

Camp Stonewall Brig

Feb 22nd [1864]

Dear Sister:

I received your letter a day or so ago, but as you were not prompt in answering, I thought I would just pay you back in your coin, so put it off until today. And as we will have to take another tour of picket duty day after tomorrow you will have to make this answer for a week or ten days perhaps. We are indeed on picket a great part of our time, in camp sixteen days and on picket eight. I have written to a certain old maid in Lexington by her own request and have waited patiently a month for an answer and as yet received none, so if you see her just tell her for me, that the next one I write she will perhaps answer. You need not alarm yourself in regard to the tobacco interest, as the gent with the spectacles was none other than her brother, so you see that I am posted in that quarter and fear no interference in regard to any investment I may desire to make.

I am greatly surprised at Miss Mary marrying Lou Davidson. I hear that he does nothing else but drink all the time. So her brothers and father must have seen him, and consequently she must have known how worthless he is...I suppose the gay cavaliers are sweeping everything before them and winning many a susceptible lassies heart by their dashing charges.

[Page 2]

You must have had quite a gay time carrying Mc. up in the stage on your lap, I suppose he is quite a respectable boy as far as regards size and badness.

What does Mr. Patton do in regard to the substitute act and how does he manage to keep out? We received our first installment of conscripts yesterday and I thought at the time as the regiment were whooping and making all sorts of fun over them that some of them would feel cheap if they should find some kinfolk among the number so I kept mute as a mice and pictured to myself McTanner walking along in the crowd. Poor men I pity them, they seem to think that the army is the last place in the world to have to come to and cannot reconcile the idea that this is to be their home until we shall have achieved our independence, but I suppose they realize the poets idea when he said,

"Tis home where'ere the heart is,
Where'ere its living pleasures dwell,
In lonely cabin or princely hall
In forest dell or hermit cell."

Patriotism is at considerable discount with them and only equals Confederate Shuck. By the way I expect our Shuck will considerable improve owing to the recent legislature of our Congress. All honor to our noble Congress who tax everything and put everybody into the army but themselves.

[Page 3]

But I suppose they think that the Confederacy is about played out in that thing which they call talent and do not think that it would be advisable to expose themselves to the bullets of the Yanks which slay without fear, favor or affection. But I think he would be a fool indeed who would not be able, if he had the power, to devise means for his own safety. But the recent acts of Congress seem to meet with general favor and even the ever-fault-finding Examiner seems to be for once half pleased. I am glad to see the tone of the people is becoming more courageous and more worthy

of Southerners battling for freedom and all that men hold dear. But look at our noble army voluntarily reenlisting for the war, none are found who shirk from their duty. On the other hand look at the Yankees offering enormous bounties and getting so few soldiers at that. Is not our cause brighter than it has ever been? God seems to be smiling upon us. We can never be conquered, I trust in God, and in our own brave legions. I think that the beginning of the end can now be seen and before the snows of next winter, peace, honorable and lasting shall smile sweetly upon us. God grant that my hopes may not be wrong. But it is the general opinion in the army. Col. Terry said today he firmly believed that we would have peace before July.

[Page 4]

We have been having quite an interesting series of meetings lately and they still progress. They are conducted by Rev. Mr. Baker of Staunton, who is very plain but I think a good man. I hope they may be attended with good results. We have also had some interesting meetings of our association since my return. Expect to have the Rev. Dr. Hoge to address us in a week or so.

All are gone to bed so I will close and turn in too. May God bless you all. Your bro --

A.T. Barclay