

Camp Stonewall Brig

Feb 10th 1864

Dear Homefolks:

You no doubt have imagined that I have forgotten you, and that the Yanks have gotten me, but neither is the case. I have just returned from an eight day picket on the Rapid Ann where it was impossible to write and though I feel somewhat tired will endeavor to write tonight for the mail tomorrow. I have received two letters since my arrival in camp, one from Han. written at Mr. Patton's which as it was first on docket, I will answer first. As to your insinuations of my hiring McClelland to brag for me, I have only to say that he left too soon after I get here or perhaps I would have done so. And I would like to know how you know that it is all fudge.

So Miss Mickey could not stand it and called to see me and instead of being sorry that I was not there I am truly glad I was in a different climate, for I know that I would have gotten a deserved blessing and as I do not like to deal in left handed compliments there might have been a blow up and my tobacco interest would have gone up. You ask me how I like Miss S. What would you not give to know? I am sorry to hear of Col. Jordan's death. It will no doubt be a great affliction to them all and especially as he committed suicide. May God comfort them all.

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The other letter was from Mother, which I have just finished reading. I am very thankful to you for your excellent advice. Do you think that I could for one moment think of returning to the beggarly elements of this world after enjoying the sweets of this Christian life? I do from my heart believe that I have been brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and though I am exposed to great temptations still His grace is sufficient for me and I never cease to pray that He will keep me in the straight and narrow path that leadeth to heaven, and I trust and believe that you never lift up your heart to the mercy seat of God without remembering your absent son. And has He not promised to hear our prayers? Oh do not for one moment believe that I could be induced to forsake the cause of Christ; it is the only thing that sheds any light on this dark cloud of war, the only thing that smooths my rugged pathway. I will ever endeavor to fix my eye upon the cross of Christ as a mariner to his needle, until I shall safely arrive at last in heaven. The life of a Christian must be dear to any one, but how doubly dear it is to a soldier. How sweet it is to feel that I am a Christian when all is dark and gloomy around me. The light that emanates from the cross of Christ drives away this gloom

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and makes my heart so light and happy. What perfect happiness we sometimes feel, but the devil tempts us and we do not always feel so. Oh that we were all Christians! Then this cloud of war would pass away, and the bright rainbow of Peace would soon shoot across our political sky, but our people seem to have all gone astray and riches seem to be their only thought, so they are not exposed to the fury of war, they care very little for the poor soldiers. But thank God there are some who think of us, some whose thoughts are turned to the absent one far far away from home, and oh, how dear is the thought that they think of us. Even now your thoughts may be of me and your prayers ascending to heaven in my behalf. I thank God for these kind and loving friends and though separated from them our imaginations can call up their loved form and faces. I have just had another manifestation of His mercy towards me in being safely spared through the battle of the other day, though it was not a severe fight, it requires only one ball to end our lives and many a

one passed harmlessly by. That is the time it is to feel how sweet it is to be a Christian. When the balls are flying thick around you and dealing death all around,

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to commit yourself into His care, that He has power to hurl by harmless, the missels of death. An an old Christian warrior once said "every bullet has its billet"; I think is eminently true.

But as I am sleepy and tired I will close. You have no doubt seen a better description of the late fight than I can give. I may give you my official report in my next. Excuse this scratch. I believe I am getting more careless about my writing every day but I console myself by saying that all great men wrote badly.

Give my love to all friends,

Yours affectionately

A.T.B.