

Adams Gen Hospital
Memphis Ten Jan 31

My Own Dear sweet wife

yours of the 21 came to hand the 26 and I take my pen with great pleasure to thank you with my whol heart for the expressions of love thearin expressed by you My Own beloved Wife for me I should have writen an answer sooner to you but the very day I received yours I started a long letter to you and I did not want to tire you .. Dear wife you need not trouble yourself to write to me twice a week .. but write as often as you conveniently can and tell me you love me and chear me up as your two last letters did and I will be satisfied for my heart is sad and dreary very often .. for how can I be gay and hapy and have a mery heart at all times when if I would but look around me I might see so much suffering and mortal misery .. I then I am far away from you my dear and long to be with you so much fer I feel that you want me thear to provide and protect you .. I am not unhapy my dear wife though often sad and my heart is bursting with sympathy for poor suffering humanity wich I see every day and I cant releave them .. I will endeavor to discribe the scene I witnessed and looked upon today and wich makes me sad and causes my heart to bleed at pore with sympathy and pity = I have often spoaken to you about the refugees that come inside of our lines more or less every day = chiefly women and children = while I was taking a run today to enjoy the fress are I came to a large coton shed that was used formely for a coton whear house .. but lately had been used for a goverment stable = well inside of this shed wear about 800 (?) refugees women and children hear they wear poor things with thear gaunt and sickely looking faces with out food or means to buy with .. no friends to provide for them many of them wear sick with no medical help and thear was several corps among them who had died and had not been taken away thear was one poor woman who had been confined the night before and her dead child lay by her side and she a dieing for the want of care .. my dear you can imagine what her sufferings are but I will not attempt to discribe the scenes of ~~perre~~ horror and Misery I seen then .. they lay around in the manure on the cold ground b without beding food or clothing and nothing had been done for them yet and with very few to pity or sympathise with them oh how my heart bleeds for them I thought if they

wear ondy up in Boon county how quickly releaf would be furnished them out of your abundance = but hear society is in such a disorganised state that everyone seems to think of none but themselves and they come and go to every place of amusement and enjoy themselves without a thought for the sufferings that are all around them on every hand Dear Wife this is one of the many scenes of sufferings that we are called upon to witness in this southern clime and one of the curses and miseries of unholy war how I would like to see the leaders of this wicked rebellion tortured upon the rack and be one of thear tormenters .. yes methinks the soles of theas poor wretches will assend up to heaven and call down the vengence of god upon thear sin ~~de~~ (?) staned souls .. and they will be haunted through hell by the crys of widows and orphans made by thear fowl acts of treason now dear wife have I not reason to be sad and would I not be a cruell wretch if I could not feel and pity in such cases = but how thankfull I am that you are so well off and in a land of sympathy and plenty and far from these scenes of sufferings and woe oh God is good to me .. this is a wicked place every night you can hear the shout of drunken revelry and sin every saloone hall ally and corner you can look upon the drunken soldier and citizen who are indulging in debauchery and sin and ruining ther imortral soul .. then thear is the various theaters and dances and other places of amusements crowded by gay and thoughtless who do not seem to have a thought for any but themselves and I am often waked in the night by the report of fire arms as shots are exchanged between citizen and soldir and it is a comon ocurence to hear of two or three bodies being found shot dead in the morning both of soldiers and citizen such is the state of society hear in memphis and you in your peacefull homes cannot ~~relies~~ realise or imagine the realities of the horrors by anything you can read nor can can you apreciate the blessings of peace without trying (?) the realities of war = I hear that our ladies in the different hospitals are going to start out with subscription lists and try and obtain ~~ma~~ means to releave the sufferings of those poor wretches before mentined and I feel that you will be willing for me to contribute \$01 (?) dolars I know you want money bad but dear wife you can spare the amount as I have not spent money for any foolish purpose scince I have been gone and I know that God will not let you suffer for the amount I may give for such charitable purposes = I wish that I had the means to spare how hapy I would be to go down in the morning and provide for them = your dreem that I was sick I am hapy to inform you is just contrary I am well and

enjoying good health .. and I am so glad that my poorly composed letters are of so much interest to you that you read them over so often .. I shall endeavour to express my love and feelings as well as I can in order to impress upon your mind how much and how well I love you and how very dear to me you are = I imagine my dear how very disagreeable it must be getting around on account of the snow but I hope that you will not suffer in congruence = do not go out in the cold more than you possibly can help for fear of your health = I cannot bear to hear that you are sick = I am so happy my dear to hear that the little work I done at home towards fixing up and trying to make you comfortable has proved of so much benefit to you I wish I could have done more but you your little ~~m~~ skesix (?) kept tilling me to work I know my dear you wear so unselfish that you wanted me enjoy myself and visit you did not know how happy I was while I was doing that work for you I know I was doing something that would do you good before long and I would like to be at home now to break through the drifts and haul you up some more wood keen (?) an good fires for you until this snap is over .. and I am amply rewarded for all I can do for you by knowing that it is all remembered by you and that you in return are trying to make me happy by being such a good wife = I think my dear if you can sell the 40 for a thousand dollars you had better do it for the sake of being out of debt but you need not be anxious it is worth that and soon will be worth more = I think you had better seed down about 10 acres where the rye is or was 10 or 15 acres with ~~Tim~~ timothy if clover is so high the land wants rest and you had better have a peace to seed down every spring and a peace to break up as soon as you get started = I have answered your letter and will now go to bed and finish this long letter the next chance so good night dear wife I shall soon be on my knees praying for you before I go to bed may God bless and keep you and make you happy in his love — — Dec 1 I will take my pen to write a few more lines of my unfinished letter I am very busy or am called upon so often .. that it is almost useless for me to begin to write it is nearly or quiet 3 months since I took my last departure from our much loved home .. and although I witness many strange sights .. and there is much here in the discharge of my duties and daily transactions to engage my thoughts .. yet I assure you my dear wife that I enjoy many a fond recollection of your affectionate kindness and unselfish and devoted love .. I am glad to inform you my dear that all is well with me though I am so lonely and sad betimes (?) .. I do my duty

willingly and chearfully .. and by so doing have won the good will of those under me and the confidence of my superiors .. yes dear I have made some very good friends and all treat me with respect .. for wich I am thankfull to god and would give him all the glory = let this chear you my dear during my absence .. I never imagined untill I tryed what a pain it was to leave her I love so dearly and so well .. but alas I know now that we cannot properly estimate our individual blessings untill we are denied them = my absence has tought me .. that deprived of you the world would be a barren wilderness and life a blank .. I love to meditate and think hear in solitude .. the many joys and hapy seasons you have caused me strewing my pathway with flowers and exalting my soul to a just realisation of a loving wife and of the influence of your pure and gentle spirit over my rough nature Oh that we may be long spared for each other = to asist each other to tread lifes pathway and at last land our souls in heaven a few more months and I hope to be with you if spared to take my stand again by your side as your protector and guide and in the meantime dear wife be carfull of your health and of the childrens and be patient trusting in him who holds the destineys of all men in his almighty hands = the thoughts that I am remembered and fondly loved by you makes me chearfull and hapy knowing that you will welcome my return and receive me with open arms .. whenever I am going about my duties my mind often wanders back to you and I get to thinking of your many acts of kindness and thoughtful love for me then it is that I am oftimes forced by my feelings to ~~betry~~ betray my weekness by writing these sad letters to you .. wich you will make allowance for my dear wife .. I have much to be thankfull for God is good I am blessed with health and a clear concience = and Many dear kind friends = and it is my sincere prayr to god that he will asist me in the discharge of my duties clense me from all sin and increase my love to my fellow beings and help me to upright and just so that I may not bring disgrace upon myself or family by any wrong act or misdemenor .. and I can truly say dear wife that scince I have been gone I have wronged no one knowingly but have cultivated the peace and good will of everyone endeavouring to school my heart to look with pity and compassion upon the failings of others and to extend to all sick or well friend or foe that adirse (?) that counsel and that asistance wich I thought would render them wiser and better thus dear Elizabeth is the life I am striving with the help of god to live and my own conscience tells me I am right I fear my dear that this will not be

very interesting to you but as I am destitute of any news and you have not complained of my letters being to long I must write something you know I have sent you several magazines and will send you some more please mention in your next whether you have received any of them or not .. I expect to receive 26 dollars pay soon as I have signed the pay rolls I will send you 20 as soon as I get it I will now have to put up my writing again as Mary and Maggy want me to go down to the boat with them to see Miss Cowell (?) I off who has been one of our nurses and is now going to start for one of the hospitals in Louisville I am sorry to part with her she was such a good woman .. when you write let me know something about your brother Thomas I have not heard anything concerning him for a long time Good night dear wife I shall finish sometime

Dec 2 My Good kind and Sweet Wife I

again take my pen to write a few more lines of this long letter I have not anything of any importance to write and I scarcely know what I am going to fill up this letter with = Milt Orton¹ and young sweet (?) belonging to the 9 in to see me day before yesterday milt is as rough as ever they urged me to go out in town with them I was glad to see them they look real well = yesterday my good kind friend Arthur² was in to see me and I spent the afternoon with him he is looking first rate and is a brave soldier we wandered all over the town and had a long talk in the park he has been in a great many fights since I last seen him and has had some hard breath escapes his regiment will be in town on Monday they are going down the river to vicksburgh = he thinks a great deal of our family he and I are very warm friends he gave me 50 dollars of his money to keep for him which I will express to John as soon as I get payed so that I can send my darling wife my wages with it my good dear sweet noble wife I wish I could send you a big pile but dear my wages are small and don't amount to much but oh how cheerfully I send the little mite (?) to you knowing that you will think just as much of me as if I sent you thousands God bless you Elizabeth how I do love you and oh if could only make you feel the power of my love for you Arthur would have me go and sit with him and have our pictures taken for father so I went I never wanted to laugh so much in my life as I did when the artist was taken them Arthur was so full of mischief you will see as soon as you see the pictures that I am just ready to rore .. I held my head to high to look all right I will send them to father soon

you must not tell him that they are coming arthur thinks so much of father and I know father will be pleased with the pictures Arthur sends his love to you and says you must not get discouraged this war will soon be ended and we will soon be home .. yes dear dear wife there is better days coming .. I will finish this as soon as I receive one from you I am expecting one very day and may want to answer some or any inquires you may make and will say good night again may god bless you a Kiss

My very Dear wife I will try and finish this letter now but I fear it will not be very interesting to you however I have done the best I could and now I have to acknowledge the receipt of yours of the 24 which I have just read with one from sarah and in yours I found this miserable photograph that I should not have known had you not said in your letter that it was taken and meant for a representation of your own sweet self and our dear Marshall .. I return the miserable thing to you for I know you have not changed so much as ~~at~~ make such a miserable looking thing as that in the short time that I have been gone at least I know your face and hands have not turned black as they are represented to be on this picture .. why dear wife instead of that loveing kind rosey cheaked wife I left a few weeks ago = ~~yo~~ this thing represents some poor Norwegion about 40 years old .. you will please tell the man that took that picture that I fell the utmost contempt in my boosem for him and that I think him a poor miserable contemptible swindeler and not master of his art if this is the best he can do and would let you take such a poor thing from his shop knowing that you wear going to send it to a husband that loves you and has been waiting so patiently for a ~~th~~ true likeness .. I feel so disappointed and vexed that if I had him hear I should give him a good sound thrashing as it is I would like to see him in the front ranks charging on a rebel battery midst a shower of shell and canister bad luck to him couldnt he see that handkerchief or some play thing laying on top of your head I should think dear wife you might have felt that I hope dear wife you will not be vexed at me for returning it I would not give the old picture for 40 bushell of them I want something that looks like you or nothing if I could paint I have your image so impressed upon my heart that I could paint a true likeness though I am far from you you need not mind sending your pictures I will keep the old ones and I do not want you to pay out money that is scarce with you to such miserable theaving lousey scamps and contemptible trembling cowards who stay at home and swindle the dear wives of soldiers out of money I am

vexed and disapointed at present — but dear wife I do not blame you — I know how hard it is to go to town and I yet never seen a good true photagraph if your hands and face had not been so black and that handkerchef had not been on your head I should have kept it though eaven then it would not look like my darling wife . . I am realy Glad my dear that the cold wether is over and that this miserable snow is going off I would like if you could get that black walnut tree home before the sleighing (?) goes off the weather hear has been delightful untill this morning but now it is rainy and looks as thought it may continue for some time .. you say you dremp I was at home to stay I wish your dreem was reality as it is I can ondly long and hope for that hapy time when I may clasp you to my heart and weep tears of joy at againe beholding and kissing my dear wife for a blessed has been øf obtained .. oh how often I dreem so sweetly of you and how I love to dreem of one so dear = you say you gave John 30 dolars to pay for Dr Woodard³ I realy hope he has made no such ~~exorp~~ exorbient charges as that charges as that pleas let me know how much he did charge you and what he did for you = thear has been a great movement of troops through this place and it thrills my heart and rouses my patriotism to the highest pitch to hear those splendid military bands playing at the head of colums while whole Brigades so proudly keep step to the musick as they go marching on to victory and to meet vile trators and smite them to the earth it is a beautifull sight to see a well drilled army on the move to see the noble Horse at the sound of music begin to prance and curve his neck as he caries his rider to death or victory dear wife my long teadious letter is about ended I hope you will wait patiently and trust in God for better days take all the panes you can with the boys and instill noble and right principels upon ther young minds and teach them to be kind and generous and loving to all .. and now may God bless you may he guide and comfort and asist you in all that is right Remember your loving Husband Thos Hannah

¹ Milton Orton, from Spring, Boone County, Illinois. Mustered in 31 October 1861. Mustered out 31 October 1864. 9th Illinois Calvary, Company I.

² Probably Arthur Dawson, 15th Illinois Infantry, Company B.

³ Dr. George N. Woodward. 1821–1874.