In the trenches Petersburg
March 12th 1865 —

Dear Laura

I received a letter from you about the last of January. I am not sure I answered it. — if I did not it was because no one has gone South since I give you the benefit of this doubt anyhow and you can give the news from Petersburg to all — as there is none it will not take you long. You have not had a "run" of letters from this quarter recently — this you must attribute to Sherman who has interposed — furloughing to Ala ceased in this army some time ago. — in consequence few have gone South as far as Ala or beyond Sherman and this you understand interrupted things & bothered considerably. We know nothing here of Shermans movements or intention — or even where he is — nothing of Joe Johnston's army. Every thing is kept dark — the newspapers say nothing except that they have been requested by the authorities to give

no news from Sherman. We have been in the ignorant state until we concern ourselves little about Sherman and his moves. —
Of course there are some who can imagine all Sherman is going to do — who can see him as he forms the junction with Grant and sweeps down on the flank of our army.
I trust he may never reach here — but if he should — if the combined yankee hosts and all yankeedom in arms encircle it — advancing upon it from every direction the army of Northern Virginia will make the effort to strike him a staggering blow — the laurels he has gathered in Georgia and South Carolina & which he may gather in North Carolina as he comes on in his grand march I hope it may be the good fortune of this army to tear from his brow. — This army will strike many more "honest blows" for the Confederacy. We will not yield Richmond yet — nor Petersburg — We are growing to become attached to Petersburg — you don't imagine that our associations connected with its defence have been pleasant — but we are ac-

commodating ourselves to circumstances — as it seems we are to remain here during the war — There are ladies still in the city — many who have defied shot and shell and have stood to their posts.
They love the soldiers & at their dancing parties we have the liveliest times imaginable — In the maze of the dance the contrast in the movements of these spirited creatures is great oh yes very great, and those of the quiet Alabamian —
The style of beauty is about as varied as in other parts of the globe — one has a beautiful mouth — another glances at you with one sparkling black eye and a lovely blue eye — These colors black & blue are those which excite the raptures of poets and romancers lovers &c — The combined ~~effect~~ ought to be irresistible
I received a day or two ago a letter from Jim dated Charlotte N.C Feb 26 —
He was all right — in command of his Regiment when he wrote & anxious to hear from home — he wanted to hear through me

I cannot help him as he has been home since I have heard.
He was in two skirmishes in S. C. – his orderly Sergeant was wounded by his side at Columbia – he says his Corps has been driven easily by Sherman to where it was when he wrote – Jim is in low spirits – although he writes "if you ask me 'are you whipped' I answer not quite" – He represents you all to be as gloomy – with the shadow of black events before your visions. – But do not yield yet – nor despond – Independence will yet be ours.
We are only retiring to the interior where we will gather fresh courage and strength for the contest. Many brave gallant hearts will cease to beat – many a noble soldier fall ere the victory be won – but at last it will be ours. We are willing to pay the price.
The faint-hearted are leaving us – deserting us when the best men should stand firmest in their places, and going to the enemy. Captain Reaves from this Regiment has gone. He was loyal – but would not pay the price of independence – he could not face the dangers which

he imagined would beset him in the bloody campaign we are soon to enter upon
A great many have left us but there are still those left who will remain firm & true to the last. Many of those who have gone have abandoned wives families – brothers and sisters – what think you of such craven hearts? Congress has authorized the President to call in 300,000 negro soldiers – many are bitterly, fiercely opposed to it – some from principle, others from meaner motives.
It is argued that we yield in this a great principle – we confess our weakness to the world – we can no longer maintain the contest ourselves and now call upon the negro to sustain us.
This humiliation, if humiliation it be, we will accept – in preference to that other one – subjugation. The word peace has lost its significance – its horror to you – you have heard it so often and often in the four years past – but as the hour approaches when the yankees are considering they will fix it upon us I grow more the

less reconciled to such a fate —
though it did not effect me individually
— I might leave the country and wander
in Mexico or South America yet we all
could not do this — ~~some~~ if our family does
not all do the same — we are bound here
and we will do what we can to avert such
a fate. — we can sacrifice pride for victory.
At present we are quiet here.
John had a man Jerry Williams killed
yesterday. He was an excellent man and
an excellent soldier. There is some casualty
every day or two — but as it is only one at
a time passes unnoticed. We have had
tremendous rains the last few days & army
movements for the present are effectually
barred here. — I will quit as it is so dark
I cannot see and light inconvenient —
Captain Jordan of the 43d Ala who is going on
a furlough obtained long ago will carry this
I had only a few minutes notice & don't know
what I have written or failed to write. —
I have written to both Father & Bolling by
every chance. —

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I have just received $500 sent me by Express by Father I am many times obliged to him – We have not heard from any of you since you wrote to me – remember me to all & write when you can John is all right

Your affectionately

Cushman Hall

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