

*Endorsed:* Woolwich, 21 March 1797 Mrs. Meredith to Mrs. Askin.

*Translation*

Woolwich, March 21, 1797

My dearest and best beloved Mother: I have the opportunity to give my dear parents news of myself and shall begin by telling them that we are in good health; and after that, tell my dear Mother that I am a widow, that is, my dear Meredith left me three days ago to go to Ireland. The company to which he belongs was ordered there, and many think it will be stationed there several years. The order was a great surprise to us, for my dear Meredith was not to go to camp until the month of May, as he is just recovering from a very severe illness, and the doctor had said that traveling directly after his recovery might do him much harm. But my dear parents know my dear Husband well enough to be satisfied he would never say a word about remaining. No, on the contrary, he prepared all his equipment, and begged me to get my things ready and those of the children, so that we could set out the next day at six in the morning. This was at one o'clock Tuesday, and we would have to leave Wednesday, very little time, indeed, to get everything ready. But that is always the way they do with the officers. My dear Meredith was extremely desirous of taking me with him, and at the same time, it was easy to see that he would rather I should ask to remain here.

After great restraint on my inclination I said this: "My dear Husband, you may be assured that I should be only too happy to go with you, but at the same time we are not going to do anything that we may regret forever after. True, you are ordered to Cork, Ireland. Well then, suppose that we get there without any accident, it will not be without great expense, for it is not possible to travel so far and not be as good as ruined. After landing there, suppose that these wicked French try a descent on that coast as they did before. You are ordered off to fight. Now, behold me left in a strange country, not knowing a single soul; and