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MC073: Folder 36: Catherine Palmer to Thomas Sharp Palmer 1861 March 29

This transcription from the original letter contains language contemporaneous of the time and is being presented as part of a historical record. Please note that this transcription has not been reviewed for final editing. Please contact us with any questions.

Charleston, March 29, 1861

My kind Brother;

Your letter of the 18th came to hand this morning. I must say I never was as much astonished in my life – if it had come from the most inveterate enemy I had on earth it could not of been more venomous, bitter, and ungentlemanly as well as incorrect. Are you crazy to thus abuse a woman without cause? My remarks were not personal, I spoke of the Republicans as a Party, not as individuals, and any unprejudiced mind would so understand it; on the day your letter arrived there came a paper also from James Robinson in the Editorial of which he called us thieves, traitors, robbers, etc. and said that hanging was too good for us, in fact, a whole page was filled with such kind of expressions, you also spoke in one of your letters of the traitors of the South. I did not deem them as personal nor did I intend mine as such. You said look out for John in the spring, he talks of Volunteering and coming down South, but in Will's letter which was received before I wrote to you, you said John had volunteered and expected a Capt's commission. I would like to know what a man volunteers for if not to fight. That is what they mean here when they volunteer but it may be different in the black Republican country. I make this remark because you said John could volunteer without fighting. I am very much obliged to you for reminding me of my ingratitude to those who were so kind to me. That certainly was very generous as well as brotherly. As regards to our friends in Ohio, I feel deeply sensible of all their kindness and more, there is nothing they could say that would cause a resentful word from me, for God knows ingratitude is not one of my faults. But reproach comes with a bad grace from one who left me on what many supposed a bed of death and let several weeks pass without even writing to know how I was. Tom, who made you my judge or gave you authority to say I cast aside the truths of the Holy Bible, or to say I am turned to gall, and that all the finer feelings of my nature had turned to hate, or to call my words and meanings hateful, or to say my soul was full of hate, or that I would sacrifice my children's happiness to hate and to say I had repaid all the kindness I received from those I did and still love, with hate. O God, only knows how I love them, He knows I would not intentionally hurt the feelings for the brightest jewel that sparkled in the diadem of a Queen. Oh, how hard to be innocent and yet so misconstrued. But you add insult to injury after filling three pages with spleen, you say I forbear for I do not think it come from your heart or soul rather, therefore do not mean it and then you

go on again in the same strain until three more pages are consumed. There is but about four lines in the six pages of your letter that was devoted to anything like brotherly expressions (and all for what). Merely because I said I would teach my children to hate the enemies of our country. You say providing I recall some little of my hate you will still remain my affectionate brother. I have nothing to recall for I have done nothing to deserve the severe philippic with which you have seen fit to unburden yourself. This is the first letter of the kind I have ever been compelled to write to either man or woman, and certainly never expected to have done so to one who is so nearly connected to me. I pray this will be the very last of its kind. William is quite well, Bettie, Clinton are well, I hope sincerely your house will be just to suit you and your family may you all enjoy good health and happiness. Oh, health, what a blessing it must be. My love to John and tell him I will be glad to hear from him and family too, very often. The wealthier is delightful. Will waits for your letter, he is very stout.

Affectionately Kate