

Dear Josie

As the sun has brightened up things I must drop you a few lines this morning, for a week past the days have been so dark and my eyes so weak that I could not see to write. Your last letter came to hand in due time and received a hearty welcome as your letters always do. Was glad to hear that all was well in the household, there is quite a family of you now and when all are well it is much to be thankful for. Before I write any further I must thank Mrs. Lay for the magazine she so kindly sent me at Christmas. I find in it many useful hints and am trying to profit by them; you want me to write you what gifts "Old Santa" brought me. Why child; I couldn't do it at this late hour if my life depended on it, you surely have forgotten about my failing memory, I have spent at least two hours this morning looking for 40cts which Eva gave me in change after settling the wash bill. I guess I'll never find it, but will doubtless die now the poorer, if I can't remember from one day to another, how could you expect me to tell you about things nearly a month old? But I must

tell you that I had a very happy Christmas, every mail for several days bringing some tangible proof that I was not forgotten by my old friends had kind remembrances from N. Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Ala, Miss. Tenn. and California and New Mexico – not costly gifts but they all bore the assurance that my friends were thinking of me and that made me happy. Solomon you know says, that “Loving favor is better than silver and gold” and I am sure it is more satisfying to the heart. I have been troubled heretofore about getting black collars, the merchants didn’t bring them, it seems that Santa Claus had heard about it so he sent me four beautiful ones and two scarfs, silk and worsted a box from sister Martha containing stockings, apron and nightgowns – a very pretty laundry bag, 2 pairs of nice gloves and quite a number of pretty handkerchiefs – a gravy boat from Annie Dougette [Annie Daugette] a plate from Mrs. Ide with Van Dike’s “Empire of Peace” printed in gilt letters also many very beautiful books and cards. Now don’t you feel glad that you have such a popular grandmother? You can just be as much so in your old age, if throughout your life you will be kind and [thoughtful] and sympathetic to your fellow creatures both of high and low degree.

Amelia has just come in and asks me to say to you that as there is no one passing from here to G [Gadsden] they will just express the suit case and that you will find in it some foot comforts for little Carl they will be nice to slip over his shoes when he goes out on a cold day. Kate was glad to receive the check enclosed in your letter of yesterday. Bill Hudson is feeling quite consequential today, he was busy cleaning my yard and when the mail was brought in, it contained two letters for him each with check to pay his fare one from Mr. Cross to go immediately to Gadsden to help Ruth who was expecting company, the other from Mr. Plasser to come over immediately and move them to their new home, wanted to get everything straightened by Saturday. After rendering the letters to him I said, well Bill what are you going to do, you must decide quick? He answered why in course [I'm] going to Edie" he has never yet learned to say Miss. Edie but it is truly wonderful the love he has for those childrens true he nursed them all, but his attachment and faithfulness to the family is seldom seen.

I was glad to learn from your letter that Carl was learning to talk so rapidly, you must teach him to say Grandma Caldwell that's a hard word but he is an unusually smart boy and can soon learn it. Lorraine's baby is just ten days old but I have not seen it yet, it has been rainy and cloudy all the while and I have been suffering with [neuralgia] in the face and haven't ventured out, but I pulled my first hyacinth, bowed it up with some pretty baby ribbon and sent it with the following lines

Like the first flowers of springtime, so welcome and sweet  
The darling new baby, with gladness we greet.

I think I will go down and take a peep at the little lady this afternoon.

Kindest regards to Mrs. Lay and each member of the family, not forgetting Mary

With love from Grandma