

Omaha, July 22,

My beloved Maria,

As I guess the rest of the folks will not regard it as undue partiality that my first letter from the Valley of the Mississippi should be to you, I shall herewith acquaint your loving heart with tidings of my peace and safety. We arrived at this city about 4 o'clock this afternoon. Our journey from Ogden has been a very pleasant one.

Our car is though rather plain in compar-

ison with the gorgeous
palace cars, was quite
comfortable and suppli-
ed with pleasant company.
Some of the passengers,
a young ^uwoman with
two children on her way
to New York to join
her husband, and a
young Swedish gentle-
man, in particular,
were interesting studies.
I ~~we~~ a pleasurable
incident occurred in
connection with the said
Swede. I was sitting
opposite him, my eyes
tired looking over the
sandy wastes of Nevada,
when I heard a cry
resembling the hurricane
and tempestuous shriek

with which father is
wont to charge upon
the cat, only it was
as much beyond that,
as thunder ^{is} beyond a
pop-gun. He bounded
like a wild-cat from
car to car, the while
the astounded passengers
rubbed their drowsy pas-
senger's eyes, and gazed.
At last he returned
pale as death, with lips
quivering. He had lost
his hat! It was a choice
hat on which he bestowed
much thought and care.
He averted me, when
his breath came to him,
that he contemplated casting
himself from the car in
pursuit, but was deterred

by the thought of absent friends. The lady alluded to was so unusually pretty that five or six men of as many different varieties of the species were hovering about her in a condition of abject servitude ^{were very} ^{instinctive}

The means employed by the patient little woman for disposing of them and her pitiful children ^{were very} ^{instructive}

Omaha looks rather insignificant after San J. I do not wonder that our Iowa land is rather provokingly low in price, after seeing the Nebraska plains. The entire

eastern half of this great state (we spent 40 hours in crossing it) is an unbroken prairie, consisting of the richest land, and much of it still government land, purchasable at \$2.50 per acre.

It is a vast, magnificent country. The grass in many places is as thick as the timothy in our front yard, though not as high. The amount of cattle in ~~our~~ the upper part of the Platte Valley is astonishing. In some places the plain would be speckled, as far as the eye could reach, with the stalling

herds. In the eastern part of the state, the groves, sit out within the last few years, mingle with the grand fields of corn, ~~is~~ ~~of~~ some of it seven feet high already, in a beautiful park-like way. But I must close now, as we start at five o'clock to-morrow, and I wish some sleep.

I shall reach Kellogg about three to-morrow.

Good by for the present,

Willis