

Ship Massachusetts

Off Lobos 28 Feb 1847

Dear Major

I ought to have in the bank of Commerce N. Y. Somewhere about \$1000, which on coming away I thought might be a commercial fund for me to draw on. I have not had occasion to do so, & as now foresee none, I am unwilling it should lie longer idle. Will you therefore do me the favor to invest it for me, either in Ohio, Kentucky or U. S. 6 pcents, as you may find most advantageous unless you find something better. I always have a little of Ohio & Kenty (Kentucky) all things being equal, would prefer the Kenty. Above you have my check in blank which please fill up with a required amt. for \$1000 of Bonds, & send the certificate to "Mrs R E Lee, Arlington near Alexa D. C."

It has been a long time since I have written to you & longer since I have heard. I wrote from Saltillo or its vicinity giving you brief accounts to that point. You may therefore be suspicious at finding me here, unless you recd information of what was intended before I did, as the Genl tells me it was so arranged before he left Washington. Here I am then a member of the Grand Armee.

(Page 2) My orders however did not reach me till about 10 days after Genl Worths Division had left, which gave me a solitary aide to Camayo & some trouble to wend my way through Canales County. I got through however unharmed & reached Brazos about a fortnight before the Genl & suite sailed. We called at Tampico on our way here & staid there a day. It is one pf the prettiest places I have seen in Mex: Situated on the N. Side of the Panuco, about 5 miles from its mouth & immediately below its junction with the Tamesi. About 1 mile below the town, the Tampico or Montezuma enters the Panuco from the South & communicates with Sagious & the Tamiagua in that direction. The town is watered from the Tamesi & one of our Steamboats, "May Somers" ascended the Panuco 130 miles. The present Tampico as you know is not older than about 20 years. The houses are consequently in good preservation & are moreover well built. There are some fine buildings among them, pitched roofs, glazed windows, venetian blinds etc. It looked more like home than anything I had seen. Some of the houses are three storied. The lower floor of the house occupied by Genl Patterson was paved by tessalative marble. Does that not approximate the "Marble Halls." Beauregard was just completing the defenses of the land approaches to the city. They are a system of field works, well placed & (Page 3) calculated for the object & will require a garrison of at least 1000 men. I believe Col: DeRussys Regt: of Louis a (Louisiana) Vols. & Capt Wise's Compy. of Arty. have been left to defend them. The market was well filled with vegetables, Green corn, tomatoes, sweet irish potatoes, snap beans, greens, onions etc were among the number. The only fruit I saw were sweet oranges & bananas. The fish were beautiful to behold & in great abundance, but ask Major Smith about the chocolate. I saw the tree growing with the fruit on it & the coconut also. In fact I was charmed with Tampico & if it depends upon my vote, it will never fall back to Mexico. It would not be characteristic of the Anglo Saxon race to permit it. The Panuco is very

pretty river, but there is not more than 12' water on the bar. This Isd: is about 56 miles S. of Tampico, & about the same distance N. of Tuspan. It is a small island covered with evergreen about 1/3 miles in circumference & some 8 or 10 miles from the main. It is surrounded by a coral reef, which in the E & W. direction I should think was nearly two miles long, though less in the N. & S. It is this reef which a shelter from the Northers. The water between the reef & Isd is perfectly smooth, no matter how rough the sea is outside, & there is a narrow notch in the reef on the south side, just wide enough to admit a row boat & affording a fine landing on the inside. The surf is constantly breaking over the reef & the Isd is enclosed by a white wall of foam. I went ashore for the first time yesterday. The chief growth of the Isd is the Caouchuc tree. It was not tall & inclined towards the south by the Northers. It is the most remarkable growth I have ever seen. It begins to branch as soon as it emerges from the ground & at evy 8 or 12 inches, throws out vertical branches, sometimes dividing & serving as house (?). After reaching 8 or 10 feet from the ground, these branches are less frequent. The main branch becomes smaller & puts out upward branches likewise. At this point however the main branch is larger than where it first leaves the ground. The supports at this point in the larger trees were (Page 4) as large as a man's leg. The leaf resembled the Bay (leaf). Upon wounding the bark a liquid exudes, which almost immediately became glutinous & soon elastic. The trees were covered with beautiful vines, forming dense arbours, sufficient for shelter in this climate. Among them I saw some resembling the Chinese honey suckle. The wild vine was in full bloom & there was another tree with a white blossom resembling in odors the fresh lilac. Tell Miss Sue I send her a leaf of beautiful vine. But fear it will hardly give her an idea of its beauty. There are about 50 sail under the Isd, loaded with troops, munitions, etc. The troops are principally, Genls Worth & Twiggs Divisions, which comprise all the Regulars. I think in about another day the Genl will set sail & precede the Fleet. He will require a day or two to arrange matters with the Navy, & by that time I hope Genls Patterson, Eastman, Pillow & Shields will be along with the volunteers. You of course know our destination. I am told the Mexicans are anxiously expecting us & are prepared by land & water & say that we will never succeed. I hope they may be mistaken. Col: Totten, Major Smith, & myself are the only Engineers aboard the Mass: Sanders is with Genl Worth. Swift, Smith, Foster McClelland are in the harbour, Mason, Drapur, Stevens, Beauregard & Tower are in the bay. Major Turnbull, Capt Johnston, & Scanunon of the --?-- are with us. McClelland with Genl Patterson, Hughes with Worth, Hardcastle & Derby behind. Hughes, Talcott, Hagner, Laidley, Stone & Boyos of the Ordnance. Huger is the only one aboard. Col: Hitchcock Insp Genl. Major Kirby & Van Dusen, paymasters, Col: Childs Cpts Vinton Swartout & Drums Compys are also aboard. Remember me very kindly, to Mrs. D. all the family, Talcotts etc. Wish us good luck & believe me very truly RE Lee