

Gefle, Jan. 16h 1910

My Dear Viola;

Today is Monday and the busy Sunday is passed once more, so I will take time to write my darling a few lines being as it is so long since I favored you with the last one.

In my last letter I believe I told you that we were going off to another town to canvass and to hold meeting if possible. Well we did so and a very nice time we had. We were gone three days and while away we gave away about 800 tracts and disposed of about 80 books. After considerable trouble and chasing around from one person to another, being referred a place to hold a meeting, we at last were fortunate to hire a hall for 5 kr. and 50 öre where we held a very good meeting. There were about 60 people who came out to hear the Mormons preach and it seemed as though they were quite interested in our talks for they gave us perfect attention and kept their eyes upon us all the time. We sang three Swedish songs and one English one during the meeting and after meeting was dismissed they wanted us to sing another English song, which we did with pleasure. They thanked us for our service and gave us an invitation to come back to their town whenever opportunity will permit. We feel well paid for our trip and intend to go again sometime in the near future. It makes us feel encouraged in our work and we feel to give God the glory for our success. We intend to visit other towns and see if we can wake up some interest in Mormonism among people who are seeking for truth. Last night we had a well attended meeting and Elder Fugal was the main speaker, Bro. Beckstrom making a few closing remarks.

In your short letter you wrote that you have forgotten how I look and that you can't imagine how I talk. Well dearest I wish you could be present some time when I am trying to speak Swedish, and see if you could understand what your husband has to say. Perhaps when I return to you I will mix so much Swedish in with my English that it will be uninteresting to you for me to talk to you, but we will try to clear up that difficulty, won't we dear?

Elder Benson who arrived here about a month ago very often calls me down when we are talking here at the office and asks Bro. Beckstrom and myself which language we are speaking, Swedish or English. Well it is quite a task to keep from mixing the languages when we are obliged to speak them both, every day. While I was at Luleå I never had the chance to speak English and I realize that it helped me wonderfully in the language, but nevertheless I am glad I have two companions now for it causes the time to go much more pleasantly.

Just think dearest how much time has gone since I last saw you; one and one quarter of a year has elapsed since we parted at the Salt Lake depot, when it seemed as though my heart strings would break for I knew that I would be away from you a longer time than I had been acquainted with you and we knew not what would happen before we would meet again. But we must thank the Lord for His protecting care over us so far and pray that He will continually bless us with health and strength that we may be able to perform our duties in an acceptable manner before Him.

Well my dear Viola, I am pleased to note that you went to that Scandinavian dance and enjoyed yourself. Hope you will attend quite often so you can have some enjoyment in your lonesomeness while your husband is away. Yes it would be very nice if I were home to give you a sleigh ride being as you have sleighing in that part of the world. We have not had snow here for over two months but I haven't been in a sleigh at all this winter and perhaps I won't have a sleigh ride at all this winter. It will be nice when all the snow melts and the grass begins to grow and the leaves decorate the barren trees. I hope this will be my last winter in Sweden but I don't know whether it will or not. It will be so nice to get back to my little wife and daughter. I suppose Melba will be afraid of her papa at first but I will soon cause her to feel to home on her papa's lap. It will be nice to have my wife on one knee and baby on the other. Oh! how I long for that time to come, and I know you do also. No, I don't think you are extravagant because you have a new dress for Xmas and you know I would like for you to have lots of nice things but I am unable to get them for you. I would like to see you in your new dress for I know you will look cute no matter how the dress looks.

Excuse me dearest for my procrastination this time and I will try to do better in the future. You understand I was away three days and then when I came home I had to prepare for Sunday. God bless you, Viola. Your loving husband. Nels.

Gefle, Jan. 24th, 1910

My Dear Viola;

I now with pen in hand will endeavor to write you a few lines as it is just a week ago today since I favored you with the last one. Dear wife, your beautiful photos came to hand today and I thank you ever so much for same. They certainly are grand and you don't know how happy and proud I feel over my darlings wife and baby. You are both just as cute as you can be and I about feel like eating your photos up. I received the proofs a few days ago and when I looked at Melba's photo I could hardly believe my eyes, she is so beautiful. I have showed the photos to quite a number of the saints and they just about go up over Melba, she is so cute. I try to tease them by saying she looks lots like her papa and that that is the reason she is so cute but they won't agree with me so I suppose we will have to give you the credit for her beauty. They all say I have a beautiful wife but they need not tell me that for I knew that when I married you. They all seem to think that you and I look so much alike; well if you are prettier than I then I think neither one of us have anything to boast of, but that doesn't make any difference, we have the cutest baby in the world, haven't we dearest? I can see that you are not so fat as you were when you had the last photo taken but I suppose that is due to Melba pulling at your breasts every day, isn't it dear? When you wean her you will soon get fat again. I suppose you have your new Xmas dress on in the photo, I think it looks nice and I see your husband is hanging fast to your neck. Pleased to note that you liked the broach and the photo but sorry that I couldn't send you a nicer present for Xmas. [Melba's picture p. 158.]

Well dearest the ring came OK and I have it on my finger now so I suppose the people won't think I am a single man anymore. I have yours and Melba's photo before me now while I am writing and I can't help but keep looking at it. When I first received it I

couldn't keep my eyes off of it for many minutes at a time. Say but it certainly would be nice to be home with my little family. Think how happy we would be, but we must feel happy and thankful anyway, and hope and pray that we will be permitted to be together again in about one more year.

You ask me how I would like to come home to see you and then go right back. I must say that I don't believe I could stand to go right back for it would break my heart to pull away from my wife and child. Often I dream that I am home but that I haven't completed my mission and have to come back to do so; and I tell you that when I wake I am glad that it isn't so that I again have to leave you. Time is rolling on and before we know it the time will arrive that I will once more tread upon American soil and mingle with my loved ones at home. You ask if I don't ever get homesick and you wonder if I wouldn't like to see you. Most assuredly I would be more than glad to see you and talk to you, but I must say that I haven't once been homesick since I arrived in the mission field and I pray to God that I never get the sickness for it no doubt is a bad one. At times I have felt discouraged in the work but never has it entered my mind to give up all and long for home. At present I feel fine in the work, but we have so much division among our saints here in Gefle that I don't know what will be the result. It seems as though the devil has got control of a few of them and is trying to use them as his servants to spoil our game, but we will give him as tough a fight as we can and try to get unity restored in our little assembly.

Elder Beckstrom received a letter from the pres. of the Swedish mission yesterday calling him to preside over the Sundsvall conference as Pres. Pehrson is released to go home. Bro. Beckstrom will leave here in a few days and then I suppose Elder Woodard who has been laboring at Sundsvall over two years will come here to Gefle and be Bro. Beckstrom's successor. I don't like to part with Bro. B. for he is such a nice man and he is just like a father to us, but whenever changes are made by the proper authorities we must be willing to accept them and respond to all calls. Elder Woodard is a very nice young man full of the spirit of work so I think everything will go on just as well at least we will try to make it do so. Elder Benson is quite weak in the language but he is willing to learn and is making pretty good headway. I was afraid that they would leave Bro. Benson and I here alone but today we received a letter from Bro. Pehrson stating that he intended to send Bro. Woodard here, so I feel more easy and can sleep without getting the nightmares.

My dear wife I must close now as it is soon time for my English class to come. Be good yourself and to sweet little Melba. Tell her that papa thinks he has a nice baby. As ever your loving Nels. Best regards to all. Kiss her for me. xxxxoxxx

Gefle, Jan. 31st, 1910

My Dear Wife;

Your letter of Jan 12th came to hand OK and contents noted. I notice that sickness has come in your midst and of course that isn't pleasant news to me. I am so glad that you and babe have been blessed with good health in the past and I hope that the sickness you have will soon leave. It's too bad that you had to stay awake a couple of nights with Melba and then walk the floor with her in the day. She no doubt is so heavy that she

would soon wear you out at that rate. I wish I could have helped you when you were in need of a husband. Well dearest, be very careful not to overdo yourself in any way for if you should get sick I am afraid I should worry myself crazy, and would be of no use in the mission field. I hope the next letter will bring me good news stating that you are all well. It certainly is a blessing to have good health and we don't appreciate it until we are afflicted.

So you are going to live with mother while Annie is in Salt Lake City? Well dearest I wish I could pay you a visit while you are there. Say, I believe tears of joy would lubricate my eyes if I could be in your company for awhile. It is so long since I was with you that it seems like a dream but I suppose I will awake from that dream some day and be with you in reality. Time seems to be going very fast for me but I don't care how fast it goes for I am anxious to be with you again. I know the time doesn't go as fast for you as it does for me but I hope you are able to content yourself and find great joy and satisfaction with your sweet little daughter who is the cutest little girl in the world.

So I was mistaken when I wrote you that I could see you had your new Xmas dress on in the photo. Your last letter states that you haven't yet sewed it. Well you look very nice no matter if it isn't your new dress. I feel like I have the cutest little wife and cutest little daughter in the whole world. I hope you will not get too conceited dearest. ha! ha! ha! I hope Melba doesn't get too thin for I think she looks so very nice and cute the way she is. I wonder if she will know her papa when he comes to P.G. I suppose she will be somewhat afraid of me and perhaps you will hardly think I am the same fellow after spending a few years in Sweden.

Some of the Swedes are alright but I hope to goodness that I don't become like some of the jealous sulky one-sided things that are here. But I suppose there are good and bad people no matter where we go, so probably I better not criticize too severely.

Well dearest it is 9 p.m. now and today at 1:37 Bro. Beckstrom left us and went to Sundsvall to preside over the Sundsvall conference. There were quite a number of the saints down to the depot to see him off. I hate very much to part with him for he was just like a father to me but I will have to take my medicine and make the best of it. I suppose Elder David Woodard will be here this week some time to take charge of the branch so I presume everything will be OK and we will soon get used to each other. It doesn't take long for elders to get acquainted with each other and as a rule we form a great love for one another.

Last night our meeting was well attended, our hall would not hold them all so some of them had to sit in the kitchen, but that went OK and we had a very nice meeting. All seemed to be quite interested in our talks and kept very quiet while we were talking. Prospects look quite bright here in Gefle now and if we have good luck and can keep the investigation on the right path I believe we will have a bounteous harvest when warm weather comes so we can baptize. Of course I don't intend to count my fish before they are caught, but I am just expressing my opinions on different matters. I have come in contact with two women who seem very interested and one of them has already expressed her desire to be baptized as soon as weather will permit.

Well dearest I feel fine and I only hope you are in the same condition and feel like the world is one of pleasure and satisfaction. We can make this good earth of ours a heaven or a hell just as we choose and I hope we will be able to make it a heaven through all coming life. Oh dearest I am glad you love me so much that you think you will be unable to live more than one more year without me. We must trust to time and providence and accept what the Lord desires should be done. Will close with love and very best wishes hoping you are all well. Your Loving Nels. Write soon. xxxxxxooxxx

Pleasant Grove, Ut., Feb. 5, 1910

My Dear Nels:

It has been a week since I wrote to you [last in box was Jan. 12], but I guess you won't care if I write again now. When I wrote to you before I was staying up to your mother's. I stayed there for ten days while Annie was visiting in Salt Lake City. I enjoyed myself just fine while I was there and it seems a little lonesome down here since I came back. Annie is going to Spanish Fork a week from today and then I guess I will go up again when she goes. I made my new dress while I was up there and they all think it looks fine.

There was a Scandinavian dance Wednesday night so I went with Stena and wore my new dress. I had a very nice time and it seemed like everyone enjoyed themselves. They served Coffee and Buns so Chris took Stena and I to Coffee. There was quite a large crowd out and Chris said they made about fifteen dollars. They had it in the old Hall because they went behind the last one they had in the new Hall. I wish you could have been there. Jens and Lavina were there and Aunt Lettie and Uncle Friend [Joseph's brother] and Aunt Stena. While I was up there Chris was down town and had a ton of coal sent down here and I didn't know anything about it until we came home and we could see that someone had brought coal so we asked Mrs. Banks and she said that the fellow that brought it said Mr. Fugal sent it. So I guess it was Chris that sent it but I haven't seen him to ask him about it yet. He sent us down a load of kindlings a while back all chopped and ready to use.

I don't believe I ever told you that Carrie gave me her baby buggy. I don't know what I would do without it because Melba is so big I can't carry her very far.

Well Nels I suppose you have got the baby's picture before this so you know what she looks like now. What do you think of her Nels? Do you think she is as sweet as I said she is? The picture looks just like her but Oh if you could only see her when she is laughing and playing. Your mother has got a little bath tub up there just the right size for Melba and I bathed her in it every morning while I was up there and we were wishing we had a Kodak to take her picture while she is in it. She sits up so cute and holds to the sides with both hands and looks up and laughs. Can you imagine you can see that picture? And what would you give to see the real thing?

It had been nearly two weeks since I heard from you when I got your letter today so you see I had been looking for it for quite awhile but you said you had been away tracting and so I guess it is alright but you must write to me just as often as you can, won't you dear? I know I don't write as often as I should but you know I can't write sometimes when

Melba is cross so you know you must write to me often whether I do or not.

I just heard today that Bishop Walker's father died last night. Esther and Ike are trying to get Annie to move to Salt Lake and she is thinking some of moving there in the spring. I will send you a little piece of my dress and also a piece of the lace and braid that it is trimmed with [enclosed].

Well Nels I am getting tired and sleepy so will close for this time. Write soon to your loving Viola.

Pleasant Grove, Utah, Feb. 8th 1910

Dear Bro. Niels,

Received your very welcome letter a couple of days ago and was more than pleased to hear from you. Whenever a letter from you is brought in the house we all stand around, all attention, until it has been read. Glad to note that you are well because health is one of the greatest blessings anyone can have.

On the 2nd inst. the Scandinavians gave a dance in the Opera house, we had a good time. Viola was there, I think everyone there had a very nice time, a good sociable crowd was out. Jesse Oler knocked the cat out of the barrel. The cat this time was a stuffed dog. They are talking of getting up another dance in the near future.

Last Saturday night the Home Dramatic Co. put on a play entitled "Thompkins Hired Man." It was pretty good, we have hardly got through laughing yet. J.D. Thorne took the part of the hired man. Henry Jeppson was Mr. Thompkins, Joe Halliday the part of the young man in love, Claude Hays a half grown awkward hired boy, a quartet of the high school boys and music teacher. The girls: Old Lady Thompkins, a cross old woman with a secret Deliah Thorne, her daughter, an ill tempered proud thing Lydia Humphries, and adopted daughter that is very sweet tempered and pretty by Leah Halliday, a niece staying at the Thompkins home by Hazel Smith. You can imagine the play.

B.N. Walker's funeral was held in the P.G. tabernacle, it was crowded to overflowing, 784 people attended it. The speakers were A.J. Evans, S.L. Chipman, Mr. Lewis a commissioner, Mr. Loveless and Judge Booth and others. It was the largest funeral I have ever attended. They certainly praised him to the highest and I guess he was a good man. Mrs. Elizabeth Walker died the week before Ben. She was 82 years old and had been ailing for a long time. Strange that mother and son should die so close together.

About the latest news in town is that Tom Larson is water master. Uncle Isaac got left, he put in his application and had a petition too. The boys think that Uncle Isaac would be a good water master. P.G. went dry but for some cause or other there are some that get buzzie, if reports are true. Chris has been out collecting for the water works for the last three or four days.

I am going to give you a pen picture of home. It is now 9 o'clock p.m. Mother is sitting under the light in a rocker reading a book. She is so interested that she has not time to

even look up over her glasses. Chris is sitting by the range in the big rocker asleep. He was trying to sum up how much he had taken in for water works, but somehow or other his pencil refused to add and put the figures in the wrong place. Ernest is sitting at the other side of the table drawing. You would smile if you could see the house he has made. Just now Ernest said, "Ma, I'm sleepy, I'll have to go to bed." The kid is in bed now and I understand that he not so sleepy now as he is singing a song.

Bertha and Clara Nelson are home for a visit, they intend to go back to Salt Lake next week. Bertha is still nursing and Clara is sewing for Cohn's store in Salt Lake. You know W. M. Nelson is on a mission in Denmark and Rose is in Salt Lake. Bertha said Rose liked nursing alright, I guess she likes the dough better. Lew has been trimming trees lately, he has trimmed the ash trees on the side walk. Today he is moving from the Washburn's place to Trinnups, he likes that place much better. Ally Radmall came home yesterday, he has been herding sheep for a couple of months. Owen and Alley are topping their poplar trees.

You stated in your letter that you thought the elders of former days accomplished more than the elders of today. Circumstances are different now than they were then, and you must not get discouraged if you do not convert anyone, you may sow the seed for some other elder to reap. People as a rule are not quite so religious as they used to be. They are more taken up with worldly things. We have no doubts whatever but that you are doing as much good as any one elder can.

Mother thanks you very much for the letter you sent her, she appreciated it very much. She said she wished she was able to write and she'd certainly answer it. It is getting late and I am getting sleeping so will close for tonight. Write soon to your Sister Stena.

Mother enclosed \$5.00 in this letter for you. She said it was a Christmas present but you did not need it as much then as you do now. The folks send their love.

Gefle, Feb. 25th 1910

My Dear Wife;

Your most welcome and kind favor of Feb. 5th came to hand and the contents read with great pleasure. Samples of your dress were in the envelope and I think they are very pretty. I imagine when the goods are made into a dress and placed on my dear wife that they look very nice and I must say I should like very much to see you sometime when you have it on. Pleased to note that you enjoyed yourself while staying at mother's and I hope you will enjoy it next time you go stay while Annie is at Spanish Fork. I should like to have happened to call on you while you were there sewing your dress and see if you would be very surprised. I dream of you very often and that I am with you but when I awake I am quite disappointed to find myself about 10,000 miles from you. Well dearest, time seems to be rolling on quite lively and it won't be so very long before we will meet again and live happily together. I suppose the time doesn't seem to pass as fast for you as it does for me, but I think it will roll on much more smoothly for you this year than last because you will not worry so much and your charming little child will be a great comfort and pastime for you.

Just think, if they don't keep me longer than till Xmas, I have just ten months left, and they will go like a shot out of a gun, for I am so busy that the days seem almost too short. I arise every morning at six o'clock and seldom go to bed before 10:30 p.m. and still I do not seem to be making much headway. I want to make good use of my time while here, for I realize that this is the greatest chance and opportunity of my life to learn something, for I have all my time to spend in this. When I get home I will have something else to take my time and attention so my time for study will be limited. I am certainly thankful that I was sent on a mission for I can already realize wherein it has helped me wonderfully, giving me a much better insight to things and to understand the plan of life and salvation and to realize what we have to work for, and what our destiny will be provided we are faithful and keep on toiling in the right path.

I am experiencing some things that are not at all pleasant but I suppose they are a means of strengthening me and will prove a blessing to me for they cause me to be more cautious and to exercise carefulness in all my words and actions. I am now referring to the discussion that is existing among our saints in this city. It seems as though old perdition is trying his best to destroy the work of the Lord, and some of the so-called saints seem to be possessed with the devil's influence, causing a very foul spirit to be in our midst very often. We elders are invited in our thoughts and efforts and expect to get things bettered before long but it is hard to tell what will happen before peace will be restored. Generally these discussions soon come to a head but it seems like this one is quite long winded. It commenced shortly after I came here and has existed ever since. I do hope I may have the chance of experiencing good feelings among the saints before I am called away from here or else I will not feel satisfied with any work in the Gefle branch. If our saints were united now I think we would have good progress in our works for we have quite a number of good investigators and we are working to get more every day.

Well dearest I have something else to write about now that will probably interest you even if it doesn't concern you in the least. You remember of me telling you there were two elders sent to Luleå? Sorry to say they are not there now. They got it into their heads that they couldn't stay in Luleå so they packed their goods and came back to Sundsvall saying that they couldn't stay in such a place. The one elder who has not been satisfied with his destination since he came last spring was sent to Stockholm to report to the Pres. of the mission and the other is at Sundsvall willing to go back to Luleå as soon as they give him a partner. I think they are quite childish when the two of them couldn't stay in a place a few months where I had stayed alone six months. I think they will realize their error in the near future and regret that they left there without permission from the proper authority. We learn to do great things by doing little things and not by being disobedient. That's all for this time. Will write again before I come home. Yours forever and forever, Niels. Write soon dearest. Kiss Melba a few for me and accept the following from me.
xxx000xxxx0x0x

Gefle, March 4th 1910

My Dear Wife Viola;

Tis six o'clock Friday morning. I have made a fire, washed my face, am all dressed, so I feel like a new man after a pleasant night's rest, and feel it both a duty and a pleasure to write you a few lines. I believe it is about a week since I received your last letter so I am looking for another any moment. I decided to write you without first getting one from you.

In your last letter you wrote that I should write to you often whether you returned the favor or not. Well dear wife I will endeavor to write to you once a week but if it happens that it runs a little over a week you must not feel bad and think that I have forgotten you, for sometimes there is something that prevents me from writing at the times when I have thought I should.

Say Sweetheart, it certainly would be nice to talk with you now for a while, and oh! how nice it would be to be in your presence. I hardly know how I would act but I almost think I would be apt to eat you up. Oh! dearest, it certainly will be real happiness when we meet again. I dare not think too about that pleasant time for fear I get homesick.

Yesterday while I was out canvassing I got into a little conversation with a woman who had a pretty little girl that was all full of smiles. I asked the mother how old the baby was and she informed me that she was ten months. In an instant my thoughts dashed over land and water to the valley of Utah where safely in her mother's care lives my baby girl and imagined that I could see sweet little Melba, as the baby which I was admiring and was looking at me with its pretty face all trimmed with smiles. The child cannot walk without aid, but by clinging to chairs and the sofa it could make its way around the room. Melba is soon nine months now so I suppose she is as full of life and vigor as the babe I have made reference to. Just think when I get home she will be at least one and a half years old and oh! what a sweet little topsy she will be. Think of the comfort she will be to the father and mother as they relate their last two year's experiences and draw out resolutions and plans for their future. What can be more happiness to a man than to know that he has a dear loving wife and the most beautiful charming daughter in the whole world.

I thank God for all this and I only hope that I can prove worthy of them so that when these few moments of corruption have elapsed that I may be worthy of a resurrection in the first morning and shall meet the wife that God has given me for all time and eternity. Oh! we will not live alone but sweet little Melba will probably be our nearest neighbor or probably be partaker of the same house as we. And oh! that we live such a life while here in this world of sin that we can gain strength enough to refrain from all evil temptation and thereby be worthy of an exaltation in our Father's house where we can have an endless posterity. Oh! if we could only realize what our destiny will be if we are faithful to the covenant and not idle our time away in degrading foolishness. Think of it as God is, we may become. How? By following the same laws as He has, through His different stages of eternity. Isn't it grand to know that these few moments that we should in this life of mortality will not be the last of our existence. Grand? Why we can't half realize how good our Maker is and what glorious plans He has for his children to follow that they may sometime obtain to the same glory as He at present is in. When I think of these things I become buried in pleasant thoughts and it causes me to thank God that I have been permitted to be born into this world and have a chance with my millions of brothers

and sisters to work out my own salvation. If we would only think of these things constantly I believe it will be much easier to reject all evil and to feel more satisfied with our condition and worldly riches. Intelligence is the Glory of God but we must by intelligence guide us through the proper channel.

Well dear Viola I pray our Heavenly Father to protect you and to give you courage that you may bravely fight the battles of this life and always feel consoled when you know that we are made one for all eternity. I am as every your loving Niels. xxxxxxooxxx

Pleasant Grove, Mar. 8th 1910

Dear Brother:

Am ashamed to confess I have some unfinished letters which have been dated all along from 3 months ago until the present date. I don't know how it is but somehow I suppose fate has interfered but I don't intend to let this one be amongst the others if I have to cut it short and run all the way to the office to be sure it gets off.

After receiving such beautiful letters from you it makes me feel like five cents in scrip to think we have not sent you a letter in all these months. When you went away, it was our intention to write you often but there is an old saying that the road to h___ is paved with good intentions and if our intentions to write to you can be called good ones, I am afraid that we have paved a distressingly long distance toward that place.

[Letter from Lavina to Niels continued, next set.]