

Fort Lafayette, 12 June 1865*

No. 2

Mrs. S.R. Mallory

La Grange, Ga.

The occupation, physical no less than mental, my loved & cherished wife, of writing to you brings with it relief; and though my previous & only letter hence was but written on the seventh instant, since which period no change in my situation has occurred, I cannot keep from paper the whisperings of a heart from which you are never absent, though I greatly fear that the distance and obstacles which separate us may permit not an echo of them to reach you.

I will number my letters that you may readily know the delay or the non-receipt of any of them.

Though imprisonment is robbed of many of its rude aspects, no less by the uniform attention bestowed upon the health and the comfort of the unfortunate here, than by the humanity and courtesy which the officers ever mingle with the vigorous discharge of duty, it is to me but one remove from death. Constrained separation from those who fill up my world, who form my only source of happiness in it, from you & my children - is a vulture at my heart! Could I but know of your welfare, I could "possess my soul in patience," and regard the rusting away of life here as but a preparation for that union which I hope for with you hereafter. But I know too well your nature no[t] to be convinced that life will to you be but a weary road, and that of each remove you will but drag a greater length of chain, separated from me. Take courage then, my loving wife. Believe with me that, properly presented, my case will have favorable consideration of President Johnson. Constitute yourself the representative, and with your truth, affection, and courage, aided by the counsels of just and judicious minds, there will be with you no such word as fail.

All my political life is known. My congressional record for ten years is free from word or sentiment of secession or dissension, but filled with evidences of the contrary. I was never in my state legislature, never advised her secession, always deplored it, always hoped for a means to avert war. You may well remember how my view upon these points subjected me to the odium of the extremists, and how my interference to prevent the attack on Fort Pickens brought down the thunder of Denunciation.

I am anxious to take the oath of allegiance and to do what I can to evoke order from the chaos, and in good faith to aid the administration to harmonize the country. As a slaveholder I regard the institution as gone, and I am prepared to conform to our new status. I want no station, I care not to cast another vote, but want to see a strong government. I have seen and thought much during our terrific struggle, have surrendered many ideas of government and individual rights as utopian, and wish to pass the rest of

my days in the walks of private life. Mr. Hill is well, and anxiously looking for his release. Oh if I could but see you for an hour! Kiss our little ones for me. Tell my noble boy Buddy that I long ardently to see him, and tell my servants that I count upon their good faith until we me[et]. God grant that I may be able to do something for them to start them fairly in their new life. Love to Mrs. Hill. I hardly expect this to find you at La G[range] hoping that you are enroute.

God Bless you
As ever yours,
S.R. Mallory

Transcribed by Sean McCormick, University of Florida, 2007.

*Note: Written from prison.