

Baton Rouge April 1, 1864

Dear Elizabeth

By this day's mail I re'cd two letters from you which were read with much pleasure as they are the first re'cd in three weeks. I sent you a letter by last mail and am going to send one by next mail without any apology.

As you are informed by that letter we are again housed in cloth and subject to discipline of the camp the first time for me in more than ten months. During that time I have lived more as a citizen than soldier in many respects.

But here it seems like old times. We can scarcely move without a dictator. In the morning we are awakened by the harsh notes of fife and drum at half past five, and every onse must turn out and answer to roll call. Breakfast call at half past six when we partake of our sumptuous repast of bread, meat and coffee. Guard mounting at eight when those detailed for guard for the next 24 hours are to appear in their best suit boots blacked and guns shining. Those not on duty then spend their time in repairing quarters reading writing or whatever they choose until 12 o'clock when dinner is served consisting of bread, salt beef and beans. We are not called on then until half past five P.M. when every man must appear in his very best at dress parade. After which we take our supper of bread and tea and enjoy ourselves as best we can until half past eight o'clock when we all appear at roll call and at precisely nine o'clock "lights out" is sounded and every light in camp is extinguished _____ and quiet most prevail. This is all as it should be in camp but I find it somewhat difficult to acquiesce to so much regularity in retiring just when ordered to after ten months irregularly in this respect. It is however much better for the health of soldiers to conform ~~strictly~~

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strictly to the Army Regulations and I am not disposed to find fault. I have given you our programme as it is at present. I shall be on duty once in about eight days. You will please excuse so much of camp life in this. There is indeed but little prospect of the war closing very soon. Gen. Garfield in a speech delivered at Cleveland saw that this is the critical period of the war and warned the people not to be deceived in the hope that the war will soon close. I am afraid these words will prove too true. Although I do not doubt the ability of the government to suppress the rebellion I believe it will take time, money, and lives that very many of the people have not counted on.

So sure as our government succeeds just so sure is slavery abolished in this country and whether it succeeds or not that institution can never prosper again.

The slave once freed can never be enslaved. I have talked with many of them and they are all agreed on this point. Rather than go back into bondage they will die.

They are a poor unfortunate race I am sorry for them but wish they were on the other side the Atlantic. I dont want anything to do with them. I would not employ one of them on no condition. Southerners may live where Negro labor is the only kind of labor and where it is considered a disgrace for a white man to till the soil, but let me live in my own native north where the laboring man is the gentlemen instead of the do-nothing drinker and gambler of the south.

Our Regt. was not accepted in the cavalry service consequently has not entered the veteran service, nor do I think many of the boys will reenlist at present. Our reasons for not reenlisting are the same that you have advanced and if I am not mistaken those fellows that advance the reasons they do for staying at home they find more than an equal

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in Elizabeth. Old recruits are better than new ones are they? well it will take only three yér's for them to be as good soldiers as we are now and I would advise them to try it. After they have all tried it for three yr's we will willingly take the field again and not ask them to stay longer, which is fair is it not? They will please bear in mind that when we return we will not be subject to draft this is no draft partly the cause of their anxiety for us to remain in the service. Elizabeth I believe I feel more anxiety for our country than I did the day I enlisted but there are many at home or at the north who are doing much harm to the cause of reenlisting many of the boys will not reenlist because they say it will save some copperhead from the draft and when I think of this and some other reasons which I will not mention at present I cannot help thinking three yr's is all required of me.

I dont know but there are some warriors of the present day whom we can compare with those of old, but I think they are few. They of the present can endure fatiguing marches pass through the bloody battlefields and march up to the cannons mouth unmoved and without a murmur, but there are but few who can withstand the counsel and admintious of loved one at home. Oh! no Elizabeth do not think the warrior of the present day is so hard hearted. There is scarcely a boy in our Co who is not anxiously looking forward to the time when he can see those who are dear as life itself and when they return after three yrs privations and hardships their hearts will soon become melted by the warming influences of those they have known for so long, only through the pen.

I have already written much more than I expected and close by wishing you well and hoping that we may soon meet again.

Yours truly and affectionatly

Leonard