In Camp near
the Lewis House —
March 5th 1862 —

My Dear wife

I wrote you a few days ago, but will write again now, seeing a chance & send the letter by one of the soldiers from Maine, just returning home — It seems that but few letters go thro' now, by mail. None have reached me from home later than the 20th of last month — How dreadful it would be if they should be cut off altogether & we never hear from each other! for months & it might be for yrs — But I shall hope for better things. We have not been ordered off yet — We are under what are called Marching orders & are required to be ready & move at a moments notice — In a few days we will be almost certain to start somewhere I expect; — but our letters will be forwarded to us from Manassas.

We still have cold weather here — The snow has been 4 or 5 in deep, but is just melting & the mud is awful; — tho' this morning it is frozen hard. It will be a pity for the men to give up their comfortable cabins after being so long a time in them, & having built them with so much labour & trouble; — tho' for

myself? shall be glad to get away from such a miserable muddy country & in fact will be glad to move even if we went to another place as muddy.

I was sorry to learn from yr letter that the negroes & mules had not arrived — George wrote that he had sent them home; but my opinion is he gave himself very little trouble about them — He was too much engrossed with his own business to take any interest in mine. I fear making so late a start this year we shall make no crop & not clear expenses. I have known however a good crop made even when starting late. Both corn & cotton can be planted on the old beds & the middles afterwards ploughed out. How would it do to speak to the 2 Nelsons — Benners & Mr Alfred Hatch & get them if all their land has been broken up, to help me break up my land? — In a few days they could do it, and I would return the work at a future time — either this fall or next spring. They wd do this if you were to propose it — but do as you think best. I would only consent upon the understanding that the work was to be returned or repaid. I know most of the planters had bedded up their land even before I was at home last —

I have written to Hugh Davis at Macon Miss to send my mulled negroes over, if they have not been sent — and in case the rivers are too high I told him to ship them to Demopolis. The prospects certainly seem bad for making any thing this year, on our little farm — but we may get by so with proper management. What is the name of the overseer? I did not think if I knew. Write me fully & often of home & plantation affairs.

My horse was lost — when I came back he could not be found, & no one seemed to know what had become of him. They furnished me with another horse however and upon trying him I think I have made a good exchange. He is a fine riding horse. — I am trying to sell one of my horses now, as it is so difficult to get feed for them. In the army here the loss has been awful in horses. — I counted a pile in one place yesterday of 23 & suppose several hundred were lying dead in a short distance. — We have all been disturbed by the defeats at Fort Donelson, Roanoke & other places; — but still look forward with hope and confidence that we shall finally triumph. Ours would be an awful doom if the Yankees shd succeed in their unhallowed purpose of subjugation & destruction.

I have not seen Bird since I was at home — but rec'd a letter from him a few days ago. He was quite well — & expects to join again for the war. He seemed to be out with A. C. J. — & spoke of him in no very complimentary terms.

I have heard nothing of the Brig Generalship & begin to think it will not be conferred upon me; altho' at one time the prospects seemed very good. I shall be satisfied any way — The responsibility would only be increased that much & it is already enough being in command of a single Regt —

What has Rit concluded to do? — How did he come out with his examination? Tell him not to be discouraged let it have gone as it may. I know he was studious & attentive & I feel the utmost confidence in his doing well now and in future —. One so free of dissipated or bad habits & with good minded manners, as he has, must do well in the world, let him follow whatever profession or pursuit he may prefer. Both he & Alfred have been always so steady — so studious — so gentlemanly in their deportment, that it gives me great hopes of their success in life — Indeed, my darling, I think we have great cause to be proud of all of our children — My heart warms when I think of them —; my very heart — strings are indeed around them — and Oh how happy I sh'd be to have them near me and with her I love so supremely — their pure hearted and best of mothers. Long years have passed since we were made one! — Oh, darling, sweet wife! you will never know how fondly I dont upon you. How every day I recall Vt sweet face, & soft words, & gentle kindnesses to me and my love increases & has increased each day & you are lovelier & sweeter, & deaner to me and have been growing. Mary Dear so since that happy hour when you were made mine! Oh that I was worthy of such an angel wife! Kiss the little ones & love & then all — Even thine S. M.