

Folly Island S. B. July 3. 1863

My Dear wife

I very hastily wrote you a few lines yesterday - it was no letter at all - I was in a great hurry when I wrote it & had to close it once as I supposed the mail would go out immediately - I now have an opportunity of sending by Surgeon Forbes my regiment who goes to his home on sick leave for the enormous period of twenty days - You discover the government think me of this department of the south have great recuperative energy - ten day travel and ten days rest is time enough to make a man after he has been unmade by labor and disease - Thank God I am not ~~to stay sick~~ - to be sure twenty days would be enough to get home in - but of course when it is to get back to his duty in the twenty days the object sought in the leave to a great extent must be lost as the fatigue of traveling & the change of air & living must counteract much of the good effect intended by the leave -

Surgeon F. will be improved by the trip no doubt

for a time, but certainly cannot acquire much
permanent good from such a flying trip - 3000 miles
trout is pretty severe medicine -

I feel rather sadly this afternoon & have just
returned from a visit to the hospital. Stayed half
an hour with the sick boys - One poor fellow will
probably die in a few hours. - He was in a close
corner of the tent & could not get air enough & was
quite restless because the attendants would not roll
the bottom of the tent up. I ordered a seam to be ripped
open near his head, remarking that the Cal. was good
for something yet. "Yes" said he "I always told them that"
He wanted me to sit down & face him a while
which I did so much to his satisfaction that he
soon fell asleep - O! how I pity the poor
soldier who has to die in the field far from home - no
kind mother, wife or sister to attend him as his trembling
body sinks in the river of death - No one at
home will ever know how much they owe to the patriotic
soldier who thus offers up his life a sacrifice for his
his home - his country, - I fear another Harrison
Landing drama will be witnessed by us. We landed
there July 2nd last year - Had work and exposure soon
reduced my men in camp to half their whole number

I do not now recollect that I had a single case of death from disease at Harrison's Landing, but I do of having much suffering from fatigue and sickness - We are much better provided with shelter now than then - and have better food - yet we are wanting in what is very essential to our continued health - vegetables.

Every thing we get comes from the north - a climate two months later than this - I have some seventy five reported unfit for duty - yet very few cases of dangerous illness - Dysentery, Diarrhoea and low fever not severe are the prevailing camp diseases - I have lost only two men by death since I came on this island out of some 580 men and officers - We have been working exceedingly hard for the last two weeks - night & day my men have been on duty - but I hope now to see a little cessation,

O, wife. I do hate so to drive tired men - I can order perhaps like a command - the exercise of authority is pleasant and when not alloyed with the quality of pain fatigue & ill temper of those I rule - I believe my regiments have an affection for me. All treat me kindly and with confidence, - Of course both officers and men get out of patience at the exercise of authority, but as a general thing they in their sober moments concede that I only do what I think is necessary -

I am quite well myself. In fact I have not been compelled to work very hard myself - My labor has been more the work of direction than execution -

I wrote Mr. W. H. Hill a long letter a few days since about matters here - but too long to copy - you may call on him for a perusal if you please. I presume he will be pleased to let you see it -

It is not a very flattering account of the command on this island -

Heard very discouraging news from Ohio - I fear the anti war party are bent on mischief

I do not like this party raucous that appears to be growing at home - it bodes evil -

I shall in all probability be at home before the election long enough to do a little for the county - but will promise you I will not make more than five stump speeches a week -

I recd a letter from Saccus with you last He writes that Mills is not at all fit for duty yet though with his Regt -

I suppose by this time you have got over your scare about the invasion - I think it will keep the deaff. A raid into Ohio will open the eyes of the peace men a little
Love to all Affectionately Alvin -