Nokomisville, Va.
March 1864

My dear little daughter:

Your mother wrote me that you were pleased with my first letter, and appear disposed to profit by the advice it contained. I am glad to hear this and shall write to you with great pleasure as long as this is the case.

Should you live to the first day of September next, you will be ten years old. Your mother will then be more than three times older than you. But should you both live ten years longer, she would be only a little more than twice as old as you, although she will be just as many years older than you as she is now. You will then be a young woman and mother what is called a middle-aged woman.

You thus see that the difference in age between you and her, becomes relatively less every year, so that in ten years she will no longer treat you as a little girl.
But as a woman and his equal. Now it results from this that you must be considered every year by her and every body else as as a little girl and more as a woman. When you do grow to be a woman you ought to treat her as the dearest and best friend you have, or ever can have. She will undoubtedly be such then, as she is now, but you may unhappily not have learned to think her such, and may never be so until she is dead and gone, as so many poor foolish miserable girls have done. When they no longer had a mother's lessons on which they could rest their aching, naked heads. I should grieve very much of such thought were to be the case, for then I should think you had not grown to be so good a girl as I trust you may. But if you want to make yourself mother's friend as well as daughter, you must commence now.

To do this you must learn to think she does everything for the judge best for you. When you have learned to do so you will have learned obedience which is a pretty hard thing for most children to learn. You can learn to be the dearest friend; you are destined to become, I hope, if you compel another to hold you a good part of the time you are in her presence, for this will make you wish to keep away from her as much as you can. and you will never be friends if you do not love to be with her. Still you should remember it is perhaps more unpleasant to her than it is to you. You ought to know by this time that she is disposed to gratify you, whenever she can do it without doing you harm than good. Try then when you are commanded to do or not to do, to obey cheerfully, and when you are denied a request, submit quietly and cheerfully. Sometimes children when they are refused anything, behave in a very ugly manner, throwing themselves on the floor, shrieking themselves about in a very hateful way, or crying. Such practices do not help them at any time, and sometimes make punishment necessary, besides being very bad example for younger brothers and sisters. You may perhaps remember when you have by such conduct, disturbed every body about you. Now if you should learn
to say to yourself at such times, "Well if mother did not really think I ought not to have it, she would give it to me, she knows best, so it must be better that I should not have it."

Isn't it true, you think, if you were in the habit of talking in this way to yourself, that mother would not have to scold you very often?

There is another way in which you must learn to treat mother as you please. You must never have any secret from her. You should habitually tell her every thing you do. Whenever you are tempted to do anything you are afraid to tell her, you may be quite certain it is wrong. If you have done it, the best thing you can do is to tell her all about it at once, and if she reproves you be sure not to do it again; but be equal to confess again, if you thought I want to impress this on your mind especially because nothing has been more fruitful of mischief than this want of confidence between mother and daughter, which leads the latter to conceal from the former any of her acts, associations or practices. Sometimes
Young girls form improper acquaintance, not knowing them to be such, and the need the superior knowledge and experience of a mother to warn and protect them. Then there are practices injurious to health which they indulge in ignorantly, but would discontinue or never contract if they were made known to the mother.

You see then that your health, happiness and character are in a great degree dependent on the confidence existing between you and your mother, and you can now understand why I am anxious that you should begin to cultivate this confidence immediately.

I must now close this long letter which I hope you will understand and try to adopt the advice it contains as a rule for your conduct. It would give me great pleasure to receive a letter written by you telling me what you think of my letters, and I hope I shall soon. Give my love to Frank and Robbie and kiss little Mary a half dozen times for me.

Goodbye my dear daughter,
Your loving father, L. J. Brown