

Washington March 11th 1853

My dearest own Jeanie,

I look anxiously for your return this morning hoping that the (illegible) had left yours for I had much to say & tell you of what passed last night between Father and myself and the arguments he used to bring about the decision I announced in relation to my visit to New York at once, but come you did not, so the pen has got to do what my lips could have done better, provided I could have overcome the intoxication in which I have been living while with you for the last month. Father has seen this & told me that it was necessary to get cool, a fact by the way that I have known all along, but have not had force enough to accomplish, he pointed out that it was only by your absence that I could regain my former self. Using numerous reasons to show it, which were conclusions too in my own mind, overcoming all that I could bring up & showing me too much what a fool I have been - already his medicine had its effect - now I see that I have the object before me without which my steps have been wandering for the last five years. & today a large amount of work in proportion to what has been done lately shows that I am recovering myself & at last waking up to the lifelong happiness which has been granted me, may I be able to prove to you how great it is & make yours as entire as mine is a prayer that I have set up more than once since we parted.

Plans were hardly decided upon during our stormy talk, but the general ideas I must give you, the more I look at the Service the more I see that upon it little reliance can be based for means to support you as my own "little Jeanie Smed" should be while I live & if perchance an accident should occur to me, which pray God it may not but which I must look forward to, you would be left at the mercy of a pitiless world (not that I forget my own dearest, yours or my dear relative) & I must be prepared for all these- so that if Father does not obtain me some position in which I can better my money affairs by service in Kearney - with his advice I shall at once turn my attention to some other profession, most probably Engineering, as for that I am better prepared than for any other, & make myself a master of it theoretically in as short a time as possible so that I may be able with a year or 18 months practice in the field to take a stand among men in that line that will make you feel proud of me & which at the same time will bring us, what is really as important, bread & butter, by this I do not want you to understand that I am going to leap before I look well at the ground, a furlough, if necessary, will give me time & opportunity to try my success & even if failure comes (which it cannot with you as the goal) I shall be no worse off than I now am & can again return to my own profession which I should leave now with pleasure, though I know that seldom does one who has lived in as long as I not have pangs at some future time, but these few, non in fact, have even the same tie to draw them from it & as far as friendships go all are nothing now, you are my all in all & with you I can go without another. Father & I both agree that I must not think of resigning without a certainty before me, particularly when there is every probability of a new era dawning upon the service before the next Congress adjourns - but even then the only thing that would retain me is the

feeling of difficulty of attaining a position similar to the one I hold in the Navy in any other profession - a mediocre one would not satisfy you or me I know & the struggle would of course be longer on that account, to the top your love & my ambition for your praise would lead & short of it I could not stop - After much conversation of which I only give you my impressions formed, Father then told me to stay away from N.Y. till after my visit to Carolina & to this I consented but hope he may withdraw it on his return, much will depend upon what I hear from you in sequel to the view your dear Mother takes of affairs in the new light they will be presented to her this morning, & knowing her love for Father I feel convinced now (I did not yesterday) that she will take his ideas & that everything will go right & that soon the clouds which

(page 2)

gather about us will scatter & leave the sky as bright as it was on the morning when together we read her sweet letter, what a soother it is. Am I right, dearest Jeanie, in asking you to bear my absence so much longer- Yes I am. My heart casts off a load when I say so, & when I return you will see me as I ought to be, no longer groveling under the weight of an imaginary loss of trouble, but standing up bravely meeting & ready to meet mountains of labors supported through it all by your sweet smile & approving pressure of the hand which even now seems to grasp mine as I write. In this way alone can I show you how much I value your love & how great will always be my care hereafter to keep & preserve you through the paths, so full of thorns as mine must always be, which you have consented to walk with me. Why could not I have thought & felt as I do now for three days past, It would have saved you so much pain, Father so much fears for your happiness under my charge, & me so much cause for repentance; can you blot those days out - no I will not ask it, but remember them as what I have been & note hereafter what I shall be; I must not write more for my fingers begin to shake & I have to send something to Father, & suppose I should get a scolding for doing this without speaking of my coming out on such a day, but I am changed, my own dearest Jeanie, in everything but one & that is my love for you & may blessings without number come down upon you now & ever shall be the prayer of you devotedly attached

Jack