

Camp Griffin March 7th 1862

Dear Harriet

your ever welcome letter bearing date Feb 28 came to hand last evening & was perused with the usual degree of satisfaction. How miserable I should be if I could not hear from you. though we can not converse face to face at the present time we can by aid of pen correspondence to each other (though hundreds of miles stretch out between us) & convey ideas that are interesting & pleasing especially to one in my situation in an enemies country far from the object of my affection. I experience a great deal of real enjoyment in perusing your letters. I have often heard said that lovers lost or were apt to lose their love to some extent when absent from each other any great length of time. this saying does not fit my case, for the longer I am absent from you the more perfect you seem to me. I thought when at home that I loved you as much as possible for one to

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love, but I am aware of the fact that the longer I am absent from you the dearer you seem to me, there is scarce an hour passes but what I think of you. In your letter you seem to think that I estimate your perfection to highly, but I think not. I dont suppose that you are exactly perfect in the strict sense of the term but I think you come as near to it as any one I know. I wish that I was as perfect as you are. I am surrounded by all kinds of vice but I intend to return to my home with as good morals as when I left. I know that if my morality becomes impaired that I shall not merit your loving hand which I hope to possess it at some future day. at all events I am willing to acknowledge you my better half. Oh excuse me I am a little to fast I mean that I hope to be able at some future day to call you so. I know your generous disposition will compel you to overlook my little imperfections & wrong sayings for I know that I have said that to you that I ought not to have said. for example one eve when we were going down to singing school 2 years ago this winter, my mind was somewhat troubled & I said more than I ought

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to, though I did not intend to hurt your feelings in the least. You know this loving business is a little delicate in its first stages especially to one of my temperament, but enough of this. I am enjoying very good health at the present time I never enjoyed such perfect health six months or nearly that in succession in my life, at least I have no recollection of it I was weighed today & would tell you how much I weighed if I thought you would not laugh at me as you did once before you naughty girl. but I will venture to tell you., I weigh 172 lbs & a fraction more in my dress coat minus a vest 25 lbs more than when I enlisted. the Glover boys are all well except Hobart he is sick in the Hospital with the fever he has been quite sick but is getting along well. Edward is working in the cook tent he was very still & steady for the first 2 or 3 months but he is now more jolly & appears to enjoy himself now quite well. Yesterday Elbert Nye & I obtained passes & went to Alexandria the city where Col Ellsworth was shot by a man named Jackson last summer

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we went into the house. there is a flag staff on one corner of the building the very one that Col Ellsworth hauled down the secesh flag from & raised the stars & stripes in place of. Col Ellsworth was Col of the fire Zouaves Alexandria is quite a large city on the Potomac on the Va side about 16 miles from our encampment we went on foot over near Falls Church a distance of 5 or 6 miles which brought us to the Railroad we there took the cars for Alex a distance of ten miles. our ride was free soldiers all go free on that road. we saw a good many steam boats & schooners also towboats & skiffs. We had a good time. we intended to ride back on the 5 oclock train but the 5 oclock train proved to be a 4 oclock one & we got left, so we had to foot it. after walking on the track 7 miles we concluded to go out of our way a half mile

on to munsons hill where the 1st N. Hampshire Battery is stationed. Alfred Crosbry who used to live in Glover was there he is saddler for that Battery. We stopped over night & returned this morn which is Sunday you will notice by the date of this that I commenced this Friday. We had services on the Parade ground this forenoon a minister from St Johnsbury preached to us the Reg formed in a hollow square. the minister singers & field officers

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standing inside
the square.

I enclose this
ring for you not because
I think it anything very nice or
beautiful. but it is one of my own
manufacture wholly so. I whittled it
out of cocoa nut shell & by the aid of a
file I cut a piece from a 8 cent piece &
fitted it in the4 top as you see. I have
made 3 rings one that I intend to send
to Emily one that I wear & this one that
I send to you. our boys have made a
good many & sent home. In regard to
slavery I think it will receive a death
blow before peace is declared Mr Lincoln
advocates the gradual emancipation of
the slaves. In regard to H Pages writing
a friendly letter to you. it is perfectly,
right for you to answer it. receive this
from your lover Dan

Topics include: courtship, morals, sightseeing in Alexandria, health, slavery

Transcribed by Gemma Philcox

Head-Quarters 6th Vermont Regiment
Company D
Camp Near Newport News
March 31st 1862

Dear Harriet, I have not received an answer to the letter that I wrote you 3 weeks yesterday. Perhaps you have not received it, or if you have received & answered it it has not reached me yet. It is rumored that there is no mail matter allowed to leave Washington for a certain number of days, this if so is to prevent the rebels from knowing the movements of our army. The next day after I wrote you the Great army of the Potomas advanced about 10 miles in the direction of Mannassas. we encamped about 3 miles from Fairfax Court House. it was quite rainy in the A.M.

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which made it muddy & hard walking. & as we were each well loaded with a knapsack filled with 1 heavy wool blanket 1 rubber blanket 1 over & 1 fatigue coat, 1 shirt 1 pr drawers portfolio & some other little trinkets, 2 days rations in haversack, canteen, cartridge box & belts with 40 rounds of ball cartridges & a gun & bayonet we were somewhat fatigued when we got to our journeys end. We are provided with small linnen tents 1 for every 4 men they are in 2 pieces which button together at the top. when stuck up they resemble the roof of a house. they make quite a comfortable shelter to crawl under in a climate like this. We stopped there untill the next Saturday when we started toward Alexandria by way of Fairfax Court House. it commenced raining when we were at F. C. H. waiting for other regts to pass. it rained most of the time during the day & night. after marching about 15 miles we turned into a piece of pine woods for the night

were thoroughly drenched with rain

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I was wet through long before we halted about the time we stopped it rained harder than ever my boots were full of water+ & I felt cold & chilly. others were in as bad or even worse condition than I was. some were inclined to curl up by a tree they did not seem to care whether they lived or died (it was a cold rain) I knew that I must do something to stir my blood so I went with several other to get some rails when I got back with my rails I felt better. it was hard starting a fire but we succeeded in doing so after a while. We mixed our rails with green logs as large as 3 or 4 of us could carry in a little while we had a regular log heap fire our shanties were open in front so that the fire could shine in & dry our clothes. as the ground was level the soil is such that the water was 2 or 3 inches deep all over the grounds. we cut pine poles 3 or 4 inches in diameter for a floor to our hovel

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& covered them with brush we then spread our blankets & sought nature's kind restorer sleep I slept soundly several hours. when I awoke the steam was rising from my wet clothing in large quantities. I felt much refreshed & strange to say I didnt take cold but few of Comp did. Sunday the 23d we marched to Alexandria & went on board the steamboat Catskill. thousands of soldiers embarked that day. thousands went the week before. I have not time to give the particulars of our voyage but Tuesday morn when we awoke we found ourselves ankored near Fortress Monroe

We ran up to the wharf by the fort & stopped some time but did not get off. the old Fortress is a strong costly looking Institution with many heavy guns mounted on the top & judging from the large number of port holes in her massive walls she has a large number of guns inside. the Union & Floyd guns are on the outside elevated on heaps of sand they are monsters to behold We landed at Hampton about 2 miles from F. Monroe. the next Thursday we marched up James river about 15 miles & drove in the rebel pickets a part of the army went by Big Bethel and drove the rebels without fighting. the next morn we marched

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back about 6 miles to our present encampment. This is a beautiful country very level & free from stone I think the soil is very fertile & productive though many beautiful fields have been poorly cultivated & has become somewhat exhausted. I think if it could be cultivated like our New England soil it would yield a bountiful reward Peach trees are in blossom here & have been for several days. I am well some of the boys are some unwell H Bliss & Z Bickford are in the Hospital. We are now about 180 miles fom Camp Griffin. As there is not much regularity about the mail & we are moving about you need not expect to hear from me very often. Direct letters as usual & they will find

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me after a while. Since I commenced this letter I received your ever welcome

letter which gave me great pleasure
When you write write all the news
Day before yesterday I went over to
Newport News I saw the wrecks of
the Congress & Cumberland which
were sunk by the rebel Steamer
Merrimac. they are but few rods
from shore. the Cumberlands
masts stick out of the water
20 or 30 feet. the Congress was
nearly all burnt but enough to
left to mark the spot. I must
draw this piece of pencil marks to
a close. I fear you cant read all
of this, but as I have no ink I
have to use a pencil. Receive
from your lover Dan

Topics include: advance of the Army of the Potomac to Fairfax Court House, camping conditions, voyage to and description of Fort Monroe, skirmishes with rebels, viewing the wrecks of the Congress and the Cumberland at Newport News

Transcribed by Gemma Philcox