Dagan, had lived in Logansport, IN, about 20 miles from Delphi, from the late 1840’s, when Richard Smalley Pratt moved his family there from New York state. After Richard Smalley died about 1851, Mary and the boys remained in Logansport. In 1863, she remarried George Dagan, a shoemaker. They ran a boarding house in Logansport. He died in 1874. One son, Seth, remained in the area (the third son had moved to New Orleans), and Seth died in 1890. At some point, Henry moved his mother to live near her brothers, in Fulton County, Ohio, where she died in 1898.*

Note: Rather than adding [sic] when a word is misspelled, I have underlined Laura’s spelling to indicate that is how it is in the original.