

me.

I am very sorry I cannot be with you & the children and our friends during the coming holidays. Better luck next time, I hope.

I shall apply for a leave immediate after New Year's but shall not be able to get away for three or four days after. I will get as long a leave as possible, but you must not be surprised nor disappointed, if I am only able to stay with you eight or nine days. I shall try hard to get the privilege of asking for an extension but am not sanguine that it will be granted. - The Journal came to hand and was very welcome. I got a good deal of news from it, so you can keep on sending them, as well as a Cent's paper occasionally. It started painful reminiscences to see an advertisement of a firm announcing themselves as successors to Sprague & Whitman. Love to all, Yours & Dear Wife IWB

I send you a piece of pine taken from the pine tree which I had built while travelling across the road to Bell Gardensville and in which slept on the night of Nov. 27<sup>th</sup> 1863

Near Bealeton. Va.  
Dec. 22. 1863.

My Dear Wife:

Your of the 16<sup>th</sup> + 17<sup>th</sup> was rec'd last evening. I am glad you have at last got some of my letters, for I was beginning to get discouraged. Several of yours must have miscarried, as I never rec'd any acknowledging the check or the key. You say the trunk was open - did anything appear to be taken out of it? It was just as full as it could possibly be crammed. All my Retained papers were in it I hope they have not been lost, and yet they must be, or you would certainly have found ~~it~~ before this more paper in than the one you sent. It is of no consequence now however, as I have

obtained from the Department  
sufficient data for making up  
my Return for the Third Quarter.  
I have also obtained Duplicates of  
all the receipts I lost ~~at~~ at Fomplins  
Square. My Return for the Third Quarter  
has been sent in & I shall have no  
difficulty in making up my Return  
for the Fourth which will pretty <sup>nearly</sup>  
quite 'clear my papers.'

You have not told me yet whether  
you had got the money on my Pay  
Account, but as you complain that  
you will hardly have funds sufficient  
to pay the tax. If you had got them  
cached. I don't think you would have  
been complaining of a scarcity of  
cash. Write me immediately upon  
the receipt of this whether you have  
got my pay or not; if not, or if  
there is any difficulty about it, keep  
the pay account in your possession

and I will get the money here &  
~~bring~~ or send it on to you. I sent  
the account because it was the  
easiest way of sending money to  
you, and the check because we ex-  
pected to have a fight and I did  
not wish to be killed or taken prison-  
er with so much money on my per-  
son. Besides, I did not wish to leave  
this subterranean sphere a creditor of  
Uncle Sam, because he makes a  
great deal of trouble about paying  
his honest debt to one's heirs & execu-  
tors.

It is well enough that you have  
paid the Life Insurance Interest, as I  
can get it returned in case I am  
ordered out of the field, or perhaps if  
we remain in winter quarters here  
for the next three months, as we will  
in all probability. I intended to write  
you to this effect before, but it escaped