

Letters from Matamoros ULYSSES S. GRANT

Matamoros Mexico

July 2d 1846

My Dear Julia

I recieved last evening your letter of the 10th of June, in which you speak of this Earthly paradise. If it is a Paradise where it rains about four hours each day why then Matamoros is the place. I have no doubt though I should like the place very much if it was only the home of My Dearest Julia, but I know that I shall never be contented until I am with her once more. I am afraid Julia that Matamoros will be very sickly this Summer. The whole of this country is low and flat and for the last six weeks it has rained almost incessantly so that now the whole country is under water. Our tents are so bad that evry time it rains we get a complete shower-bath. I dont believe that we will leave here for two or three months and then we will either have some hard fighting or bring our difficulties in this quarter to a speedy close. Now that the Oregon boundary is no longer in dispute I think we will soon quiet Mexico and then dearest Julia, if I am not one of the unfortunate who fall, nothing will keep me from seeing you again. I really am very much in hopes that an other Spring will not roll around before I will be able to call Julia my own dear, (shall I say wife,) Just think it is now going on three years since we were first engaged! You never will tell me Julia if you think your Pa & Ma will say no. I dont think they can but I would like to hear you say that they will not.—I did not let the flowers in your last letter blow away. When I opened the letter and saw the rose leaves I just thought that only two short weeks ago Julia had them in her own hands and here I am and have not seen her fore more than a year. If I was in Mo. and you were here I know what I would do very soon; I would volunteer to come to Mexico as

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a private if I could come no other way. But I recollect you did volunteer some time ago, or what showed your willingness to do so, you said that you wished we had been united when I was last in Mo. and how willing you would be to share even a tent with me. Indeed Julia that letter made me feel very happy. How much I ought to love you when you express a willingness to sacrifice so much just for me.—I believe you have burned some of my letters for you say you only have twenty five of them and it seems to me I have written a great many more; at all events I will write more in the future and you must write often too wont you Julia? So you have read that ridiculous falsehood about the cause of Lt. Deas⁴¹ crossing the river. There was not a word of truth in the whole statement except that he swam the river. It was a strange fancy that struck him at a time when he was not duly himself. Fred. has not got here yet. I wonder what can keep him? I shall pick a quarrel with him as soon as he gets here for not writing to me. He is a great deal worse than you are about writing; but I ought not to say a word about your writing now for you are so much more punctual than you used to be. I will write to you again in a few days but you must not wait to get another letter before you answer this. I would like to make a bargain for each of us to write, say, evry Sunday [] then just think I would hear from my Dear love fifty two times in a year. Remember me to all at White Haven.

Your Devoted
 ULYSSES

⁴¹First Lieutenant Edward Deas (c. 1822–1849) swam across the Rio Grande on April 13 and was captured. Some newspapers reported that he was searching for Colonel Cross, while others claimed that he was smitten with a Mexican woman. Deas was freed in a prisoner exchange on May 11, 1846.

P. S. You say that I must not let Fred. read your letters. I know now how to get you to write often. Evry time that two weeks elapse without geting a letter from my Dearest Julia I will just take out one of the old ones and give it to Fred. to read. You had better look out and write often if you dont want him to read them.

U S GRANT

P. P. S. Since writing the above I have heard that Fred is in N. Orleans on his way here. I suppose he will be here in two or three days. I'll make him write to you as soon as he comes.

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Matamoras Mexico
July 25th 1846

My Dearest Julia

It must be about two weeks since I have written to you, and as I am determined that a longer time shall never pass with my Dearest hearing from me, whilst I am in an enemie's country, I write to you again, notwithstanding I have not heard from you for some time. Do not understand me though to cast any censure upon you, for you may have written me a dozen letters and me not recieved one of them yet, for I believe it is about two weeks since we have had a Mail, and there is no telling when we will have another. You must not neglect to write often Dearest so that whenever a mail does reach this far-out-of-the-way country I can hear from the one single person who of all others occupys my thoughts. This is my last letter from Matamoras Julia. Already the most of the troops have left for Camargo and

a very few days more will see the remainder of us off. Whether we will have much more fighting is a matter of much speculation. At present we are bound for Camargo and from thence to Monteray, where it is reported that there is several thousand Mexican troops engaged in throwing up Fortifications, and there is no doubt either but that Parades⁴² has left Mexico at the head of nine thousand more to reinforce them, but the latest news says that he has been obliged to return to the City of Mexico on account of some rupture there. But a few months more will determine what we have to do, and I will be careful to keep my Dear Julia advised of what the army in this quarter is about. Fred. has not arrived here yet but I am looking for him daily. His commission arrived some time ago, and also a letter from St. Louis for him. I have them both in my possession, and wrote to him to hasten on. His Reg.t. (the 5th Infantry) is already in Camargo. A few months more of fatigue and privation, I am much in hopes, will bring our difficulties to such a crisis that I will be able to see you again Julia, and then if my wishes prevailed, we would never part again as merely engaged, but as,—you know what I would say.—No doubt a hard march awaits us between Camargo and Monteray. The distance is over two hundred miles, and as I have understood, a great part of it without water. But a person cannot expect to make a Campaign without meeting with some privations.

Fred. and me will probably be near each other during the time and between us I am in hopes that I will hear from my Dear Julia evry week, but write oftener to me than to Fred.—Since we have been in Matamoras a great many murders have been committed, and what is strange there seemes to be but very week means made use of to prevent frequent repetitions.

⁴²General Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga (1797–1849) became interim president of Mexico on January 4, 1846. Paredes was overthrown by an insurrection in Mexico City on August 4.

Some of the volunteers and about all the Texans seem to think it perfectly right to impose upon the people of a conquered City to any extent, and even to murder them where the act can be covered by the dark. And how much they seem to enjoy acts of violence too! I would not pretend to guess the number of murders that have been committed upon the persons of poor Mexicans and our soldiers, since we have been here, but the number would startle you.—Is Ellen married yet? I never hear you mention her name any more. John I suppose is on his way for the seat of war by this time.⁴³ If we have to fight we may all meet next winter in the City of Mexico.

There is no telling whether it will be as prisoners of war or as a conquering force. From my experience I judge the latter much the most probable.—How pleasant it would be now for me to spend a day with you at White Haven. I envy you all very much, but still hope on that better times are coming. Remember me to all at White Haven and write very soon and very often to

ULYSSES



⁴³Julia's brother John Cromwell Dent was an officer in the 2nd Missouri Mounted Volunteers and served in New Mexico.