



MSS295 Thomas M. Reynolds letters to Louisa J. Seward, American Civil War Digital Collections: Letters, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.

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Transcriptions by Center for Digital Collections staff.

Camp Gilpin Gloucester Pt. Va.
Febry 17th 1863

My Dearest Lou

Again, I commence the pleasing task of writing you. The hour is a favorable one. It has been raining constantly for two days, and to night it almost pours, rendering all things dreary, save the cheerful fire near by.

It is just such an evening as causes the Soldier to feel that he is, as it were, an outcast, a wanderer, alone. The dear faces that once smiled on him, come back again, and amid the storm he fancies he hears their merry voices,

Oh that it were not fancy alone that paints the joyous scene! But alas it must be so. These rude homes of ours, can be ~~be~~ illuminated by no other smile ^{than} that which comes to us in reverie, no voice of affection shall greet my ears. Save in the stilly hour of night, as I wander in dreamland!

Lou do you ever sympathize with the Soldier? A foolish question perhaps you think for me to ask I who have never yet ^{been} engaged in a single Battle. but it is not in the Battles din or the excitement of the advance, that the soldier needs sympathy it is in the camp. for here he has time to reflect - here it is, that his life of exile, possesses all its horrors.

I had rather spend a month in marching or fighting, than a week in camp, with a stormy sky, like that we now enjoy. But I fear this will not interest you. I know I have your sympathy. why reprove.

One thing Lou which ^{perhaps} makes me have the horrors is that my particular friend, Lieut. Challenger Co. K, has almost deserted me owing to the fact that his wife came down three days since and therefore he finds his home

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to possess greater charms, than the cheerless abode of his friend Tom. His wife is a very fine Lady and I consented to give him up, knowing that he at least was happy. I called on them yesterday evening, and after I was seated I found that my boots were outside my pants & my hat yet on my head. I of course apologized and plead camp life in defence of my rudeness. After my confusion was over, caused by the presence of so rare a creature (a Lady) I felt extremely well, and about nine in the evening I returned to my tent, conscious of having seen two happy persons this side the Potomac.

Perhaps I envied them, I do not know; However I recollect of sighing heavily while on my way home. But enough of my woes, you will think I am homesick, and I never intend to admit that.

We had a very interesting time in Camp on night before last. Our Picket line was attacked by the Rebels, about 9 o'clock. the Long roll was beat immediately and the Regiment formed in line. It was so extremely dark you could scarcely see the man by your side. The greatest excitement prevailed every one expected they would fire into us at once. The Colonel ordered all our tents pulled down, and we were marched into the Fort near by. We finally reached the fort, it being difficult to march in the dark, and taken our position behind the parapet. Here we waited patiently for their attack, but they came not. It rained all the time and I got very wet. After a silent watch of 2 1/2 hours we marched back to Camp, erected our tents again and turned in for the night. The next morning we learned that the Rebs. [end underline] fired about fifty rounds at our pickets (who returned the fire), and then ^{they} skedaddled back again.

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Thus ended the last fight on Gloucester Point, I will add (if you will not charge me with being vain), that Co. H, was in line near two minutes before any other company of the Regt. which is quite an honor, to the Company at least. But probably you are not soldier enough to understand these things. I will explain fully when I return. And here I will remark, that if we remain here, I can get home for ten days, in the course of a few weeks. I wish your opinion as to whether I shall come or not. I sometimes think I had better remain here, for it will take one third of my time to go & return, the balance I would have to divide between your home and mine. So you perceive that I would have but a short time, and of course it would storm. you know that's my luck. However let me hear from you soon.

I have received two letters from you within a week. I need but say, that I should be happy if I could always receive them thus often. I should have written to ^{you} last week, but was on picket and therefore could not. You wished me to tell you the real cause of my failing to write, some time since. I can but answer as I did then, I do not know of any cause, if I did I would surely not conceal it from you. Your information in relation to Mr Wilson & Em Bradley astonishes me, I should never ^{have} dreamed of such a thing. I am glad you feel so confident of my safety. I have always felt that I should be spared to see this Rebellion crushed, and permitted to realize those dreams of the future, which even now prompt my every action. You ask my opinion in relation to your going to school in the summer. I of course will leave it with you entirely. You know I am an advocate of study, and would always advise its pursuance. I therefore say to you

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embrace ^{for acquiring knowledge} all opportunities. I would be glad myself to be under such a teacher as Mr. Ridgely. You recollect that I used to insist on your attending Central College and as Mr. Ridgely is a Married man I shall by no means, get jealous. Now Lou you have my consent, act as you think proper. I received a letter from Bob Orrell some days since, but he did not mention your name, so you will have to tell me the story yourself. I will look for it next time. He told me that John Lee started the report of my being wounded, I can't imagine why he should thus misrepresent my affairs. I have nearly forgotten the substance of my letter to Bob Orrell, but I think I spoke of the horrors of a Bachelors life and probably of the joys of a home made happy by another's smile. I generally write a large amount of nonsense and I understand that you read all the letter, if so, I need not relate the topics. I am glad that even a letter of mine should meet your eye, at a party where I would have been thrice happy to greet you. Now it is hard to be thus separated. I sometimes feel it to be more than I can endure. But who is there that knows the sacrifices they are able to make until the trial comes. It is the province of the youth (of both sexes,) of today to endure Oh may we learn to submit.

I must close shortly. Let me hope your Mother is better ever this. also that your health is good. Write me soon and write a long letter.

There is no news in Camp. Next week I will send you a paper, which is printed in Yorktown if I can get a copy. I had one more subject to speak of in this letter but have not room. I will write again in a few days if nothing happens. So you will not let my last remark raise your curiosity.
Lou J Seward
Yours till death
Tom

embrace all opportunities [inserted text] for acquiring knowledge [end inserted text]. I would be glad myself to be under such a teacher as Mr. Ridgely. You recollect that I used to insist on your attending [underline] Central College [end underline] and as Mr. Ridgely is a [underline] Married man [end underline] I shall by no means, [underline] get jealous [end underline]. Now Lou you have my consent, act as you think proper. I received a letter from Bob Orrell some days since, but he did not mention your name, So you will have to tell me the story yourself. I will look for it next time. He told me that John Lee started the report of my being wounded, I can't imagine why he should thus misrepresent my affairs. I have nearly forgotten the substance of my letter to Bob Orrell, but I think I spoke of the horrors of a [underline] Bachelors life [end underline] and probably of the joys of a home made happy by another's smile. I generally write a large amount of nonsense did I understand that you read all the letter, if so, I need not relate the topics. I am glad that even a letter of [underline] mine [end underline] should meet your eye, at a party where I would have been [underline] thrice happy [end underline] to greet you. Lou it is hard to be thus separated. I sometimes feel it to be more than I can endure. But who is there that knows the sacrifices they are able to make until the trial comes. It is the province of the youth, (of both sexes,) of today to [underline] endure [end underline] Oh may we learn to submit.

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