

Richmond 21 Aug. [18]62

My D[ear] Wife,

My constant application from morning until nights lately, and the necessity I have been under from the sickness of Mr. Tidball [Edward M. Tidball, chief clerk, Navy Department], to work at night also, has left me so used up that I have allowed longer time than usual to slip away without writing to you; and Congress, having convened on the 18th is already at work carving out work for all the Departments & giving as much trouble as possible.

My friend Mr. Conrad (Conradi) [Charles Magill Conrad] has already displayed his venom by moving a resolution in the House to abolish the office of Sec. of the Navy & to commit its functions to the Sec. of War. He feels spiteful at the loss of his property in N.O. [New Orleans] and chooses to think that I could have saved the city. This resolution will show his spleen and venom & that is all.

News has just reached us that Pope [Union General John Pope] has retreated before Lee [Confederate General Robert E. Lee], and that we will not be able to force him to fight. McClellan [Union Major General George B. McClellan] has abandoned his position on the James River, and has gone, it is thought, to join Genl. Pope.

You must not suffer your mind to dwell on the idea that we are to be “crushed,” as you say; but on the contrary you must look at the character of our revolution justly, & you will see that we cannot be “crushed.” The very fact that the Lincoln Govt. [Government] have been forced to resort to draughting [drafting] men, shows that there [sic] people will not fight us without compulsion.

And this resort to drafting will render the war more odious & unpopular than ever, & the effect has already been such that Lincoln has deferred it until the 18 Sept. You will see by the papers that placards denouncing Lincoln & the war are already being put up secretly in Northern cities. To me, my dear wife, the signs of weakness & decay in the U.S. are everywhere evident, and if they can escape a military despotism they will surprise the world.

Mrs. Saunderson of Jacksonville, who has for a year past, been under medical treatment in New York, came last night. She has been trying for three months to get a passport, & the enemy finally sent her down to Newbern, N.C. She awaits her husband here. She says the South has many strong friends North, & the time is rapidly coming when they will speak out.

Pila, for whom you inquire, returned here soon after receiving your letter. She spent two days with me & then went home. She preferred remaining in N.C. & I think she is disgusted with G.

Mrs. [Shansbury?], Mrs. Chilton, Mrs. [Carte?], Mrs. Elzey &c [etcetera] are still all absent. Mrs. Lee & Mrs. McLane are at the Spotswood, & Mrs. Morton & family are at the Amelia Springs. Genl. Joe Johnston is not yet well and she is with him at the springs.

Mrs. Fry, with whom I had a sweet interview, & another with Col. Fry [D. R. Fry], will let us have the room that Genl. Elzey [Arnold Elzey] had & the adjoining one that Carte had, and boarders, the children & Nancy, for ten dollars per day (\$10), we finding our towels & linen as theirs have given out.

This is a high sum, but not as much as house keeping would cost, though house keeping is in many respects preferable. We can't keep house for less than \$15 per day. I am paying \$15 for a pair of shoes for Zack, \$1 per doz. for eggs, \$20 per barrel for flour, seventy five cents for sugar, 50 cts for [???], 60 cts for ham &c &c. My tea gave out some time since, as I kept but very little, two or three pounds of yours, & I have not bought any more as it is now selling, green for \$12 & black for \$15 per pound.

Your tea is in Charlotte, N.C. and I have ordered some to be sent to you.

Mrs. Hamson's lease expires on the 22 prox. & I am perplexed & annoyed to know what to do and need your counsel & advice. Write me candidly your views & preferences & wishes. I despise sympathy as a general rule, but I look naturally & gratefully to you always when I need it; whether I do now or not you must judge.

I am working with unceasing perseverance in getting up iron clad ships, and am certain of success. The obstacles in the way would deter most men, but they excite my perseverance.

Mr. Sanders [Saunders?] dined with me last Sunday in company with Ben Hill (Hon Senator Hill of Geo.) [Benjamin Harvey Hill] & Mr. Neal was to have come but he was taken sick the day before. I regretted that Mr. Sanders did not bring Mr. Neal to my house at once where I could have given him every attention, & I asked him to do so.

Young Sanders [Saunders?] is a very gentlemanly nice fellow & a gallant soldier.

My love to [Mann?] & all the children & may Heaven bless my dear wife.

S.R. Mallory

I sent you to letters a day or two since.

Transcribed by Nicole J. Milano, University of Florida, 2009