

Camp Stonewall Brig
Dec 29th 1863

Dear Sister:

I feel tonight like taking off gloves and pitching in to give you a regular down scolding. Two weeks have gone by and still no letter from home. I would let you know I am still on "terra firma" and as glad as ever to receive one of your sunny epistles, for they are indeed as a ray of sunshine in these dark and troublesome times. How eagerly we all look for the mails and how happy to get letters none but a soldier can tell. But I will reprove you for a few days but must insist that you make up for lost time by writing longer letters. I want no more half sheets. We are at last in winter quarters. I have been very busy for two days building me a hut; will try to finish tomorrow and then I will feel more at home.

We have all been looking for Mr. Milleton for some days, but hear that the canal is broken so have in some measure given him out until the rainy season is past for it has been raining here incessantly for two or three days and suppose that you are visited with a similar blessing. How did you spend your Christmas? I was on picket in the Rapidan, had Confed. bacon and bread for breakfast, and bread and bacon for dinner, and for supper nothing.

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Hope you fared more sumptuously. Some of our officers disgraced themselves by getting drunk. Why is it (the birthday, or our Lord and Saviour) should be especially set apart to be thus desecrated. Certainly it should be a day of rejoicing to us. But that it should be thus spent, how disgraceful and sinful.

I have heard that Miss Kate Compton is married and that to Lieut. Smith of V.M.I. Is it true? Marrying seems to have gotten to be quite a mania with the Lexington ladies. I wonder if Miss Barclay will not soon be off. I expect it would be a good idea for me to employ an agent to act for me before the crop is all sent to market. Will you consent to act for me? If so, do not pick an inferior article, I would prefer to wait for the next season, I understand that there is a good show for the growing crop.

Have you heard from Elnora lately? Give my love the next time you write. I am ashamed to write myself after so long a time. I expect Watson will have to come into service again as I see Congress is after the substitutes gents. with a sharp pole. Love to all friends. Good bye,

A.T. Barclay