Montgomery
Feby 10th 1862.

My Dearest, sweetest darling—

Intelligence rec'd here to day compels me to hasten back to my Reg't— I hear that the enemy have crossed a large force over the Potomac and we may be attacked where we are; or we may be ordered to go & meet them— Besides this news, I have just heard of the defeat of our troops at Roanoke Island in N Ca!— & the taking of about 3000 prisoners!— and the design of the enemy is to reach the R'l R'd in N. Ca at Weldon, as is believed,

If they were to succeed, in this, I sh'd be unable in a few days to reach my Reg't— and by way of Knoxville they are making the same attempt—

In addition to all this news has reached here that the Lincolnites have

taken possession of Florence in N Ala & of the Memphis & Charleston Rl Rd. — All believe here, as I do, that a general movement at all points where we have troops is contemplated —

I should feel that I had deserted my post — the post of duty — if I did not hasten back —!

My hope & expectation was, when I left Manassas, that I could remain at least 2 weeks at home — the very thought thrilled my heart — I longed to go to my sweet home and clasp to my bosom the dear being whom God created & intended for me as I often think — the one of all on earth I ever saw or knew who was the idol of my soul — the very being to make me happy — Oh to be so near & yet to feel compelled to forego the

pleasure of seeing her is to me torturing painfully so — My coming or starting on a trip of 1000 miles (& 1000 back) to spend a week or 2 weeks with you whom I parted from just 3 weeks ago shows you how my heart yearns to see you & be with you again — Gladly wd I walk barefooted from here to Greensboro & back just to spend a week by yr side — But I fear to go — My reputation that I want to preserve for yr sake & that of my children might & would suffer greatly if I were now to go back & a fight shd come off in my absence — You know how much disposed the world is to find fault & to censure — You know too I have enemies (a few atleast) who wd rejoice at this — such as Tom Anderson at Eutaw & others like him — They wd always

intimate, tho' they did never let me hear it that I had left knowing there did be a fight — When I left Camp nothing seemed less likely — Snow was on the ground & the mud deep — But the news just rec'd convinces me that something will be done & that immediately on the Potomac

I fear you will hardly appreciate my motives in this — I know it will be a disappointment to you, but oh! how much greater to me! — My very soul grieves at the sacrifice I make of inclination at the shrine of duty. I trust we may meet again & live & love as we have done — We are in the midst of a great war — What may befall me I know not — whether it shall be to die in the battle-field or be immured in prison walls or return again to my beloved wife & children to dwell with them while life lasts I know not. — In any event, I want to preserve your pure love, & prize it value more than all the wealth or honors of this world — Cherish for me them