

*This letter was difficult to decipher, and I almost gave up on the translation. I had to omit, extrapolate, and guess. Names are scribbled, words are capitalized when they should not be and vice versa, others are misspelled, there are grammatical errors, and there are innuendos which border on being incoherent. But this letter is a sequel to another letter from what looks like Klenert, dated 24. December 1852, and in its way, of some interest.*

23. Feb. 1853

Dear Friend!

After a long wait and much worry about your health, received your note of 29. January on the 20th of February. I read it many times. All sorts of thoughts stormed over me; . . . some seemed only half real, others double. The content of your letter is terrible. I read it perhaps twenty times, and each time it seemed like a bad dream. It seems impossible to me to comprehend that it is possible, without any line from the Marci (?), should you have sunk so deep? I am a man, and tears ran from my eyes. *(Several lines are unclear and are omitted; apparently they are references to some calamity such as perhaps an illegitimate pregnancy in the family - see next paragraph)* . . . how can I console you . . . I don't know what to say . . . I know only too well that your heart is inconsolable . . . if all this is really true, one must despair of all humanity . . . Thunder, hail and lightning are all striking at once. *(Marginal add-on:)* Now, my dear friend, be a man in this situation, and do not surrender to pain and grief.

One year without news and now too much at once. My brother, I think he has become a wash woman (*tattletale?*), what do I need to know who is single or married, or whether the setting for their scandalous relationships is a penitentiary or a whorehouse or a country inn. As far as I am concerned, all the Philistines can sit down and squeeze them as we did as boys with the junebugs.

Now, my dear friend, I worked half of January in Lankhaus (*see below*). Since the 28th I am on the farm of the man who had the pigs butchered. Work for \$15 a month. I really don't know any other recourse than to work for wages. I am off foot travel for good, and there is no steamboat before April. I don't know myself what I should do. There is uncertainty of finding a decent job in a bigger city. I would spend \$20 on travel and lose much time. I could not save up enough money, and if I stay here, I could not bring it together, either. That means \$130 until September. In the next letter that I send you, I'll enclose \$5 and I'll probably need \$15 until then. For my keep I hardly need anything, and I don't smoke tobacco. That leaves \$100 if we can agree on that.

These are not bad wages; none of the farmers pay a lot. Gary Martin works in the city for \$13. I am staying with good people; they all like me and I don't have to be concerned about prompt payment. The boss is often gone for weeks; he is more a cattle dealer than farmer. He has 1100 acres of land, 12 horses, I hardly know how many steers - I guess 300 3-year olds, and 15 cows.

I think I will stay here until next October, then I'll be the first in the Lankhaus (*he must mean a packing plant; perhaps it is the name of a town*) and will earn some good money. I am not worried that he will advance me what I need, but I don't want to be obligated. In October it starts in Rock Island again, then I'll go there; they are going to butcher oxen, they'll start early and it doesn't last long, but it's good money while it lasts; that's why I don't want to be tied down. Anyway, we would want to sell our steers. Anyway, let me know what you think. By 15. March I will send you a letter with \$5.

Your faithful A. Klenert.

P.S.

I wrote to Herigel on 16. January, including a small present for Hannah. I hope it got there. I am anxious to get a reply. Today is her birthday. I wish I could congratulate her in person, she would like that. Fondest greetings to all, and for Hannah ten kisses.

(*Marginal note:*) If I don't get a reply from Herrigl (sic) in two weeks, I will assume that the letter did not get there, and I would regret that very much.