

Camp Sierles Va. 14th May 1863.

My Dear Nellie,

Not from any fear of that "scolding" which you were magnanimous enough to promise me if I wasn't "prompt" to answer you, do I commence this letter. No, indeed! On the whole I rather like to hear you "go on" - you do it so savagely - and should at all times prefer to get up your wrath, to exciting your tender qualities (as far as fun is concerned), but being so far away that I can't "make up faces" to suit the occasion I will content myself with conducting my pen so that we may remain on "amicable terms". But there! I am not so prompt after all! here is your letter written April 21st - almost a month ago! it is truly astonishing to reflect on the flight of time! it doesn't seem more than a week since your warmhearted, patriotic letter was received - yet it must be over a fortnight! Well for me that time does fly quickly by! - I am getting somewhat impatient at the long continuance of this cruel rebellion! - I wish in a few short months to be again in Maine, near to those little lambs which I feel it a sacred duty to watch over, care for and protect!

What does all this fighting, this slaughter of so many brave and good men amount to? it almost makes the heavy fird within one to contemplate the fearful struggle, the irreparable loss which this army has just endured and to think that it has been all in vain! Generals may construe it as they please and talk as big as they wish about it, but the solemn fact is, Nellie, we have suffered a terrible loss and a demoralizing defeat! - that is a plain - an unpleasant fact - but it is better to look it square in the face than seek to hide it as many do. Yes: I believe we shall come out victorious in the end, and our cause be triumphant; but

no big battles on the Rappahannock will ever do us - that is my opinion simply and you may take it for what it is worth. Do not think that I am discouraged from what I have said, for I am not - Our cause looks better now than it did last winter. Being so recently engaged in a battle, the like of which was never before witnessed, I am probably less enthusiastic than at some other times, for the scenes incident thereto were such as to damp the most daring spirits. Some of the newspaper reports are quite accurate in the general account of affairs, but if the rage of battle was to the correspondents who were safe in the rear, so awful, what do you think it must have been to one who was in the very thickest and hottest part of it?

I have been looking very anxiously - I don't know why it is but anxiously I have looked for a letter from Dixon - hope nothing is wrong or the matter with him or with any of you. Shall certainly expect a letter to-night from him or you - it has now been over two weeks since his to us was written!

There is that letter from Mary Gros which she wrote about the time you did yours? I haven't yet seen anything of it. I rec'd one from Mary Richardson written May 3 and that is the last from home!

Red must write and Emma and Mattie - they all owe me letters.

Of course, Nettie it was in sport too about your beau - you may rest easy on that score - he will come along one of these days - "big as life and twice as natural".

What did you do for May-day? hope the sweet-scented may flowers were not wanting on the mantle. Even here plenty can be found - the woods are full of every description of flowers and birds too! The trees have all leaved out; you can see the grass grow; the sun is as hot as at home in July. This must be a noble farming country and one delightful to live in in peaceful

times, but yet not so glorious as New England! I believe Maine to have the most enjoyable weather of any State in the Union.

Around my tent are many trees - some Walnut, some oak and three splendid beeches about 4 inches through. These, and especially the latter, make it shady and cool! This might well be called a summer retreat! My time is now occupied thus - Revell at 5 A.M., breakfast at 7, Co. Ordinance drill from 9 1/2 to 11 1/2, dinner at 12, Battalion drill from 3 to 5, Dinner at 5 1/2, dress-parade at 6, tattoo at 8 1/2, taps at 9 P.M. - a hard day's work in hot weather - shan't probably have to do it long as we will undoubtedly move again in a few days.

This is a big sheet of paper - see if you cannot find me as big and be sure to fill it full.

No; you need not send back that picture - I have now two of yours and you can keep that one in the house. I would get another tassel of myself if possible - have shaved off all but the mustache and look savage - wish you could see me!

All the Norway boys are well I believe. Frank Lane was slightly wounded in the leg - nothing serious. Capt. Goldemann will not lose a limb but will be unfit for service for some time.

St. Lord rec'd a letter from Emily Sartain the other day - she got hold of a pair of socks with her name inside on a bit of paper and for the fun of the thing wrote to her (a stranger to him) - she answered punctually but he was minus one foot when the letter reached him - hope her letter will console him in his loss, as her stocking covered his foot when he lost it! - unluckily stocking! - she probably left the heel vulnerable.

My love to all the family and kindred - Please answer soon.

Ever truly
Wash.

I rec'd a letter that Tom Merrill wrote to Cyrus Justice a short time since - he was first in hospital with fever and chills.

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