

Chicago. June 1, 1875.

Mrs. J.H. Orne.

My dear Madam:

Your letter written immediately after you received the news of the proceedings which I was unhappily compelled to take, should have received an earlier reply and I must beg you to excuse my apparent neglect.

If you have since then seen any detailed account of the occurrences which forced me to place my mother under care, I think, indeed I know, you could not but have approved my action. Six physicians in council informed me that by longer delay I was making myself morally responsible for some very probable tragedy, which might occur at any moment. Some of my Eastern friends have criticised the public proceedings in Court which seemed to them unnecessary. Against this there was no help, for we have a Statute in this State which imposes a very heavy penalty on any one depriving an insane person of his liberty, without the verdict of a jury.

My mother is I think under as good care and as happily situated as is possible under the circumstances. She is in the private part of the house of Dr. Patterson, and her associates are the members of his family only. With them she walks and drives whenever she likes and takes her meals with them or in her own room as she chooses, and she tells me she likes them all very much. The expression of surprise at my action which was telegraphed East and which you doubtless saw, was the first and last expression of the kind she has uttered and we are on the best of terms. Indeed my consolation in this sad affair is in thinking that she herself is happier in every way, in her freedom from care and excitement, than she has been in ten years. So far as I can see she does not realize her situation at all. It is of course my care that she should have everything for her comfort and pleasure that can be obtained.

I can tell you nothing as to the probability of her restoration. It must be the work of some turn if it occurs. Her physician who is of high repute is not yet able to give an opinion.

The responsibility that has been and is now on me is one that I would gladly share if it was possible to do so, but being alone as I am, I can only do my duty as it is given me to see it, trusting that I am guided for the best.

Very sincerely yours,

(signed) Robert T. Lincoln.