In Camp near Lewis H.
Feby 19th 186[illegible]

[Ca. 180]

My Dear, dear wife,

I reached here this evening and am deeply disappointed at not finding any letters from you. The only letter from home is one from Mary Quitman dated the 4th of this month. I learn however that some letters to me had been sent down to Richmond & those I did not get, but may yet do so. Oh how sad — how sad I feel at not having gone on home. I did want so much to see you, my darling wife.

On getting to Bristow last night, where I stopped in preference to getting off at Manassas they told me they had heard cannon firing all day — so I thought I was just in time and not back a day too soon — Besides the rumours which are always rife in camp of the movements of the enemy I have heard nothing to day. It is believed by all here tho' & most all in Richmond that we will either have a fight here soon or be moved off to some other field. I wanted very much to remain in R. to witness the inauguration of the 1st Prest under the new Gov't but I was afraid to be away from the Reg't — All the mind officers seem to be glad I had gotten back —

I shall rejoice when the war is over & I can return home, there to remain in happiness &

quiet all the balance of my days. I
do believe I sh'd be the happiest of men if
this shall ever again ~~be~~ my lot.
We have bad news. the fall of Fort Don-
elson in Tenn is a sad blow to our Army.
It begins to make me view it in a more
serious light than I have ever done; still
I do not fear that we shall be finally
subjugated. There are some however even
in Greene Co & in our town who wd rejoice
to see Lincoln conquer us. I heard while
at home that Mr Jeffreys & Jno Charles had
both said they were willing to live under Lin-
coln's govt — They are at heart real Lincolnites
I think some of our near neighbours are not
better. It ~~wears~~ wears me sometimes to think that I
am away from home, from all I love on earth —
making sacrifices of ease & comfort & happiness —
to fight for their property as well as their lib-
erty & ~~[illegible]~~ independence and still get no
thanks from them, nor aid nor sympathy to our cause.
The new Members of Congress were arriving in
Richmond when I left. Saw Mr Singleton & his
wife — both of whom asked particularly after
you. Clay & wife had not arrived, nor had James
Phelan whom I wished to see.
Gen'l Toombs told me he spoke to the Pres't
about appointing me Brig Gen'l & the Pres't told
him he could not say anything in my favour
which he would not endorse — and many other
complimentary expressions — He did not say that

he would give me the appointment, tho' Toombs said he thought he would do so. I begin to doubt whether he will or not & feel much less concern on the subject than I formerly did.

You inquired of me whether you sh'd send to Mr Dowell, Withers & Co for groceries — I never heard a word from them on the subject, tho' I wrote to them about it. You had best send to them and I have no doubt it will be all right — if not I will send them the money — in case they require it.

I am concerned about the hands from the Est. I fear they have not yet been sent home & the mules are absolutely necessary at the plantation. I wish I had sent Claiborne over for them when I was at home — It will be impossible to make any thing there this year — Geo never sent me any list of the hands I drew — I cant understand why he did not. He took an unauthorized liberty to go & swap off negroes I drew when I had not only not authorized him, but had expressly told him if there was to be any exchanges made that I wd prefer to make them myself. He had no authority whatever to give away, as he says he did, my interest in the land. One 1/10 part wd not have amounted to much but certainly he ought to have consulted me before undertaking to give away [illegible]

[illegible] to me. I do not like the high valuation put on Kitty & Henry — being just double what they wd have sold for at the time I got them — but I need not make any objection now as it is too late — As to the you which he said I owed the younger children I confess I don't understand it. It may be for debts of the Est not yet paid — or for the difference in the valuation of negroes. I have written to Geo to learn what it meant. He ought to have sent my hands at once, knowing that all the mules were in Miss & that nothing could be done farming until I got them. Let me know who is the overseer. I will write to him & give him my views about planting. However I know so little about the no of hands & do kind that I hardly know how to instruct him. On 1st of Jan'y Smaw will owe one of the notes or rather it will be due — He will no doubt pay the interest (at least) if called on — the notes are in the Planters Ins office & Mr Weems will give them to you or to Rit if called on — If he pays the interest, it will more than pay off one of Mr's in Greensboro & nearly yr Mr — Do with it as you like; but be certain to get Mr Weems or Carson to call on Smaw to pay interest if nothing else. Do let me beg of you to write every 2 or 3 days — & write fully. Send back all the letters sent to me at home — God bless you all — Love to Sis & the child [illegible] — Nothing to read over this letter — My health [illegible] very good — Yours [illegible] S. M.