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Letter, Jane Grey Swisshelm to Nettie Swisshelm [August 7, 1882]

Jane Grey Swisshelm

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Jane Grey Swisshelm to Nettie Swisshelm, August 7, 1882

[Mitchell MSS -- A.L.S.]

Swissvale Aug 7, 82

Old Darling

Your Postal & letter came together to day & you break my heart talking of your lonesomeness. If by staying with you I could prevent your being lonesome I would, probably, have undone every duty that I might save you from this nightmare, but a bitter experience has taught me that you cannot possibly be more lonesome than with me, & that you cannot, well, have companionship likely to cause you more annoyance. We see & estimate things so differently that it is quite out of the question for me to avoid being a source of apprehension to you all the time we are together. You never know when I am going to hurt someone's feelings or do something to make myself ridiculous. If I should give my whole attention to avoid such results they would be no less likely to occur. I am not fit for society, & no one knows this better than I. I have no desire to occupy a place for which I know myself to be unfit. My work in the world lies in another field, & I cannot & will not neglect it in a vain effort to be a coward to desert my post here. Pittsburg[h] is in debt twice the amount the state Constitution allows. Her water works are a failure I have exposed the fraud until the councils have sent an agent to talk or wheedle me into silence. I see no hope if I fail to arouse the citizens to resist the theives ring which has robbed and is still robbing them. I hope to make arrangements for lecturing

in the Opera House or Library Hall every Sunday afternoon by way of teaching the people how to live. There is absolutely no one but me for this work, & I cannot leave it to take away so very little of your lonesomeness as it would be possible for me to banish. I think you can get someone to take my room who would be more company than I could be. If you would take a man, wife & baby to board it would be about the wisest thing you could do. By the way, did Grandmother Atwood come to visit you? You wrote four times that you expected her & never ~~said~~ if she came. I had a postal from Earnest & wrote him again about building workmen's houses here. The demand's so great that the Laundry, up & down stairs, & the old stone barn, are full of people of people [sic] who have come to stay, & who are industrious pious & sober. Virginia negroes for whose work there is a pressing demand The Irish are being driven out by them. Love to all the folks & the babies,
from

[Signature illegible in MS.]