

St. Augustine Fla Apr 13<sup>th</sup> / 62

My Darling Wife:

My last letter was dated at Jacksonville. We then expected to remain there for some time, but before the mail which contained the letter left, we received orders to evacuate the place. For my part I was very much disappointed for I liked the place very much, and had made some very pleasant acquaintances among the people there. Why the order was given I am entirely unable to guess, but as there has been a change in the General Commanding, perhaps he thought it necessary to make some change in the disposition of the force here. However we had to pack and start at short notice. We have 7 Co's here, the other three are at Fernandina. The 97<sup>th</sup> Pa Regt have gone to Hilton Head. How long we shall stay here no one knows, but many of the officers think that we shall be permanently stationed here during the war but that is only their opinion, and that is not worth any more than my own, that I know of, and mine is, that we shall not stay here but a short time. The place here is much pleasanter than Jacksonville, and we have excellent quarters but I do not think I shall like near as well here. But the weather is dull to-day, & I have "got the blues" and should not "like" anywhere to-day, not even at home with you, feeling as I do now, but then ~~pit~~ if I had my little darling wife to put her arms around my neck, the "blues" would vanish "double quick"

By the way, I showed my pictures to Mrs Sawyer this morning, she thinks, (as I do) that I have got a sweet little wife, and some darling babies, she said she would sooner guessed you were their older sister than their Mother. I have not seen "the young widow" until within a few days. for nearly three months. I intend to answer my little Annie's letter and want her to write to me every time that you do, I don't suppose that Josie will undertake to correspond with me yet, but I should like to get a line from her very much I hope you have got done worrying about the danger that I am in. you must be convinced that I am in no more danger here than in any other place. There is danger everywhere, you know, but I have faith to believe that that I shall see my only treasures again in this life. I should like very much to be with with you now, but am not homesick nor impatient yet, for you know Annie and I always stay the time out that is fixed upon, before we begin to fuss. However I think there is no doubt but that we shall be at home before cold weather again. I suppose you are having pleasant Spring weather there now, and that Annie & Josie go out with you after violets & Mayflowers, would I like to go with you? I wish you could look out of the window where I am writing, and see the splendid flowers that are in blossom. Red and white Oleanders and Jessamines, and a great many other kinds. they make a splendid show, and the mocking birds are singing all around among them, which seems only a fitting accompaniment to their beauty. But I must try and give you a poor description of the place, you know that I am not good for describing places, but this is so peculiar that I think it is worthy of a better one than I can give. You probably know that this is the oldest town in America, I do not recollect the date of the settlement, but to judge from the appearance of the place, should think it was about the year 1 B.C. There is nothing American in the looks of the town, everything appears just as it left the hands of the old Spanish settlers. There is an old convent with a Catholic church close by, which has a chime of 4 bells, or rather what is called a chime, but a jangle would be more appropriate I think, for such an infernal clatter I never heard before, as they made this morning calling the people to church. It sounded like a dozen cows, with each a cow bell on her neck, and going upon the run. As I was coming up a

street facing the convent yard, the gate was opened to admit a number of little girls who were probably going to a Sabbath school, I got a sight of one of the sisters of the convent who was coming out to meet them. It was the first time that I ever saw a “real live” nun, and I took a good look at her. She was a pale sweet looking woman, about 25 or 30 years old, I should judge. She wore a black dress, with a curious head dress, of white, a kind of veil I should think which was thrown back from her face, and fell down as low as the waist, it was very becoming, and altogether, I think she looked as good and pure as it is possible for a poor mortal to be. But I began to ~~tel~~ describe this old city, but find I have been describing a pretty nun, however, dont think I have fallen in love with her. Now I will try again. As I said before, it is very pleasant. The town faces the river, and there is a granite wall running the whole length of the town ~~between the street & river~~, which is ~~about~~ washed by the tide. There are no buildings on that side of the streed, and the wall makes a beautiful walk. How would you like to take a walk with me there, some moonlight evening? Perhaps we may yet, who knows: There is a very pleasant public square, shaded with trees, and in the center is an ancient looking monument, / with the inscription, “La Plaza de la Constution” The streets are very narrow, not more than 14 or 15 feet wide, and when one of our 4 horse teams go thundering through them, it causes a general stampede, among the dogs and small niggers. Most of the houses are built with balconies which project over the street nearly meeting in the middle. Nearly all the buildings are built of a material that looks like stone, but on a close inspection it does not resemble stone in the least, for it is composed of small shells, it is quarried near here. It seems to be pretty durable however for some of the oldest buildings in the country are standing here in a good state of preservation. The fort here is built of the same material. It is the oldest fortification, on this continent. It is a very imposing looking structure, but I expect, two or three of our little gunboats with their single long gun each, would play “the dickens” with it in about a half a day I have not seen a great deal of the place yet, probably I shall have more to tell you about the place when I write again. I have not written to William for some time, but intend to do so soon but the fact is I am getting too lazy to write much now, but hope to get up force enough to write to you once a week at least I am thinking that it is about time that I received another letter from you. The last one was dated Mar 16”, nearly a month ago, but probably the next mail will bring two or three, at least I hope so My health continues good, and the health of the Reg<sup>t</sup> generally is excelent. We have not lost but two men by sickness since we left Port Royal, nearly three months ago. One of those died of Consumption, just before we arrived at Fernandina. He was probably sick when he enlisted. The other died this evening, he had been sick for a great while, and had been moved with the Reg<sup>t</sup> a number of times. I am anxious to get a letter from you to hear that you are all well, and that Josie has got over with the mea<sup>s</sup>les, although I have not worried about it much, still I should feel a better to hear that you are all as well as usual. Give my love to my good little sister Ruth, and to the “boys” and Hattie. I am quite anxious to hear a favorable report of her case. I really hope I shall find a little neice there when I get back. My love to father and mother of course, and to everybody else that you love. Write often and direct as usual. There has been no regular mail established South of Port Royal. Well good bye my darling wife

I remain as ever your loving husband      Leander