

I have become used to Getting up at the sun[,] opening the windows Going into the counting room[,] sitting down for a while Jump up[,] take a pan of water and a brush and sprinkle the floor Take the broom and sweep out Carry it into the other room Fling it up in the corner Set down cross my legs and think of nothing till the bell rings Wake up my Contemporary (Mr. Green) Wash my face[,] comb my hair[,] and dress Put on my hat and go to breakfast Eat my breakfast[,] come down again Go into the store[,] take the brush[,] brush off the counter. Go into the Counting room[,] kick up my heels & set down while my chum is gone to the bluff Presently I hear something Go in and a ladie [sic] says[,] [^]Good morning Mr. Cooper have you any pretty calicos,[^] [^]Oh Yes Mam!! some very pretty,[^] Pulled down all in the store [^]None suit me sir have you any work collars[?^] [^]Yes mam[.] [^]Let me look at them['] Show them to her She rumbles them about and throws them all over the counter [^]None of them suit have you any silks of such a colour[?^] [^]No mam not any['] (Got plenty all the time but she don't want to buy) [^]Nothing else you will look at Mam[?^] [^]No sir nothin [sic] else. Good morning sir['] [^]Good morning Mam['] Then comes the tug of war putting up the goods she has pulled down Hardly had we got the goods up before in pops some more[,] and perhaps after pulling down the whole store we may sell them a dollars worth and then they will want you to fling in a spool of Thread And if it is a dress they will want you to fling in a belt so that you have to fling in nearly as much as the profits you make. So much for storekeeping and all its attendant qualities.¹

¹ Edmund Cooper to William F. Cooper, 12 October 1836, Cooper Family Papers, TSLA.

. . . . Milley is a weeving dear brother it is not my purpose at this time to complain of your neglect in not riting but to tell you that our march is onward and I murst go back to former days when father first mooved to bedford county[.] He was then fifty od year old[.] We then settled here in a thick forrest of heavy timber and the powerfulllest cain brake that was eaver saw[.] I think 26 or 27 year ago[.] and then no plase of market only as we cold sell cattle to the drovers or hogs[.] Mills scarce and every thing high[.] It was then a trip of three month to go from nashvill to New Orleans and back[.] The seckond year after father came here governer Lewis run up the Massasippi with the first steemboat that eaver run the river and now there are nearly one hundred and maby over[.] I cant tell axactly[.] And now they purform a trip in 12 or 15 days to and from lode and unlode and carrey a burden of four or five hundred thousand[.] We used to give 50 cents for coffee per pound and 25 cents for a pound of shuguar[.] now we get 10 lbs of shuguar for a dollar and 5 pounds of coffee for a dollar and sometimes lower by the quantitey[.] I must now go back a little again and tell you that then we had no mills and now we have plenty[.] And in some plases whare they haint got the warter power they bild mills to go by steam[.] In an adjacent county they have bilt two[.] Then the woman had to spin all thare thread now there are spinning factoreys all over the cuntrey and some plases weving factory[.] But we are still going ahead[.] We now have large farms open and our lands are productive[.] consiquently produse is low[.] And our rodes are muddey in the winter time so that it is harde to get to market[.] To remmidey this evil the legeslater chartered a rode from Shelbyvill to Nashvill by way of Murpheesburrow[.] This rode is to bee throd up leavel thirtey feete wide and made leavel and then graveld over twenty feete wide and the gravel to bee nine inches thick[.] And the rode is now in rappid progress[.] a parte of it finished[.] And the hole will bee done in 12 or 15 month more[.] It is thought then that a teem can pull from 5 to 6 thousand pounds[.] All tho this rode is nearley done and it is believed that grate good will result from it the sittisens are turning thare attention to the subject of a ralerode[.] The cumberland river is not navigale at all times for steembotes therefore they say that we must have a line of ralerode from Shelbyvill to memphies on the grate Massasippi[.] or as maney people calls it the father of rivers[.] a distence of about two hundred thirty miles[.] The people in murrey county have already undertook to run a ralerode from collumbia to tennessee river 67 miles[.] The people in maddison and adjacent counteys have commenced running a ralerode from Jackson town in the district to memphies 70 miles and have also agreede to meet the murrey people at tennessee river maby 50 od miles more[.] Then bedford will have to bild a rode 40 miles to collumbia[.] Then we cold have an easey convayence to markit[.] Shold it take plase then a farmer cold put his hole crop in the cares and in three days go to markit[.] sell out[.] lay in[.] and come home[.] And it is not to stop at Shelbyville[.] But Mr. long the united states enginear was in Shelbyvill about a weeke ago and is vewing a rout from memphis to the chessapick in merriland[.] It is to run up threw the senter of our state the hole length[.] That wold bee a grate work if it is ever accomplished to connect the town of memphies and baltimore by a ralerode[.] But that thare will bee a rale rode from Shelbyvill to memphies I have no doubt[.] And as I began with fathers age and settlement in bedford thank god he is intollerable helth again and likeley to live to see the hole of this grate work compleeted[.] Histrey cold not rite aney thing to excell the progress²

² Letter from John Shoffner in Bedford County, Tennessee, to his brother Michael in Orange County, North Carolina, 28 August 1834, Michael Shoffner Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.