November 30
-
December 29
1861
John Barer

Dear Mr. Barer,

I must say I

Yours,

[Signature]
Nov. 30th 1861. Camp near Ft. Lyon Va.

I went to Washington yesterday, purchased some necessary articles for winter wear, had my picture taken by S. J. Green at Brady's. Two pictures, "graphical" portraits of some kind of Harriet Lane. I think she is a more beautiful woman than I ever saw. She is not of the ethereal, angelic kind now, one all smiles, love & voluptuousness now of the cold, intellectual platonic love style but a most glorious combination of the whole. She has kindness, intelligence & good sense in every look, form & feature of perfect...
full of life & vigor. She is not only beautiful now, but odds fair to be 40 years from now. She has a modest chase. Violets look, but the side of her veins too full & rich & wholesome for her ever to forget that she is a woman and being such must make for love. She knows that passage of Scripture which says there is a time for all things and won't be sorry when the time comes. As we came down the River St. last night they were practicing at the Arsenal with some small rifle cannon. They fired along side of us till we were off, 3 miles for the purpose of seeing whether they could hit a vessel at that distance. Hot & you. The balls struck generally from 6 to 8 rods...
to one side & most of them just all even with the bow. They sent up a nice little cloud of spray. I do not think one of them would have minded had they been aimed at the boat. I found the kest. here when I got back. He has returned only for the purpose of settling up his affairs & resigning. There was never a boy on this part night away from home more home sick than he. Soon after he came a cold storm of wind & rain setting the ground. it was very muddy & the tents damp & cold beside his rooms at home. He & I slept to-gether in my tent which flipped & slapped around so that he could not keep quite for a minute the bed was
hard, the clothes too thin. He was so uneasy that I got very little sleep. Every 15 minutes he would punch one in the ribs. "Haydon! Haydon! Haydon by God this tent will blow over!" "Don't you feel how the wind comes through the canvas?" "How damp it is here I shall take more cold." In short the place which I but 2 days ago boasted of as one of the coziest in the world seemed to him the most wretched abode on the face of the earth. Capt. May is a good lawyer. When he is disposed a fine man, and always an exemplary citizen but a most miserable soldier. I was going to punish a man
This man, for wasting some ammunition, but he interfered saying "damn it all, what is the use, let the poor cuf go". He said damn it all, what's the use till his Co. was nearly ruined. He has a great dislike of Col. Poe, says he don't see what in the world they ever wanted to get such a d-d critter into this Regt. for. It is hardly credible how soon and how rapidly men begin to get sick & die off where discipline is slack. I have never seen it fail in a Co. in Regt. & I have already noticed at least a dozen cases. I never perceived how sadly deficient Capt. May is in military ability since
he came back. I suppose it is because there have been such great changes with the rest of us since he left. One who visits Washington now will find three numerous classes of people well marked and easily identified. Besides these there is a promiscuous lot of all sorts and kinds congregated who I suppose might be called the citizens. The first and most numerous class is composed of soldiers of every rank, line, nation, uniform and branch. The other two great classes are politicians & prostitutes both very numerous & about equal in numbers, honesty & morality. A comrade said to me there yesterday...
That he used to do exercises on some day marrying a virtuous wife but had concluded that if he could find one who hadn't got the same he would not look any farther. It is more interesting than a play to sit at Willard's or the National and watch the patter. I notice and learn all that I can from such scenes. I have enough to do to look out for my own affairs and do not worry myself greatly about the fortunes of the crowd unless there be something very unusual. There are many things which I would like to write in this book which I dare not because it is liable to fall into other hands.
I think sometimes that there are very few things to be surprised in these times save virtue in woman & honesty in man.

"Whatever is, is right." They say. In this view of matters I laugh a thousand times where I once felt inclined to cry once. I know there are some good, honest, virtuous men & women in the world. I wish there were more & that I was more jealous in imitating their examples.

I am not disposed to judge any one's faults but hope that all "May so live that they may approach their end like one who wraps the drapery of his couch around him & lies down to pleasant dreams."
These struggling sides of life which seem
In wayward aimless course to tend
The eddies of a mighty stream
Which moves to its appointed end

Dec. 1st 1861.

Learned last night that one of our men died Oct. 15th at Georgetown Hospital. We learned the fact by way of his father who wrote to find whether there was any pay due him. This dying off without our knowing it is what ought not to be. We expected to see him returning every day for duty. I learned pretty nearly my standing in the Co. last night by accident. It was nothing new
to me. I knew at what it was to be when I rec. my commission. I have no desire to have it changed. I was palling quite late one of the tents I heard by chance one of the boys instructing one of our new recruits in the mysteries of soldiering. He had just finished it seemed a description of the Col.'s ways. "Now," said he, "the next thing is to look out for that D. Trent; for he is a d----d sight worse than the Col." "If he gets after you, he'll give you hell; I without many if you don't mind your business when he is around." I did not hear any more. His last sentence at least was true. I will not be
run over by any set of men whom
I am entitled to rule. They have
not to mind their business & keep
in their places. I give them fair
warning & have no cause to com-
plain in our own lot. But some-
times have a little trouble out side,
I would do as Capt. Col. Burke of
the 37th did to one of his men if
I could not be obeyed in any other.
There was no order in his Regt.
No Col. to appeal to who would do
any thing. He ordered a man
twice to fall into the ranks. The
second time the man openly re-
 fused & the Col. shot him through
the head in less than 5 seconds.
I saw him when he fell. He
was never called to account & should not have been. I hope the Captain will soon before he & I have been talking over old law matters. I began to feel although I wanted to be back. I could see so plainly the kind, sober face of Judge Graves the familiar features of all my associates in the profession especially by the honest, good-natured countenance of my best friend & partner Joseph Miller, that it seemed for a moment that I must be there again cost what it might. God only knows how much I loved the Bar & how hard it was to give it up. It was for a moment only. The thought here it had chance to
gain a permanent hold. I swore to bear arms till the war was done & I'll not break my oath. More than one tempting reason has been presented to lure one away. I'll put this down as I have the others. I know the law which I loved so much would have killed me. Here I can stand anything that any one will share with me. In an office I should work alone. I know that at the end it may kill me. The unwholesome air of the bowld room would eventually have overcome me & broken my health. If I should fall during the war I shall be sure of having turned my life's good account. Though I would...
gladly as more still if I knew this were to be my lot I would not complain. Perhaps it were better to take that grasp that certainty of the choice were given than to try the uncertainties of life in hope of doing making a better & more honorable end.

At any rate the choice is not so great but that I can take the first alternative. I hope with decent compulsion.

I think however it is full time for me to quit speculation as to how I could stand killed myself. I turn to the most approved methods as described in the best authors of killing others. Mahan says that a 6 lb. shot at your dis-
Tance will cut in two abt. 24 men. I call that pretty good work if the shot goes from one side, fragments of shell will frequently scatter over a circle more than 200 rods in diameter & make very dangerous wounds, says the same autho. There are now a days a great many ingenious & philosophical ways of killing men. One need die for love unless he prefers that way. Benson is on strike. I have read the Atlantic nearly through to day. Stop & we had a bugade this M. during which we fired abt. 50,000 of blank cartridges. The weather is cold but it is snowing.
to-night. Col. Poe has returned. Capt. May is Officer of the day.

The Capt. has said a great deal about Col. Poe putting on airs that he did not care for him or discipline. He and were talking together this AM, when he chanced to see the Col coming. He looked and Capt. looked suddenly over toward the Guard-Tent and seeing many of the men who there who were not orderly, started off in great haste, swearing he would have every one of them arrested. He never did such a thing before and such an idea would not have entered his head then but he not seen that Col. whom he did not.
care anything about, coming.

I was on guard yesterday.

I was pretty busy & had one very pleasant visit with the Col. I had been to visit the out posts. He visited the guard while I was gone & thought he had caught me nicely. I met him when I was coming back & we had quite a conversation about guards & in which he found very little fault but after all, I wasn't sorry when it was over. It was tedious last night. The ground froze deep & hard. I slept not more than 15 minutes all night. I sat down on a pole which was stuck up near the fire & was soon asleep. I was dreaming that I was in the warmer
and comfiest bed imaginable, and
God only knows what other charms
would soon have been added if I
had not tumbled off the pole & burned
my new trousers. It was a pretty
long night & required a great deal of
walking to keep from freezing.
I got through however & feel none
the worse to day. I had two very
interesting periods of conversa-
tion with the Col. to day. He was not
after me this time but was, as he
always is on such occasions, full
of politeness & good nature. He di-
rected me to prefer charges agi-

and my friend Rossen, which I have
done under the following head:

Desertion. Violation of the
Article of War — Conduct prejudicial to good order & military discipline.

Col. Poe had a talk with Benson today who was more courteous and polite in his answers than I ever knew him before. He is apt to explode when things don’t suit. Col. called him out and said to Benson, “I think it proper that I should inform you that I have sent in a recommendation for a 2nd Capt. of this Regt. to be Capt. of Co. D. I wish to know how you feel about it.” Benson with a long face informed him that he had often thought and always said that he would not serve if any traitor in the Regt. was placed over him.
He had always thought that there was no heir in the Regt. more capable of looking after the well-being of Co. D. than himself but said he 'd
if you have found one, I can only submit to your experience and better judgment'. He added several sentences in the same becoming tone of military sub-
ordinance when I should have supposed he would have broken over all bounds and damned things sky high. When the conversa-
tion was nearly over the col. began to laugh and informed him that he was the man. He had watched since our promotion & was pleased...
with it. There were several officers
who were quite near to known
men among us, but considering
the manner in which it would
be unjust to place any one over
me, I had determined not to
be put into that but shall now
for my company as much
as I can. I shall go clean on the
affair but one must keep his
eyes open and others as well.
find himself minus his commission some fine morning. Wonder always that he has an idea awake Mr. Point graduate to makte him.

O. T. Was warm pleasant day as one could wish to see very much like a warm day in May.

Capt. May showed himself in a new role some respects interesting view at least it was instructing & laughable. It was permissible, personified. He figured up articles to the amount of $95. Which he seemed to think Benson & Co. must pay or be the most mean ungrateful beings on earth. There was hardly an article for which he did not ask more than it cost him. He made
up his list & then told us that he would join in our promotion evidently thinking he could wring the money out of us in this way. When it came to a final settlement we gave him $28, for a part of them. He got very mad because we would not buy them all. We had given up our own tent & bed to him & he had lived at the rate of $1 a week at our expense with the pay for some Michigan butter which he bought along. He charged us with the balance of it (about 2 lbs). He said he was going to give us an old brass candlestick worth about $10, but when he found we would not buy all his things he carried that away. He tried to get three old frontier forks.
out of the Mep chest, which he said he had not sold but Noble would not let him have them. A little more would have induced us to have kicked him off the ground. N. W. Foster, one of our best men died at the Rpt. Hos. but a few minutes since of Typhoid Fever. He leaves a family. He took a severe cold at Cantonment Blain & has never been very well since though he did good service a large share of the time. There is not a great deal of sickness in camp but it is more than usually fatal. Typhoid Fever is the most dangerous. Very few recover from it so as to be worth much for duty. There were three good promotions in our bat.
night. Two of them & Johnston & Southworth I have long desired, they would have come before if I could have controlled matters. I think that Johnston will be P. bereft, in case I am promoted. He is in all respects a gentleman & a soldier. He comes of good English fighting stock near half his male relatives on his father's side having fallen in battle. His grandfather was Gov. of Canada when our Revolution broke out. Our Senate had the misfortune to quarrel or fall out in some way with his father some six years since. Both allowed their temper to get so high that they parted for life at
least such was their mutual son. If the father is like the son it will be kept. Since then the boy has worked his own way & married a very pretty wife. Both are poor & need the increase of pay which he will now receive. As much he told me and no more. His father lives in Canada & is a man of wealth, rank & influence. I wish they could come to an amicable settlement. I have done my best to aid his promotion and have done all I could to secure him my present place if I should leave it.

Stop.

We presented Gen. Richardson to day, with a sword & cash which cost #750.
It was a present from the Officers of the Mich. R. If I could have had my way I would have waited till another pay day & then have bought a better one. The Gen. knew nothing about it till we came in on him. He acted as funny & embarrassed as a boy with a new hat. He expressed his thanks in his usual dry blunt style & called on Col. Terry who was present to help him out by a speech which he did quite handsomely. Gen. said he desired to bring on the wine but unfortunately had none on hand. So he concluded to call on me at another time. We took
him entirely off guard. 

Many secessionists had have come in & summoned him to surrender, he would have been left confused. Anything like speech-making is a terror to him. He has never been known to talk for more than two minutes consecutively since he joined the Regt. He likes to do things without ceremony if we may judge from the way in which he got married. When the Regt. first went to Debord, he was engaged to be married to a lady at that place. When he determined to go for three years she objected. She said she was
willing to many him and go with him for a three months camp
sign but she thought that stay
in camp was too much. Indeed
she could not consent to it.

"Very well Madame there are others
"who will" "Good day." The man
called for his hat crossed the street
offered himself in less than 10 min
utes after to a girl whom he
had never seen but twice before
and was accepted & married to
within two weeks. Senator
Chandler & a number of other
Michi men were here to see how
we were getting along & we had
a severe chill for their edifi
cation. Tomorrow we buy
(or plant, as Prentice calls it) Foster, who died last night at the hospital.

More lovely weather than that of the last 3 days a rational man could ask for. It is like the warmest days of Indian summer in Michigan, only not so smoky. There is hardly any frost nights. Foster was buried yesterday. A large number of men from other lots were present. With an appropriate discourse would have been a very solemn funeral. Chaplain Rays sermon was at the same appropriate and interesting as the dryest draft of Coke's would have been.
A military funeral when properly conducted is very solemn and impressive. Its effect is profoundly different from that of other funerals. Nothing sounds more sorrowful than the slow prolonged wail of martial music. The perfect silence, dignified slow procession, the measured tread, the united arms and sober looks all increase the effect. Soldiers always look very sad on such occasions, more however as matter of discipline and duty than because they care a great deal about it.

In truth after they have been 6 months in the service the death of a comrade makes very little difference in their conversation.
or thoughts. At deep parade to
night came orders to move at 9
A.M. tomorrow. I suppose we
are going about 3 miles down the
river to Washington valley. We
shall undoubtedly winter there in
at least go into winter quarters.

One of the most important things
for a soldier to learn is that he has
to have a home or fixed place
of abode which can be improved or
beautified beyond the mere wants
of the day. As soon as he gets well
to living the order comes to move
he packs the most necessary of his
articles, abandons the rest & travels
to another place. As a Member of 1st
Kansas Hall Writes in the Covenant.
with the credulous farmers
for much poultry, potatoes &c.
to be paid for on the 11th day &
to on the 18th day his Regt.
Moved to another place.” We shall
be 3 miles nearer the enemy but
with far more prospect of active
service. I dislike to be be
cooped up there all winter
but I suppose I can sland
it at $103 per month. Our
things are all packed & we have
only to strike our tents & we are
ready for the march. Gen. Ryan
Benson & Beach a Photograph
of himself tonight. It is a good
picture & I prize very highly as
coming from him in person.
God knows I like the men so I think, does every one in the
2nd. unless it be Major Williams.
If the "Loeash" ever touch him they
had better keep out of the way of
the "Pet Sambò".

10th

2nd meal finds us in
the woods 3 1/2 miles S of our former
camp. We are trying to camp
among the trees. There is not a
house or cleared field in sight.
The ground is in its original
state with hardly the mark of
an ax on the trees. I used to
say that the Garibaldi Guards
could teach anything in the
Army of the Potomac at shooting
but lad. Pete says the 14th Brigade
has the highest reputation in that
at headquarters & everywhere else
where they are known. The guns
were barely stacked to day when the
worthies of the 2 began to run up to
the top of a hill a little in front of us
to look around. At a little distance
she spied a board fence about 1/2 mile
long & nearly new. They ran back in
great haste to inform their comrades.
In 20. minutes there was not a board
left on the posts. Col. Poe got wind of
it & rode to the place as fast as possible. He yelled at them as
soon as he came in sight.
Slop, crack went the boards on
to the ground & the men scattered
in all directions. Heard kno...
The men personally they all got into the bushes & escaped before the guard arrived. As soon as he was out of sight you might see them creaking out & snatching away the boards one by one & hiding them in the leaves. Our 100° tents did not come till sundown before there was time to put them up. We were all ordered out on picket duty. We went out about a mile to watch a number of old roads & cow paths which lead in toward our lines.

The night was warm & I slept well with a single blanket & a pile of pine boughs among such parts of the night as were not required for pickets. — Charles Godfrey
that at a man who was coming along one of the roads but missed him. He made wonderful times into the bushes. The night with us was as was quiet in camp they were called out at 8 a.m. by a report that the enemy were advancing. When we were within about four or five miles of camp coming in some Devil instigated me to fire off my pistol. I came so near getting killed hot water for this. At any other time no one would have taken any notice of but just then they were very wide awake. If I had have known that I should most certainly not have fired. It is all over now so far as any action in the matter is concerned.
I would be very glad if it had not happened. We all worked very briskly till noon leveling the ground falling trees, putting up tents, digging wells &c. just as we were about to make an order came to strike tents &c. we were ready to move in 2 hours. I had examined the ground with the critical eye of an engineer & had found that half a dozen guns might be so placed as to render our retreat to the main body impossible. In short the 4th Brigade would see Richmond sooner than they desired, unless they were able to take the battery. Gen. Heintzelman did not like the place—too far out.
At two o'clock the tents were down & we were on the move again. The Band playing. 'Tint I glad to get out of the wilderness.' I was glad to get outside for the danger of being cut off the place possessed few advantages. It was warm & there was plenty of wood. We marched back halfway to the old camp & then halted on another field where we had & sooner halted than the men began to make arrangement for campfire. After half an hour we moved 1/2 mile further to the right halted. Stacked arms & set up from later moved once more. At short distance. Stacked arms for the night. It was now near sundown. Gen. P. thought our first stopping place too cold.
nearly laughed myself to death.

I thought the weather became very cold all at once. There were no clouds, but it was snowing.

I lay down for the night. But somehow the wind raised the snow to come down on me. We were all prepared to turn our heads as the snow fell on us. We brought up some wood.
vapor from our bodies had frozen on reaching the cold air. They made
fog hard enough to bear a horse. One feels fresh and lively when he well
out of his blankets into the open air an hour before sunrise.

13th. The men are very busy at work freeing up quarters, building
log huts &c. I doubt whether we shall remain here long. I cannot
see why we should not advance at once & make an end of this business. We shall be no
better prepared as far as I can
see 8 months hence than now.
The men would rather advance
in snow knee deeps than go into win-
ner quarters. There has not been snow
enough yet to cover the ground in two days moving with all due caution we can arrive at the place where the whole thing can be decided. Would it not be better to go through Manassas at the point of the bayonet with a loss of 5,000 to 10,000 men than to delay any longer. Many will say that would be criminal. Indeed it would, that is a necessary consequence of war. Armies are raised for that very purpose. True the final object is quite different but as the immediate consequence.

The cost of waiting both in life and money must also be calculated. Every hour of delay is a positive gain to the
enemy in most respects. Gen. B. was around this P.M. toward the men, not
carry any more boards, "I won't ask to
hook any more boards around here."
They are making a devil of a fuss about
it at headquarter. "They're gone to
a lot of these officers of the Mich. P.
It must be said that he never stopped
the boys from "cramping" till he was
obliged to. His orders always were
that such kind of things "must be stopped
as much as possible." Which was
understood to mean that they should not steal any thing we
left they really needed it. The men
from this brigade have torn down
a church at 2 miles from here to
days carried it all away. They leave
down barns and houses in presence of the owners and in some cases they have taken the doors off and carried off their houses.

14th Benson who is a perfect monomaniac on the subject of log and board shanties commenced one of the latter day before yesterday. He pulled down the tent yesterday and was so much afraid someone would steal his boards that we had to sleep out doors on top of the pile last night. I swore pretty roughly not that I cared any thing about sleeping on the board pile but because I hate the any trouble of building the shanty. Since I would never pay a cent toward it but that made no
difference with him. I threatened to dissolve partnership but he declared that if I would live in it with him he would pay all expense. I think it is best to let him have his own way & I will pay a part of the expenses or not just as I see fit hereafter. He has a great desire to do all the domestic duty. I have a great desire to let him. I never think of sweeping the room, making the bed, building a fire or anything of the kind when he is here.

15th. I looked gay at dinner this Mr. Col. commanded their appearance very highly. They had all new coats, clean white gloves, shoes,
well blacked & guns with few exceptions as bright as a new dollar. They were clean clean enough in all respects for the parlor. There are some of them of whom you can no more make soldiers than Frogs. There was a battle 'tis said at Springfield Station abt 30 miles from here yesterday PM. We could hear the guns & see the smoke very plainly. The firing was for an hour very rapid. I know nothing as yet of the result. It seems as though we should never see any more fighting. The men are beginning to be soldiers. You no longer hear a continual grumbling abt. Officers, living, living clothes, burned & dirty.
Every imaginable thing. Then anything is to be done they turn out to do it as they ought. There is indeed less cause than formerly. How I used to pity the regulars when I first came down here. Poor fellows I used to think you are laced up in a straight jacket imprisoned without hope of relief for the next 5 years. After all I could not help noticing that they did not seem to feel very bad about it. That they looked almost content better than we. Times thoughts have so far changed that nothing pleases men or officers more than the thought of being made into
regulars - I on the evening of the 13th Dec. 1861 bet the oyster will come. Mark, that one of the 6 persons then present (Ernest Benson & self) got Nurses, Prentice & Mark, privates North & Robs. would be killed in battle before this night - 1862, I foolishly bet perhaps but it is made. 16th. A very fine day - It is reported that we are to go to Ft. Pickens. I would not be surprised if some such thing would be the result of all this stealing. I do not care very much whether we go or not. It would be a change & that is usually reason enough for a soldier. It would be very pleasant for the winter but
not so very pleasant for the time. We are sure to encounter some men which we are sure to encounter. I am beginning to be soldier enough to be pretty much passive as to where I am to be stationed. But I am ready to go wherever they see fit to send me, without question or regrets. We have another President in our Co. to night. The appointment was rec'd by the men with 3 groans. I do not understand something exactly in connection with the matter. I dislike it in this that it has the promotion of men in our Co. who are far better qualified than the one appointed. I do not understand why he goes or I were not appoint to Lieut. till I know the reason.
of this I shall not feel quite certain as to the future. There are
somethings which can be done, some which cannot. I don't like
the arrangement. I will wait for the sequel.

17th. I am officer of the guard
to day. "The officer of the guard must
not leave his post except for his meals
for the necessary rounds." So say the
Regulations &c. &c. Be emphasized
at this Mr. This confines me for
26 hours. The day is very warm & fine
Benson is officer of the day.

18th. It requires no small degree
of patience to sit through a long of 26
consecutive hours guard duty. It has
been done however. North...
We thought last night that I dream
the oyster (see Dec. 13th) He was on
ficket with abt. 20 others just in the
edge of a piece of woods. A volley of abt
50 guns was suddenly fired at them.
No one was killed but one had a neat
button shot off bigq sized hole made
in his shirt. The boys returned fire on
them fell back on the reserve in quick
time? The enemy did not follow them
beyond the first shots. They took there
blankets a few haversacks & 3 by 4 loaves
of bread. This is the same place where
I was apprehensive of an attack the
last time I was out. North declares
that his legs did their utmost to run
for that time the chances for my
The boys only fell back a few rods returned to main
bed. The Col. solved my doubts abt friend
ten last night. He says that it is through mistake that my commission as I thought did not come. I began to suspect that I had pulled the wrong string somewhere. It is rather unlucky in this that if my bone had come when it ought it should have been senior to two to three, therefore outranked them, who are now senior to one. But says the papers will be along in a few days.

I well remember the first time I ever talked with Benson at the time when he would be 2d. of 3d. I would be 1st. Instead of that. It was the day after the battle of Blackburn's Ford. We were lying just on the back edge of the field expecting every minute that the shells would be dropping in amongst
us or that we should be called on to go down into the valley where we were oppress'd the day before. The light was very pale & sick, some others higher in rank than we did not seem at all eager for the conflict. Benson was on the right of the Co. I on the left, seeing him a little apart from the rest I crossed over & told him that some day we would command that Co. He was of the same opinion.

We called out the two Lieutenants below us & instructed them in some few things that they ought not be wholly unprepared should such an event happen on that day. If there had been a sharp engagement our precautions would not have been lost.
19th 30 minutes past one o'clock.

Half an hour ago we were called upon
ordered to be ready to move in an hour
with letters for one day at a perfect site.

I was sensible when I went to bed
at 8 last night. I did not sleep a
mark last night but have made
sure of three hours of the best sleep
night. "God keep the man who invented
sleep" &c. to Ponga. If I could but
hear a word from Kalamazoo to tell
me how my brother fares with the
measles I should be more at ease.

It is a very dangerous disease for him
I fear its effect on the lungs. One's
hopes & expectations for this life hang on
a slender thread. A small thing may
make the future worse than now.
I hope for the best. It is surprising how rowdy soldiers become even in the midst of the most solemn things. I cannot refrain from jesting with Benson & the others about the naked Benicia in particular who has recently been appointed Gd. of the Color Guard. Benicia has considerable Falstaff abt him. I think he would fight well enough when the time comes but he is not very anxious for the time.

Here now we are still at Camp Michie. It seems that we were only called up to act as reserve to some other troops which had gone down toward Richmond. There are not too happier men in the army than Benson & co. At every feastive board there sits a ghost.
of one thing I would be as content as I shall ever expect to be. Give me the assurance that all is well at Neavanna, job & I ask no more. P. Benson & I have now a Co. which we like & which likes us as well as we like them. We are both glad to ourselves, but am good favor with both General. Majors & the rest in general as far as we care to be.

There was Division Review at 12 at end of a march. It went well.
12 Regt. with the Trans. Artillery attached are as many as can be seen to any advantage by a spectator.
PD believe we shall move soon. It was reported that Heinigelman said to Richardson that the B. was the worst Regt. in all respects that there
was in his Division. If it had proved true, that he said so, I believe the law would have murdered him. Then they went to Gen. R. forthwith to find out. It proved to be exactly the contrary. For our Gen., sometimes like to cheat each other & I did not know but it might be true. P. S. if Gen. R. 


could only ride one hand to do & only he would be one of the finest 


taking office is never seen. He will always take hold of the mane with one hand to keep from falling off. He says he used to ride fairly well when he was in Mexico, & he can ride well enough now to suit him but the boy in the P. laughs a good deal about it. Col. P. B. cannot be beat in the army in this line but the Gen. and
jolting along like some clumsy old farmer. I believe the Col. is working to get this Regt. away from this brigade & from Gen. B. It would not break the hearts of the "Red Bulls." I don't dislike it very much but if I had to choose I should follow the Col. I like Gen. B. very much but after all Col. Poe in my opinion is the "Coming man." Gen. B. will undoubtedly be a Major Gen. before the war closes but Col. Poe is too full of lightening for them in the long run. He could do far better with this Regt. if it were away from the Gen. The Gen. is as a glorious good Col. but not equal in many things to Col. Poe. He must be 40 to 50 years of age Col. Poe.
28. There is nothing like young men for war. It is a hard matter to make the P. do anything that Gen. R. did not require. Stop.

29. "Gay is the life of a soldier man" so sings Sid. Penzler, but our P. for junior P. Brent, did not think so this morning. He was detailed with Benson and another officer for picket. He is a good young man, a distant relative of the Secretary, but with not quite enough original sin for a soldier. He has been in the Quartermaster's Department since he came into the army. He knows all as much military as the man in the moon. Benson says he shall have a corps drill.
But to return, he was detailed on picket. He had never heard bullet whistle, never been on picket anything of the sort. Never was on guard-slept on the ground or shot of rations. Benson loves him. Took great delight in informing him how he must conduct.

He told him that he must not sleep a wink (2 days nights) must make the post 4 times each night, must be very careful how he traveled around in the night or he would get shot. Must keep his hands on his things so as to be able to take them off at a moment's notice in case the cavalry should come down. Must keep in good condition.
but at the same time must not

The result was that he became so
erie that he could hardly sleep

The went off to bought

provisions enough to sustain men.

4 lbs. cheese, 4 loaves gingerbread

2 lbs. sweet crackers, 2 loaves bread

The kerosene to support of other articles all by Benson's direction.

Then they came to pack Benson,

he found that he could not get
half of them into a haversack.

Benson assisted him in this crisis by filling his own haversack,
thrusting the balance
dexterously into our one chest.
He was then told how very cold.
It would be night. He strapped an overcoat & 2 blankets on his back; not however without inquiring very seriously whether it was really necessary to make such a detestable mistake of himself. It would be just his luck to blunder around & get shot. I believe Benson would care very little if he did provided there was no other way of getting aid of him. I do not wish him quite so bad as that but I did my best to help him.

21st I am afraid there is going to be a graft in camp. Gen. R. was down here before breakfast this Morn.
to inquire whether I had heard anything about the D. Regt. morning. I was sorry he asked the question, but answered it with due readiness but with a good degree of caution. I told him what reports I had heard & that I did not know where they originated or that I knew nothing about it myself. He inquired whether they wanted to go. I told him no & by all means no unless they could return to his command in the spring. He then asked the more unpleasant question as to whether I was any one making application to have the Regt. moved or whether I had heard any such thing. I replied that the impression among the men was that Col. Poe was trying to get the
Regt. moved till the spring campaign opened. The Gen. at this gave his left shoulder a terrible thing & commenced chewing his under lip. I knew that there was a storm brewing. "Well I'll go to town & say myself to see all these things. If he & the Col. quarrel one or the other must leave. They can never live in sight of each other. The Gen. looked as savage as a mad bull."

The truth is I want to go if we can return in the spring. In fact I think I do any way. If Col. Poe gets the Regt. fairly into his hands we are fairly sure to be kept for the 3 years whether he wants us or not. There are 2 things which trouble the Col.
exceedingly & which he fears can never be remedied in the field.

1st. Stealing which in reality has always been encouraged by Gen. B--\n
thoughn in such a manner as to render him entirely safe.

2d. Negligence in guard duty which has existed so long that it seems impossible to remedy it unless the man can be brought within close walls. If we are discharged in 3 months I shall come out of the business with almost empty pockets. If we are kept Byars I shall have some spare money. The expenses for the first few months consumed nearly all the pay & leaves one with only a lot of military clothing equip-
ments ornaments which are of little value for any other purpose. I like Col. Poe & if I could be under him where he had absolute control for a few years should become a fairly thoroughly educated soldier. On our present position as if there is any fighting we shall see our full share I see it well done but there are a great many things for soldiers to learn besides that. They are perhaps on the battle field 4 or 5 days a year but on all the other days there are duties important ones to be performed. I very much dislike that there should be anything ungrateful in the matter toward Gen. B, which would injure his feelings or in any way detract from
The honor which is justly due him.

He made us perhaps as good a Col. Regt. as there was in the army. Col. Poe has improved us & would make us the best Regt. in the army regular in all. I suppose the Garabaldi guards are as good & perhaps better than the L.C. but I don't think there is another Regt. of Volos. equal to it.

And I really seemed considerable like home. I suppose it was because I washed & put on a clean shirt & did my own shaving. The business of the L.C. is all this inspection, guard mounting, dinner, reading newspapers, letter writing, &c. &c. playing &c.

I was told some rather encouraging things by Capt. Norvell.
Dr. Brent of our Co.,

To his dear friend Col. Poe tell Gen. B. that he was very glad Capt. May resigned when he did as he should otherwise most certainly have been obliged to request him to do so. That when he went home our Co. was in the worst condition of any in the Regt. except 5th. That now it was in the best condition of any except 1st. That there were no two officers in the Regt. who had discharged their duties in a more satisfactory manner than Benson & I. We have both got into good standing at head quarters & I believe we know pretty well how to profit by it. It do not pay for one to bull his head aga. everything that comes to him.
Mr. Benson & I have both had several chances to put on airs & spoil all this if we had done as some others have. Nothing has been required for which was not right in a military point of view & when we have been reprimanded (as both of us have more than once) we have received it (d---d hard work sometimes) as it is required a Lt. Officer should from his CO. with the most respectful deference & attention & I have replied in few words as possible avoiding all rhetorical flourishes & figures of speech and saving all the swearing till we were alone. There is nothing substituting in this war in any way consistent with marlines or self respect.
Anything like that is carefully avoided. Everyone, especially those with no more military experience than we are liable to be mistaken on points for which he will be sharply corrected. Nor is it always easy when you know your duty, to discharge it to the letter. It frequently depends on the action of many others, by those who are not under your immediate care. The old officers were inclined to oppose the colonel. Many things, were full of suggestions & arguments, & frequently disposed to obstruct. Many of them finding themselves badly mistaken have resigned. There is not one of them, who stand well in the colonel's estimation.
It is almost impossible for a man of 40 years of age, who is not fit for an officer, but has had no experience, to conform to the most rigid requirements of military rule and discipline. You can put such men into the ranks and drill them down after awhile. They know there is no escape while the officer flies for relief to the loophole of resignation.

23rd I am on picket tomorrow.

There is a good nice prospect of being up for the next two nights on short rations every little time. It has been raining and snowing all day in heavy squalls. I would rather go on picket than be on guard here. There are 16 prisoners with no safe place to keep.
them. Some of them are almost sure to escape. They do not often get outside the guard but they are liable to it requires a great deal of labor & trouble to take them. They are a despised set of fellows mean constant watching from the officers of the guard. If there was a good guard house which you could shut them into or if there was a good solid ball & chain to put on them they might be kept. I think these troubles are nearly over for the present. We all signed a request to be sent into some some some fort during the winter to drill on artillery.

Lt. Poe says we are going without doubt... I like it... I like the winter
quarters. I want to learn the drill, I want to see the Regt. under Col. Poe's control. The only draw back is the abolitionment & regret of Gen. R. I do hate to leave him. It will nearly break his heart. He has been to McClellan & the President is very ill, but, it is said, cannot succeed. He was down to our tent to stay a day or two, but made no allusion to our meeting. He has been traveling around among the tents nearly all the afternoon looking as if he had met a friend on earth. I swear I nearly cried to see the old veteran. I was almost sorry I signed the request. Some of the officers allege as a reason for
going that he is always in quarrel with his superior officers in that way getting into trouble. Keep him back. I think he is not apt to quarrel with others but he never quarrels with the D. I would be glad to help fight out if were necessary all his quarrels provided we could stay with him. We shall not find another man whom we shall like or who will like us as we do him, as we do him. Stop.

24th On picket - there coming of all the pickets from our Regt to-day. That ought to secure one better head quarters than I have. They are quarters near by which are good enough if I could occupy them but they are so close
to the line that it is not safe. My Christmas will have to be spent here. This may be the last of guard for this winter. I wait with patience for the development of affairs. Our camp can be plainly seen from here but is more than 5 miles off.

23rd. The night passed off imperfectly quiet. I made the rounds soon after dark. About 11 P.M. just before daylight. It was a keen frosty night & the men were wide awake. They kept small fires well covered burning. They would rather be shot than starve, freeze to death. I stayed with the boys of our Co. till after 1 A.M. on post. When I had completed the rounds...
It was 10 o'clock & I went up to the general headquarters & slept for a short time. It is all the first time since I left that I have allowed to sleep in a house & it made me sick this time. I presume it was the warm close air. I was very sick for a short time but soon felt better as soon as I got into the open air. I don't believe I can ever learn to live in a house again. I was always rather inclined to the Indian style of living & soldiering is an excellent way to cultivate such a propensity. It seems impossible for me to take cold or what I may. There was a report of the rascals came up within 1/2
mile of the 87. Last night heard away some things from a house, I heard there skimmishness but did not at the time believe it was them. Have been around to all the house in this vicinity to see the ladies. Poor set. Only saw 2 who looked decent. One reminded me very much of an old acquaintance whose name I will not now mention. The other, Jenny, had thus early at the sweet age of 16) been unfortunate. She went to the area where some sad rascal in the short space of 3 hours, as she says, stole both her heart & virginity, while she did not even so much as learn his name or business.
She never had the luck to see him afterwards. The consequence was that all the time the soldiers came she enlisted a recruit in an independent lot of her own. When her mother had done scolding her father done swearing at their ill luck they being poor took her home & took care of her.

The soldiers will ask occasionally where her husband is & she is foolish enough to tell them she never had any. They however take a great liking to her boy on account of the unpopular way in which, without any fault of his own, he became a citizen of the old Dominion. I believe the title of
money which the soldiers gave him more than half support the whole family. Jenny was unfortunate in her company once & she might be in a safer locality than she is now. Soldiers soon acquire a wonderfully free & easy temper all things & war is pretty sure to reduce the morals of every thing it comes in contact with, officers excepted. I found on further examination that Jenny's case is not common to be accidental. There are two other very similar which have come to my knowledge since & all within a circle of 5 miles. At Enthuones the law on this is the worst & country for accidents that I ever heard
of. The pines will someday not
far off, conquer Virginia if we
do not. There are the densest
growth of small pines I ever
saw on what not many years
ago were cultivated fields.
The pines are all scrubby &
seldom go higher than 40 ft.
In thickets where the trees are
6 inches through you can
still see the marks of the
plow & the ridges formed
along the rows of corn can
be distinctly traced. In going
through these thickets one
will occasionally find the
remains of fences so rolled
as to be almost indistinguish-
able. There are some
fields but just abandoned in which the trees are not more than 11/2 feet high but just as thick as they can stand. Stop

26th 6 P.M. at home once more. I got in at one P.M. I have not been more fatigued since I enlisted. I have had no real sleep for the last two nights & have been on my feet the greater part of the time for 26 hours. I aimed to find all things uncertain. The Col. & Gen. have quarreled. Both had been to Washington & the Col. started to go again.
this m. the gen. could not go this time so he issued another forbidding col. p. to leave camp without his permission.

lt. col. barnard is at washing as i am told straining to prevent our removal. i know the officers of the other regt. in the brigade & gen. hering of man are all working at it. the latter expects that we will some day do hard fighting enough someday to win him great credit. the former like to have us to go ahead and all the hard places? we are called the best regt. in the service for picket duty as others say themselves
that they like to have us along to
leave on. Lt. Col. Beach of the 5th
Brig. told me this last night
adding that they all very well
knew that we were the
most steady & reliable Regt.
in this part of the army & that
the removal of it it would be
felt by more or less by all the
troops in Va. In short that he
demed it would be a great mis-
pativity to the public service.
I fear that the quarrel will get
so high that we shall lose our
lot. God save us from that
I should feel like wearing my
sword bottom upward during
the rest of my life.
It is also reported that Gen. R. is soon to be Major Gen. If this be true I should think I do in fact believe that he will be pacified by consent that the Col. go where he pleases within Col. P. went to him yesterday to have him sign a paper laying the whole matter fairly before them at headquarters. I won't sign your paper when the D. leaves I am ready to go home. Col. P. do said Gen. R. is pretty full of vindictiveness & obstinacy but he don't go it blind. I have artfully suggested to Gen. R. that he was soon to be Major Gen. it would be so much
removed from the Pet-banks hardly that he would feel their absence.

The difference between their presence & absence, I am sure, did believe that but concluded to sign the papers. It is a hard ease to be called on to choose between Col. P & Gen. B. but I have taken the former. It would not be a small thing for Benson to be under a Major Gen. who would come to our tent or three times per week & stay half an hour at a time & to be as we are on the most desirable terms with his staff? We could hardly ask more than would be given with a 1/2 of the suit.
were blessed with a little cleverness, but at the same time with modesty & bashfulness of manner. This is a great thing to leave but nevertheless the thing is decided. All this I propose to give up when the time comes for the polished science, the serene accuracy, the keen refinements, the rare but graceful compliments, the cool, steady, philosophic courage (almost fierceness) of our young men. I found also on arriving that they had the comfortable report in camp that I got three bullets through one the night before. Sir P. expressed great sorrow saying...
he hoped I was not hurt but
that I would get every rag of
clothes shot off me. He guessed
that would take some of the trick
edens out of one. 8½-

27th. Cold, raw, windy day.
I came off quicker in good time.
We have a good joke on Benson.
He gave Jenny $3.00 for the
privilege of training her boy.
He called him Dr. Prentice.
Jenny seemed greatly pleased
with the name but I
changed it as soon as B. was
gone. I called it after him. Benson
swears he will kill the young
one if she does not change the
name again. Our Exhibition
guard tomorrow. He will have a joyful time. We do not dare send him down to the Co. alone for fear that they will raise the devil with him in some way. I have not been very well to day but am going to be to morrow. I read a letter from Arthur at home. All is well & I am well content. Benson had a letter from Liobs. May it night in which he says that it is ten to one that he will see Kandy the next time he sees him. He & Kandy have fallen out in respect to their bravery each accusing the other with cowardice. I'll we have seen sharper fighting than we
I have yet to look up on an officer having every much as I should on a woman's virtue. When much is said of either I look upon it with suspicion. It seems to me if they had known or thought how quick men are in times danger to declaim the slightest word, look or action which is not is doubtful, they would both have been more careful. They are both likely to tell considerable truths which might not otherwise have become public.

28th: Walker warm & pleasant. I rather pity Seward. He is an enemy Lyman to day. He deal
of trouble he has. At guard mounting he gave the order "Inspection arms" while the guns were at shoulder. Inspected arms as quickly as possible, took his post after inspection two paces in rear of the front rank; "Officer of guard" take take his post covered the Adjutant. He then neglected to present arms to the officer of the day when he should.

The guard stood at present Adjutant shout "Officer of guard present arms"! He either did not hear it or was too scared to obey."
rounded the Adjutant fairly
black in the face. Deward
made a dive with his sword
as if he were trying to spear
apple off a tree with a pole
if it had been sharp would
have cut a drummer's head
off with it when he brought it
back to a shoulder. As it was
however he only knocked him
down on to one knee. At noon
he swore he nearly ready to resign
he was quite. He says he
will either go to a convent or be
come a detective policeman.
He told all the guards this Mr.
that they must not leave the
guard tent without his permit.
score. In less than 10 minutes they were all gone but one, seventeen prisoners asked per mission all at the same time to go after some necessary article. At supper time 2 prisoners had escaped. He was fairly crazy—had been on the jump every minute, was nearly tried to death, supposed he would be arrested &c. Nine P.M. Steward has just been here saying the most horrible oaths. Boren had just escaped & 3 others with him. He swears that he would give $100 for the privilege of shooting half the prisoners & he would give $100.
Dec

to any man who would insure their presence in the morning, I don't believe there was ever a man on the rack in more misery than he is. He says he believes they must know that he is green.

29th 3 P.M. Walker very fine. The Chaplain is preaching to the prisoners over opposite our tent. The only way he can get a congregation is to take those who are under arrest. He threatens to have the whole Regt. arrested thought to divine service. He says it is utterly devoid of religious enthusiasm, came off barely alive this
morning. Mason & Hollis are to begin. I presume it is right the best thing that can be done in our present situation. As soon as this is over I would however pluck John Bull's whiskers till he would roar.

I do not believe Bull would have dared to fight. If he had I think Russia & U.S. could have divided his possessions in N.A. in a manner which would have reminded him of 1776. It is better perhaps to end this affair which we have already on hand. When this is over there will be a great deal army of soldiers who will be ready for almost.
any enterprise. I obtained quite a notoriety among the privates of this Regt. when on picket last time by making a soldier pay $4.00 for stealing a pig. They swear it is the hardest thing they ever heard of. They pretty much all know me now & scan swear awfully at me when I am gone. I notice however that they keep in their places pretty well when I am present. Col. A. K. & mos. of K. like one but the rest of them hate me worse than the devil. Col. P. says that Benson & I are the only officers who try to live up to their duty & we don't more than half succeed. It is pretty
hard work - uphill business for us when we are alone. But when we happen to be on duty together we cannot make things go to suit us. So I go like a clock.

I would rather like it if he & I could take some of these co's for a week or two. We are going to have it arranged if possible so that he can be officer of the day & I officer of the guard at the same time so that we can learn the guard & prisoners. We are not offensive by any means & do not go an inch beyond the regulations of the Regular army nor do we intend to stop an inch short of...
Them. It is for better for officer & soldier that the regulations should be enforced. There has not been one loo in the guard house for more than a month & I do not believe there will be in 3 months. They are kept the strictest of any loo in the Rgt. Loc where things are at loose ends have from 3 to 6 in the guard house all the time. The sooner they make up their minds that they are soldiers & not citizens the better it will be for all concerned. It rather surprises me that Benson & I ever agreed. He disliked each other when we
or at least I did him when we came into the co. at St. Way,
Camp Scott for more than 2 weeks we never agreed well till we
both got mad at enego. After Bull Run we agreed still better.
We had then a common object to work for—commissions.
When these were obtained both each for a time needed the other's
assistance to sustain him in the many new duties and
few troubles which at once devolved upon us. We however
found it as yet convenient to labor without a part of the thing was profitable and
our present circumstances
That he possesses in a high degree the qualities of an officer cannot be denied. His natural good qualities, strengthened in early life by an exemplary education, have not been wholly obscured by the bad company which he has since kept for a large part of the time. He has improved in conduct & company very much since he enlisted. I believe he will reform entirely. He has a father & many other relatives of the highest respectability & abundant wealth. He has only to behave himself he can have every advantage which heart can wish.
Nov 23  Rice Pudding  3 0
  4 " Crackers  2 50
  4 " Provisions  2 68 60
  4 "  Handles  60
  24 " Coffee & Flour  50
  "  Turnips  10
  "  Butter  25
  25 " Butter  25
  28 " Benson & Aid  9 90
  29 Sunday's  70
  30 " Meat & Fish  2 08
  "  Sea  50
  12 " Crackers, Pie &e  37 37
  4 " Oysters Benson  37
  4 " Sausages  1 00
  5 " Benson  3 50
  6 " Oysters  3 50
Dec 6 Store &c 10 11
" " Provisions 1 67
" " Expenses - all store &c 3 25
7 Candles 60

Dec 7th Paid Noble 82 3/4 Dec 9

Dec 8th 8 5/10th Dec 12

Dec 14th 1861

Dec 1st 4th Boarding with Noble 91
21 6 25
23 50

Mar 2nd Note due Dec 8th
I thought once that I would at least suffer him to go his downward way so that he might be out of my path. I might have hastened his journey very much.

Before I had really made up my mind to do this our relations brought us near contact.

I found that he liked me better than I did him; he might be a useful friend, he is a younger man than I am, I could assist him in such matters might so him (they have) that it would be for my own interest to assist him. I resolved to do it for a while at least & the longer I did so the more inclined I was...
to continue. We have helped each other on more than one occasion very materially. There are some wide differences of opinion between us, we occasionally get vexed at each other but on the whole there are no two officers in the Regt. who hang to each other & who like to be together on duty as well as we. We have both been 30 times on the point of quarrelling but always concluded that the necessity of the case did not demand it. He is exceedingly obstinate & I don’t like to yield consequently the danger of a quarrel. If I were sure that I could thrash him I’d think it would have come long ago.
W.H. Benson promoted Lcpl., Co. B.
J.W. Brooks 1st Smt.-Co. D.
J.H. Freeman 1st Co. C.
Plumb 2nd Co. D.
Schultz 2nd Co. C.
W.H. Seward 2nd Co. F.

1921  9  17

I would not hesitate to accept it if he would commence it but he won't. I do not have the slightest idea of any of our small affairs. Furthermore, it would be very foolish for us both to get court martialed.

Benson left Kansas 8 years ago without his parents' consent. He was there 4 years in the employ of a man who was a large business man, but was a radical & took plans to construct others. During that time he became high & moved in the best society. He then joined a West expedition & spent some time on the plains as a sort of messenger. There he fell into some company & it seems to me good in K.

He then returned to K. & fell into still worse company. He went into a drinking & billiard saloon - general gambling house & great resort for prostitutes & B.

The good company he once kept at one time turned their backs on him. This drunk man still sleeps down. He looks to boxing & once got so far
as to go into training for a prize fight. This lowered him
in the estimation of all to the level of the clab with whom he asso-
ciated. He felt the degradation but seemed to have no thought
of remediying it by reformation. At this stage of affairs he
enlisted.

He never drank much not at all now, seldom games,
In fact leads a very way
unrespective life. All that he
necessary is for him to
keep away from those holes & he will be what he
ought. He has a remarkable
degree of control over himself
& can do so if he will
He assured me with the
almost sincerity not today
since that he would never
resign to such business while
he loved.
Frank Talfin died Oct. 15, at Georgetown Hospital.

George P. West discharged Dec. 2, 1861, Disability.

Geo. W. Greco, 2d Lt. of D.
Robt A. Burch, " " of B.
Geo. Freeman, " " of C.
Mahon, " " of K.
John Beidler, 1st " of K.
Rich. Eldred, " " of K.
Emil Moore's Adjutant.

J. B. McCown, Capt. of I.

Capt. Dwight May resigned Dec. 4, 1861.

Orderly:
Prof. Geo. A. Southworth, to Sergt.

Deymorin $100
Veedes $100
Lowes $200

Premiere owes me $60.60
Noteh owes me $17.00

John S. Weiner, Morris W. Ford, Thomas R. Slocombe, Oscar W. Clark
Recruito, Nov. 6th, 1861

Charles M. Chase discharged by reason of disability Dec. 1861