

Windon, Kentucky
July 19, 1887
Dr. John H. Bower
Columbus, Texas

My old cherished friend

I have made several attempts to write you since my arrival in old KY and reproach myself for the apparent negligence manifested, but having failed to collect any news even to this writing, of an entertaining or engaging Character is the principal cause of silence and delay on my part. Trusting that these facts will harden my reticence in extenuation of the above circumstances, promising, however, to pay you that courtesy and homage that I certainly am due you, by writing you a letter occasionally in the future. I assure you that although I have not actuated myself in this way as I should, but nevertheless, that frank, genial and engaging countenance and is vividly portrayed in my minds imagination, as I think of my dear and uncompromising old friend every day of my life, who is so many miles away, which deprives me of his daily presence and agreeable company that I feel is justly mine and to which I am deservedly entitled_ and which I contend is mine binding, as I consider you, my dear Doctor, the best and truest friend I ever possessed, save my departed parents, and I mean exactly what I have here written without any affectation or painting the subject matter in high colors: you can't conceive, how I really miss you, being now unaccustomed in meeting you every day as heretofore, and it is a feeling I will never overcome when I am attached to any person, as I am cognizant I am towards you_ and I trust & verily believe you will accept this version of the matter_ I think I will try to make it convenient to pay you all a short visit this Fall, as I have some money due me, & if the crops turn out well, you may depend on seeing me if I should live and nothing interferes_ I imagine that it will be a source of great pleasure to meet you all at least this time again in this life and rest assured I shall take advantage of it if I am permitted in this way_ we rec'd a letter from Dixie a few days ago informing us that poor little Verna was pronounced to have scarlet fever by you and she was afraid the baby would soon be similarly affected. I am indeed very sorry for her, & she certainly has my unceasing sympathy, but I sincerely trust with your kind attention and if she follows your directions, they will pull through, if it does not assume a very malignant type of the disease_ caution her and bear with her shortcomings, as this is unquestionably a time of great trial with her, as you are well aware without referring to all the details pertaining to her case_ Prevail also upon her, Doctor to keep Mercedes away from the sick children, as it is a disease that will reproduce itself under the exiting circumstances_ It is my earnest desire they will pull through the restored to health and I feel satisfied, that if anybody can bring about that result, you are the one to whom they can look with utmost confidence_ I am in great hopes through, the endeavors of the city council by means of strict quarantine, the use of disinfectants and a strict compliance to cleanliness, a spread of the malady will be averted and annihilated from your vicinal community_ but unless this is resorted to, to the letter, an epidemic will be inevitable_ for these reasons please urge your people to comply, as it will be next to an impossibility to rid your community from the germ of the disease & will reinstate and reproduce itself in after years, you are well aware I merely refer to this state of things, as it is looked on here as a terrible scourge when it assumes an epidemic form, for these reasons it is stamped out in its incipency. When you see Dixie, please state to her, I rec'd the beautiful birthday present and please deliver to her

my grateful acknowledgments; also state to her, that I registered by mail the little gauze shirts for Mercedes & trust they will reach her in due course of mail “ O.K. I also hope they will be the right size_

Well Doctor I do not know what to write to you_ only about the crops here, the grain crops, clover hay and timothy have been cut and harvested and fair yield; but the price is very low for wheat being quoted in Lexington KY at 68¢ per bushel_ This is very discouraging to the farming community and considerable dissatisfaction, but as it can't be remedied it must be endured I attended several of the sales of Thoroughbred horses since I reached KY and all that I saw sold, commanded good figures. The yearling's colts brought about an average of \$1000.00 each which I thought excellent; but am told that generally about \$ 1250.00 is customary average of these yearling colts. The horse business is by far the most remunerative and profitable now in KY it is a source of a great deal of revenue for her_ As this kind of news is xxx for your perusal and this is about all that is transpiring. I will bring now my letter to a close_ I will endeavor to gather the kind of news, that is compatible and of a more readable nature than is inserted herein and more in keeping with a personage of your status, education & intelligence the next time I write you_ now in conclusion this leaves us all in usual health & Jennie, the children & rest kindly send our love to one and all. Please favor me with an answer to this soon & oblige.

I am Sincerely,

Your friend truly

Ashbel Smith

P.S. we were terribly shocked to learn of the death of Mrs. Zue Shew and as she was quite a favorite to Jennie & myself her loss to us is irreparable. Please extend to my true friend Carly our earnest sympathy in his loss & bereavement, but we must all submit to the will of him, who passeth all understanding.” Yours xxx