

Richmond VA.  
June 8th 1862

My dear wife,

Bombs commenced bursting along the lines of the two armies, this morning early. They were distinctly heard in the city and feeling strong enough, once more, to join in the fray, I mounted my horse and rode five miles down to the Regt. The firing proved to be only a little "artillery practice" between adverse batteries and ceased about twelve o'clock leaving everything quiet along the lines. I remained down exchanging greetings with the boys until about 4 o'clock, at which time, I left for the city. Thinking it better to expose myself by degrees (after my spill) before I reported myself permanently for duty.

I found the Regt. camped in a low wet swamp bordering upon the Chickahominy, without tents or any of those comforts and luxuries known to us when we first entered the service. But these things we have long since given up. Since we have got to be veterans we look for nothing now but hard blows. However the boys looked cheerful and would be happy if our Generals would only lead them against the Yankees and give them a chance to rout the ? Army that now threatens Richmond. They had a thousand things

to tell me of what they saw and got in the camps of the enemy on Saturday night and Sunday morning. As I told you, in a former letter, the 10th was under fire, but not in the fight – they were held back as a reserve and brought up the rear – they, therefore, had time, camping Saturday night as they did in the tents of the Yankees, to gather up such relics as were left. The enemy must have been surprised at the charges of the Confederates, for they abandoned everything knapsacks, stones of every kind, nic nacs, guns, ammunition, barrels of coffee, whiskey & etc. I heard of many of the boys getting gold & silver change from the pockets of dead Yankees, also letters, daguerreotypes & etc. Some of them say they had ample opportunity to provide themselves with the most elegant table ware, but as they didn't feel like "toating" it, they left it undisturbed.

But this robbing feature of the war has even less of interest in it for you than for me, so I will turn from it with the hope that such may be the issue of all our battles that the boys may have it in their powers to supply their wants from the rich supplies of the Yankees whether they avail themselves of the opportunity or not.

Well, as I was riding along leisurely to town I met a member of the Regt. with the mail who informed me that he had a letter for me. This was more gratifying to me than any visit to the boys. When I saw the superscription, I could not wait till I reached my room to read it. I broke it open and

devoured its contents with a happy heart along the highway. As I shall return to the Regt. tomorrow I cannot think of closing my eyes this good Sabbath night without answering your dear letter.

I am not surprised, Mary, that there should, occasionally, be a rim of gloom or desponding running through your letters. The scenes through which we are now passing are sufficient to try the stoutest hearts. I have no words of chiding. When families are divided and husbands & wives are separated, perhaps forever, by this cruel, inhuman, unchristian war, it is not astonishing that many hearts should grow sad. You say you fear I'll think your patriotism is gone. I certainly do not think so, and I hope the day will never come when it will abate our job or tittle. I trust you, and every other woman in the south, will bear up, under whatever [remorse] may come, with the same spirit and resolution that inspired you in the commencement of the war. Our cause is just. I cannot believe otherwise than that God is on our side - our arms are yet strong - and the temporary defeats may come upon us - tho' many dear, precious lives maybe demanded as a sacrifice - yet I believe the South will pass through the furnace of his trials and appear in the eyes of the world as refined gold.

It is but natural that you should want me with you. It certainly would afford me the greatest happiness to be at home once more surrounded by the loved ones, but this cannot be now. I have not served my country

enough – nor can I think I’ve served it enough so long as there is an enemy in the field threatening destruction to your home and happiness, and whose villainous effort is to crush out that liberty which I desire to bequeath to my children as a heritage. If sickness and disease should render me unfit for service and leave me a tax upon the Government, then justice to the cause and to myself would induce me to retire from the field; but so long as the Good One so mercifully spares my life and gives me strength, I must “strike till the last armed foe expires.”

I regretted exceedingly to hear of the death of [Allen Penick] and the other losses sustained by the St. Clair Companies at Corinth. But that army is not the only one suffering from disease. Lieut. Wyatt told me today that seven of our recruits to Co “A,” out of 21 had died in the last two weeks – among these was Jesse Bearden a brother of [Mrs. Partlow]. The old members of the Company generally keep well.

You acknowledged the receipt of the \$200 sent by Miller Francis, but you did not tell me the state of your finances. I want to keep posted so that I may always remit to you in time. By the by, speaking of Miller, I want you to tell him that among the letters which I handed him to mail at Jacksonville for Ashville was one not backed it was written by Sam Wyatt and intended for E. Goode

and contained a ten-dollar bill. Sam had handed it to me among others and requested me to back it. I forgot to do so and handed it to Miller, with the others. Tell him to look over his papers and please direct it to E. Goode, Ashville, Ala.

You mentioned Francis' indifference while waiting on Lucy. I feel fretted to think a man & a father should so far forget himself as to forget the calls of humanity. He is certainly crazy on the subject of the war and doubtless feels that all the responsibility of carrying it on rests upon his shoulders. Although, I am rather inclined to think it was best that he did nothing for dear little Lucy. I've no doubt you and Mrs. Grant did more than he could have done under the war excitement.

I am sorry you have to write so despondingly about the boys. You know I had no confidence in the success of their teacher. He is doubtless a good man; but goodness is not the only essential of a good teacher. You ask my advice in relation to a proposition to abandoning your school and devoting yourself to your boys. Well, I feel great anxiety and concern for my children; but if you and sis are getting along smoothly

together and the labors of the schoolroom are not too great a tax upon your strength, I would not abandon it at least for the present. Wait till the end of the year. Perhaps the war will close by that time and then I can take the boys in hand and do a father's part by them at least in the way of instruction.

I was truly glad to hear that Eliza had received a letter from (Henry) and that he would probably be with her soon. Whenever he does arrive at home you must not forget to present him my compliments and tell him he is missed in the Regt. Our Col., if anything, is growing more and more unpopular every day. He seems to be so wholly unfitted to command men. The Tenth Alabamians, I am sorry to say, is almost demoralized. It has good fighting material and will fight whenever occasion offers; but it does nothing else as becomes soldiers. It presents a wreck of its former greatness. Since Col Forney left it, it has lost cast. A Regt. you know, like a company, always takes rank according to the merit of its commanding officer.

I wrote you in one of my letters something in regard to Jim Martin. I am more satisfied every day that I did not do him injustice. Ingratitude is one of his sins, and retribution is bound to overtake him. In fact, even now, he has lost nearly all the character he ever had for manliness candor

and veracity. He is ambitious, and has been wise working for some time past for promotion. He would be willing to ruin anybody to aggrandize himself. But such men always have their day and then are impotent for harm.

I am glad that John remains with you but am sorry his health does not improve. If he has been discharged from his regt. he ought not to think of returning to the service until his health is entirely restored.

The history of the Jews which you give is the same which they have enjoyed in every country for a thousand years. There may be individual instances of gentlemen among them but as a race they have been money changers and dealers in old clothes ever since the Crucifixion of our blessed Savior and it will be so as long as time lasts.

I am not astonished at the high prices which you quote for everything in the way of necessaries of life. I hope good corn crops will bring down the prices of bread stuffs. How much meat have you on hand? Will you have enough to do you? It is selling enormously high everywhere I can hear from – 40 to 50 cents per pound.

We have rumors in the city of other victories by Jackson, in the Valley of Virginia, the last of which says he has [whipped] the forces under the Yankee Gen. Shields and took 700 prisoners. Everything is great along our lines. The James [James River]

[James River] River is higher than has been known since 1847, but the obstructions remain intact. My opinion is there will be no general engagement here for some time – there will be skirmishing here and there along the line but nothing like a regular fight. In this I may be mistaken an hour may precipitate a battle but if so, we will have to bring it on – the Yankees will not – they ditch & dig and will approach by ditches till we force them to leave them.

I forgot to mention an anecdote told of one of the Yankee prisoners who was captured in the fight of Saturday & Sunday. His language was not well selected but it shows the estimation in which some of them at least, hold the courage and [valor] of Alabamians. He was taken by an Alabamian, and as he was carrying him to the rear, the Yankee said to him, “I never saw such dam fellows as you Alabamians are. I believe, if you were armed with nothing but a barlow knife you would charge hell itself to carry your point.”

I want to send you, by the first opportunity, the “Throne of David” – but perhaps you’ve read it. I have been much interested in its perusal. Having read the Old Testament much since I’ve been in camps this book gave me much pleasure.

Remember me to friends, and particularly those who inquire after me. My thanks to Mrs. Grant for her kind attention during Lucy’s sickness. Kiss the children for me and believe me as ever your affectionate husband.

C.

Written in left margin: Fighting Alabamians