

At the Light Artillery

James Island, Sept 4th 1863.

Bliss your precious heart, my own darling,
Eva, for your sweet letter of the 3rd inst
which reached me last night. No
one in this wide world could have
written such words of love except my
own darling, and oh how dear to
my soul is every line which her
kind hand has traced, from peculiarly
precious the influence of her tender
affection. Because your love is the true
purest, brightest, holiest thing of life to
me. I have no higher human ambi-
tion than to live worthy of your gen-
erous confidence, and to be permitted the
present, full, rapturous enjoyment of
all those privileges which belong to and
flow from the intimate, uninterrupted ap-
preciation of that affection. You know how
better than any one else, that you have
the fullest, truest love of the warm and
faithful heart, and that there is nothing
I hold so sacred, as your happiness, your

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Charles Colcock Jones Jr. Papers

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honor and your every comfort. So guard them,
and cherish you every moment of my life,
will now be my highest joy. You are, my
darling, ever present in my thoughts and
heart. You are never forgotten in my
prayer, but earnest prayers. No doubt
even could be more absolute than that
which lives for you in this breast at
all times, and under all circumstances.
And oh! what a privilege do I feel it,
to be so tenderly remembered, so generously
loved by my own Eva! Rest assured be-
lieving, that this heart responds with a fer-
vency, a gratitude, and a joy not seen
at in the history of the attachments
of this world. - Words cannot convey my
emotions, or language portray my affec-
tion. My whole heart is yours, and only
yours. May God bless you always my
own darling, and surround you and my
dear little daughter, with every favor.
You cannot think how precious your words
of affection always are to me, and espe-
cially at a time like this, when amid
the terrors of a restless foe, in the true

home camp, there is a perfect abnegation of
almost everything denoting of comfort, of ease,
of principle, and of ordinary civilization. The reali-
zation of the fact that there is one grand,
noble, affectionate, fearless woman's heart, in
which I have ever a privileged home, is
more precious to me than the appreciation
of all other human blessings combined. - Yes
darling, each day do I thank God more and
more fervently for having drawn us so
closely, so inseparably together, and I cling
with a devotion, which death alone can
sever, to you and all your dear loves.
They live with me during the hours of the
day - but during day and are the theme of
sighed for during the waking hours of
the silent night. - What would I not
give to be near you this very moment, with
my own lips to thank you for all your
goodness to me, in this fond arms to
fold you to this throbbing heart, that you
might feel in person how sacredly and
surely you are cherished here. But my
dearest, do you not know all this and
feel more already? - For your sake I will

endeavor to faithfully to answer every request
which you have made, and we will look
to God, in His mercy, to remove us at
no distant day to each other's personal,
present love.

I am so happy to think that you
and your wife such nice friends, and
in the enjoyment of so many comforts,
and I would suggest that you do
not hurry back to Augusta, but stay
and good, long, pleasant, friendly visit.

I am well aware of the mutual af-
fection which exists between yourself and
our dear son, and I know that the hap-
piness of that visit will be mutual.
You, ^{from} Doubling, if anything should happen
to you, which I think will not be the
case, I could communicate with you in
Florida, almost as rapidly as if you
were in Augusta. In view of every-
thing, and especially of the present
season of the year, I think because
I would not return to Augusta just
now. How frequently do I crave the privi-
lege of that seat beside my son, and

the pleasures which you have so beaute-
fully portrayed, but they must be good-
"friends" for a more convenient season. -
It makes me feel so happy to hear
that my Eva has resolved to be what
I always knew she would be when
occasion required, a brave woman. There
is no limit to the capabilities of a
true, pure, noble-hearted woman; and
such is my Darling, in the highest,
holiest sense of the word. Thus my
heart speaks, and its teachings are
not idle, for who has had a simi-
lar opportunity for judging? -

Last night was a historic night in
the record of this siege. - In the after-
noon of yesterday, it was definitely ascer-
tained that Batteries Wagner and Gregg
on Morris Island were being rapidly
inclosed untenable, that they could not
be repaired, and that our garrisons were
suffering considerably under the heavy
and prolonged bombardment from the Enemy.
During the preceding forty eight hours we had
lost perhaps one hundred and fifty men.

The exact kind of Casualties was not as yet
been forwarded to these Headquarters, in
killed and wounded, and the bomb-
proof were being seriously injured. It
was impossible to live outside of them.
The Enemy have advanced their works so
near, that the Federal Flag - as I viewed
it - appeared to be planted upon the
very edge of the ditch of Wagner. - so
close were these works, that the guns
of that Fort could not be depressed so
as to bear upon them, and in conse-
quence of the rain of bursting shells,
and the proximity of the rifled shells, our
men could not show their heads above
the parapet to fire upon the working
parties, who could be distinctly seen, as
they were - in full view and just
in front of the Fort, working away
with a blinding and a rapidity
perfectly unaccountable. It had also become
almost an impossible matter to furnish
our men, or reinforce, or relieve the garrison,
as the Land Batteries of the Enemy, and
the Ironsides and Monitors, directing their

positions - kept up our fires not only
upon the Fort, but also upon the sand hills,
in the rear, along which any relieving
parties would have been compelled to have
advanced. Of all these facts the Author
was cognizant, and the evacua-
tion of Morris Island became a matter
of necessity - not however to be accomplished
except in the face of danger, many and
decided. - Accordingly yesterday afternoon we
were officially apprised of the fact, that
the Island would be evacuated last
night, and that so soon as the
garrisons had been retired, and the
forts blown up, three rockets would
be fired from Fort Johnson, which would
be the signal for all of our Batteries
on James Island to open upon the
Enemy. If only two rockets should be
fired, it would indicate that our
wounded had not been brought away,
and in that event our batteries would
not open. In order that we might
have a full view of every thing. General
Paliferro and myself with his staff

rode down to Battery Haskell, - which commands
 the finest view of Morris Island, and
 our forts - about ten o'clock last night.
 Gault, Hagood and Colquhoun went to Fort
 Johnson. - When we arrived at Bat-
 tery Haskell, we found all the Eng-
 lish Batteries - both land and naval -
 engaged in a most heavy and concen-
 trated fire upon Wagner, and the same
 hills lying between Wagner and Gregg.
 occasionally bestowing some attention upon
 the latter Fort. - A perfect storm of
 12 inch mortar, 9 and 11 inch - and Co-
 lomb mortar shells, was rained upon the
 elevated head of Wagner. In addition,
 the enemy were, at short ranges, fire-
 feeding upon the parapets and upon the
 facade of the Fort. Shells which, in bur-
 sting, disseminated a bright light, which
 did not pass away upon the explosion
 of the shell, but continued burning for
 several moments, completely illuminating
 the Fort. Under such circumstances,
 as you will readily perceive, the evac-
 uation of the Fort was rendered not

a little difficult, as our movements - which it
 was all important should be conducted with
 perfect secrecy - were thereby to a greater
 or less degree revealed. - That night's bom-
 bardment was grand in the extreme.
 I never saw nothing more magnificent
 of that kind, except the sublimities of
 Heaven's own Artillery. - The ground trembled
 with the shock, and the air was
 filled for hours with the awful screaming
 of the heavy iron shells, and the
 explosion of mortar. Few tracks of the
 shells could be distinctly traced like
 so many shooting stars - often crossing
 each other in mid air - while the gloom
 of the night was relieved by the glitter
 of flashes of guns, and the explosion of
 conical shells, and the silence of the
 hour interrupted by the hoarse thunders,
 and the deep toned reverberations of the
 Artillery. - Occasionally, flashes of musketry
 could be seen from the Fort - and once
 Wagner fired a gun with the excep-
 tion, both the Battery and Gregg main-
 tained an absolute silence, enduring without

any reply the tremendous bombardment, the
dearest perhaps that any Fort in the
history of military operations has ever been
called upon to withstand. For fifty eight
days - thick of that Darling - has they
never cease - work borne the front of
unheard of bullets, and successfully resist
all the efforts of the Enemy for
its reduction, - efforts of the most unusual
character for never before in the record of
sieges, has guns of like calibre, power,
and range, ever been used. - The bomb
barrels continued with undiminished
force for hours on three point Batteries
and Batteries Cleves, Johnson, and Haskell
depending from James Island, slowly and
often with apparent effect. The Moon
was beautifully and calmly out of
the sea between one and two o'clock,
breathing the broad expanse
of water, and the marshes, and
low lying islands, in a flood of sub-
dued, tranquil light, strangely at var-
iance with the lurid, vengeful glare
of the flaming batteries. For a moment

Everything would be as calm, as peaceful,
as noiseless as the grave. - and the heart,
lifting itself in sympathy with the peace
of nature, - the eye, gladdened by the
pale moonbeams and the beauties of the
Pleiades, of Jupiter, of the Dipper, and of
the stars as they looked down from their
homes of tranquil light - and the ear,
catching no sound save the voices of the
waves as they clapped with the foam off
shore, could scarce realize the fact that
while nature slept, man worked to death
of under death and direful destruction. -
The next moment the air would be filled
with the discordant sounds, and the
wild lights of war, and then the au-
tumn was rendered most striking. - Past
three o'clock - and no signal yet - four
o'clock is almost come, and no indica-
tion that the garrison has been suc-
cessfully retired. Not have the Forts been
blown up. Everything is now as quiet as
the grave. Firing has entirely ceased
on both sides. - Just then, up shoots a
rocket from Fort Johnson - and then another,

and not a pause. We await the third in
breathless anxiety. Can it be that we have
been compelled to leave the wounded
in the Fort, to the mercy of the
Enemy? No, they go to the third rock
island, which indicates that our men
have all been saved, that in their
hurry they have reached Fort Johnson,
and that the evacuation of Morris
Island is complete. Happy relief, for al-
though we have been compelled to ab-
andon our forts, we have saved our
Garrisons, and what, at this juncture,
is so valuable as the life of the
soldier. And now from Batteries Mass
No. 1, Johnson's, Chevre, and Shell Point,
our guns open with deafening roar,
showering their shells in every direction
upon Morris Island, and at Forts
Wagner and Gregg, which were
lately guarding with such heroic
determination. - and this bombardment
has continued without intermission until
the hour. - But the Forts were

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not blown up as was expected and ordered.
It appears that a detachment of twenty
men, was left on the Island to spike the
guns in the Forts and to blow them up,
but the Enemy discovering the evacuation,
rushed into Fort Wagner, and in all
probability captured them, thus preven-
ting the destruction of our works. With
the exception of the evacuation of Morris Island
was successfully consummated. - While it is
a source of sincere regret that we have
thus been compelled to yield a portion
of our soil to the Enemy - a locality
too whose possession by the Enemy en-
ders the permanent blockade of Charle-
stown Harbor itself at great risk to
any adventurer who attempts to force
the passage with his vessel - a locality
which, under present circumstances, I
do not know we can ever retake, it
is a matter of sincere congratulation
that we have been able to withdraw
our troops from a position so isolated
in its character, and so thoroughly com-
manded by the Enemy. -

These accounts, have I given you a sketch
of the evacuation of Morris Island - an
historic event of which I was an eye
witness. For I saw all that I have written,
and was at all last night in order
that I might note all that could be
observed. I trust it will interest you,
and one of these days, if God please,
when we are together in the enjoyment
of that peace and quiet in our own
home which we are trying now to
secure, it may be pleasant to refer
to this letter, in order that the events
of the passing hours may come back
with their original freshness and force.
My greatest joy Ev. is to please you,
and by any means in my power,
no matter how trivial they may be,
contribute to your enjoyment and entire
satisfaction. What the Enemy will next
attempt, we can only conjecture. My own
impression is, that they will now for-
tify themselves strongly, if possible, at
the North End of Morris Island, with
a view to the occlusion of the Harbor,

and further operations against our friends Bal-
lenger on Sullivan's Island. Every effort should
be made to prevent this, if practicable, but
we are sadly in need of heavy guns,
which would enable us, at the removal
of our present batteries, successfully to
contend against their enormous Parrot Guns.
There are indications of activity in Stone
River, but nothing decided yet. We great-
ly need labor here, and on this ac-
count, our operations are sadly delayed.
The health of our troops is not good.
In fact, James Island cannot, in the
nature of things, be a healthy place.
I am lasting quinine every day, and
hope by God's blessing to escape the
fever.

I was unable during to complete the
letter in time for the Courier who leaves
our Camp for the post rather early in
the morning. So my daily remembrance
will reach you in the shape of a
very little note, which you will ap-
preciate, not so much on its own ac-
count, as by virtue of the great love

collects its beams, in a very condensed form.
 See we thank you again and again
 my own presence. Ever for your dear letters.
 You know not the joy it has given me.
 It is so full of that love which is price-
 less beyond compare - so true, so expres-
 sive of the warm tender emotions of your
 own precious heart. - It is worth the life
 of any honest, noble-hearted man to receive
 such a pledge of affection from so pure
 and noble a woman. You best know, my
 Darling, that your love is never lost
 when it is bestowed upon
 your own devoted,
 Wm. B. Ew.

Wm. B. Ew. 1863
 1863
 7. 1863

Miss E. B. Ew.
 Sparta Geo.

He remembers me to Major & Mrs Dawson
 Say W. Dawson, that although I would
 be most happy to see him, I am convin-
 ced that a single night upon this
 Island, would give him a severe
 attack of Asthma.