

[letter has raised imprint reading: "CONGRESS / [LTR*] Co"]

U.S. Gen. Hospital
Point of Rocks, Va.
Jan. 23^d 1865.

My darling Emmy.

Your dear long letter o the 15th inst. came to hand yesterday, and it gave me a great deal of pleasure I assure you; though I guess, you wrote it in the hope of heaping coals of fire on my inocent head, but if you had only waited till you received the next one. I am sure you would not have complained of it being short, whatever you might have thought of it otherwise. The fact is, darling. I have begun to think that my dear. good. loving wife, is deserving of better treatment from me. and that, if my letters afford you any pleasure, it ought to be a pleasure to me, to write them, instead of the task, that I sometimes feel it; and I assure you, dear, that when I think of it in this way, it is a plasure to me, second, only to buzzing. That you know, can only be done properly, with your arms around my neck, and with our heads lying on the same pillow. I should have answered yours, yesterday, but there was a friend stopping with me last night, so, I put it off. till I could give my whole attention to it: right, was'nt it Emmy? I am not going to answer it now, only make a beginning, and finish it this evening. I received a letter from Elmer, at the same time, which must be answered. But I will not write any more now. I should like to kiss you just once, now.

Evening: Now let me try and finish my letter. You are very kind to tell me so much of what you are doing at home. I like very much to hear of your business, and pleasures: everything that interest you I like to have you write about, and especilly the children.

I fully sympathise with you, in the loss of your little bed-fellow, and would be glad to furnish you with a bigger, I will not say a better one. I am glad you enjoy your singing s^hool, and was in hopes to have been there to go with you. but I cannot tell. I suppose Joseph is so much taken up with his [Doxey*], that he cant find time to write to me: well I do not blame him.

Now if I write you a good long, loving letter, this time, the chances are, that, ^lyou will not be pleased with the next one that you have got to answer, so my letter, next week will bring me a scolding

That is the disadvantage we have been laboring under all Summer, having to write a second letter before getting an answer to the first one, but I will try and avoid giving you any cause to find fault with me, for it I get a chance to come home this Spring, I do not want you to have anything to scold s about. You are such an awfull scold!! you know:

I began to think that I was steering rather wild after writing the above, so I have been reading your letter over again, but it has got me all mixed up, so I am am in no better condition to write than I was before.

What did you mean by being afraid of me "forgetting my other duties?" Did you mean anything ~~of~~ or nothing? I always feel, when you say anything like that as though you did not have much confidence in me now, and though I could not blame you, I would be very sorry to know that it was so.

I assure you my dear wife, that you possess, and ever have, my entire love and confidence. though I know that I have forfeited the claim that I once had, for a like return from you. After what passed between us on the last night that I was with you, which caused you, (and me) so much unhappiness, and which, was. after all, left unexplained, I feel that it would be unreasonable in me to expect the same confidence from you as before. And I cannot now, give any satisfactory explanation; ^{As} Much as I love you, my dear wife, and as much as I wish to see you. I honestly confess that I dread to meet you again.

Rather than. be obliged to see you as unhappy again, as you were when I left you, last, I would sooner never come home. I feel. that in writing what I have done, that I have admitted as much, as you ever ^{sus}pected. Perhaps, it is not doing right, but I cannot. attempt to practice any deception, where you are interested. I should fail. if I tried to convince you with your opinions on this subject, that I had never. wronged you, or failed in my love and duty to you, but it is a fact in my heart. Can I send you this? I must. It will make you unhappy. Do not fail to tell me just what you think of it If you cannot forgive me, and love me just as well as ever, tell me so honestly, and frankly. I have a right to ask this after having condemned myself. and if you could know what it costs me to do this, you would, at least be plain with me. I do not ask you to sacrifice your own feelings, but just to tell me what they are.

I do not dare to think of what I have written. If I did not love you, and did not prize your love, beyond everything else in the world I never could have written what I have done. and if I was not sure that you believed this of me. for your sake, I would not tell it, but it is done, and I will send it. I cannot. keep it on my mind any longer. I will not try to make any merit of confessing this, for you knew it before, or I would not have told you. I only want to know, if you can forgive me. And Oh: my dear wife, tell me the whole truth. If you cannot love me just the same as, as you ever did, say that you forgive me, and tell me the worst; for I cannot, will not meet you again without knowing your feelings towards me.

Now, my precious wife I will close. I have not written what I intended, but cannot put it at the end of this. Have pity on me darling. Perhaps I will write again tomorrow.

Your loving Leander