

Helena Arkansas Jan 3rd 1863

We have been here now two days, & have seen or heard but little. The town I believe I told you is a very poor thing. The Fort I have not got to see yet. The boys who have seen it, say it is quite a place. I am going out to morrow or next day. Gen Hermanns dwelling is situated not far from our Camp, in the edge of the town, at the foot of the blough (I don't know whether that word is spelled right or not). It is a very nice little frame house. That is it seems so from here, I have not been out to it.

The weather here is quite warm. We do first rate without fire in our tents. There was frost yesterday morning, but no ice. There has been none since we left St. Louis. This is the climate for me, Dollie, but not the country. This is a rebel country, & you ^{know} ^{my} Dollie I don't like it. They are my enemies, & I don't want to live where they are, any longer than is necessary to whip them, which will take some time. The Guavillas make runs on our chain guards every few days & capture ten or fifteen at a time. This evening there is a rebel boat lying at the wharf. It has come in from white river with forty or fifty prisoners to exchange. The Government is playing with the rebels in the South West. We will never succeed until the Government adopts a different policy. I hope it will be soon.

Yesterday news came up from Helena that Gen. Sherman had taken Vicksburg. We were all jubilant for a while. But it did not last us long, for another boat came up with Gen. Lyman's body, & the news that our forces had taken but a small portion of the rebels works & that our losses were very heavy. We are very anxious to hear this evening, & still I am almost almost a faint to hear.

But we must bear, let the news be good or bad. The fight is over by this time no doubt. If we are whipped what will we do, Dollie. In fact sometimes I think this Great Government is going by the board any how. It seems to me as though we have played too long. It may be we have not. If we had no traitors in the north to discourage us we could do better. But Dollie how can we keep up all of the time when those who ought to be our friends, prove themselves to be our enemies. Suppose this Government goes down, where is there a spot we could sit on this continent. I mean the people. I can think of none.

A few minutes ago I thought I heard a boat coming up. I got up I went out but it was a mistake. There has been none up to day. If we could only hear good news from below.

We are getting along in the regiment about as usual. The boys get mad occasionally, at Col. Pittredges, at the Quarter Master &c. Then the Col. gets mad, then we, the line officers get mad. The Col. threatens to Court Marshall us for counseling insubordination. Don't be uneasy about me my good Dollie. We try & keep inside of the ropes. But you need not be surprised to hear of trouble in the regiment at any time. All that is wanting now is a slight start, very slight in deed. It may come one of these days. I don't think it will be mine though Dollie. I am going to shun it if possible. But still I don't mean by that, that I am going to suffer myself or my Company injured on. The Col. I think was very anxious to have us stay in Tennessee, for no other purpose but to keep us if possible out of Gen. Curtis' Department. He never if he knew anything at all that we were not going to run over while we were where we could make our Complaint to him, & this we could always do while we were in the Department of Mo. The old Gen. would correct things for us & make every thing all right.

The Col. still treats us mean, or if he does not do it it is done by some one in power. For instance - The Quarter Master failed to yesterday to issue to our boys their regular rations. They had not had any Coffee for several days. This morning - unbeknowning to me they raised a fuss with Mrs Quarter Master, & I was called in to settle the fuss. This afternoon I called on him & told him that the Coffee had to come, & it did come in a hurry too. The Quarter Masters in the Army - as a general thing are very mean & I think I fear ours is bad as any of them. We straiten him up ever now & then.

Will well & all right. Lieut May is here & in pretty good health. He has written to Julia this afternoon I believe. I suppose he has told her all of the news. He is gloomy about the war. I don't much blame him. Lieut Wright does pretty well of late. The orderly does as well as ever. He is one of the best men in the World. Always ready for duty.

The forty third regt. Inf. Col. is camped a long by our side. There are two Co. in the Regt. from Putnam Co. Capt Layne from Greencastle has command of one of them. I have not see him yet.

Won't you goodly Vollier. Be of good cheer, I will think of you every minute in the day, & you are the last of my thoughts at night, & the first in the morning. Of evenings if I lay lay & think of you an hour or two before I go to sleep - But I am always tired Vollier & have to sleep.

Goodly Darling,

W. F. Hamilton

January 4 1863

Mr. Furman I
take up my pen to
drop you a few lines
We are all well at this
time it got here the
day we left there we
have got a nice place
here an good tents so
it is rained here it
rained all night some
of the boys is Mares

I hear you was a
goon to get a discharge
an go home if you do
I want you to take
my blanket with
you an give it to
my wife or leave it
at miles an she
can get it there

I got one an that
is as much as i want
to pack i haue much
to write an let
me no how you as
yeten lauge direct
your letter to

helena ascaus
Marion hancock
to W E Garrison
please take it an
i will do as much
for you same time

Helena Arkansas

Jan 5th 1863

Good evening Dollie,

This is so pretty & as warm an evening as we generally have up North in May. The boys are all comfortable in their wedge tents without any fire. I have a Yankee furnace which keeps my tent quite comfortable. In the army it is always best to act on the principle that the bogt is going to remain for sometime, I go to work & fix up just as though I knew I would be allowed to enjoy the benefits of my labor.

The boys have two or three bake ovens put up for our Company. They now flour & bake very good bread. I am glad they cook so well.

We are all in a fix here to hear from Hicksburgh. There has been no boat up since last Friday. Then there was no definite news, (what little there was was unfavorable). We'll hope for better news when we hear next. You no doubt get the news as fast as we do. The Soldier knows but little of what is going on.

Jan 6th 1863 I commenced this letter last night Dollie, but could not write. This morning I have been drilling the Co. It now but a few minutes till twelve o'clock. The mail goes at directly after noon. The boys will be after me in a few minutes for dinner then I can't write any more, till next mail. (We have mail every other day)

I am well. The boys are all well, & as well as usual.
I cant write any more now Dollie. Against the
next mail I will write more. Please burn all such letters
as this. I would not send it but I know you would
rather have it than none. Please send me your
likeness Dollie. So ad for this time I will try &
write you a little & little again the next mail

Good bye Darling

W. F. Garrison

Wilmington, Delaware

Jan. 1, 1863

My dear Willie,

The last letter I wrote you was such a
thing I ought to write to you some this time. But I must not
expect it Willie, tonight, for it is already eight o'clock at
night. The boys are now coming to bed, & I am writing you
now on hour or such a matter. But then don't know what to
tell to you about, to make it interesting. I don't want you
to read long letters from me that have nothing in them
But let me tell you how I am situated just now.
My tent is at Fort Mifflin. The fire is in the North West corner, the
door is in the East end, the end is on the South side. I have Lieut
Wright's bed in sitting on the end on the North side side of the
tent, with mine lying lengthwise on the top of it; the Candles
sitting on the West end of mine the paper on the Revolver & mine
sitting on the South side, with my feet to the fire, writing to
my Willie. Lieut May is lying on the bed snoring. The boys
have been crowding in here all evening. They are all out now
but Lieut May, he stays in here with me. He is not very well
(But I don't want you to tell ^{John} you what I am telling you) this
afternoon he handed in his resignation. It is right Willie. He is
not fit for the service. It is impossible for him to be able to
do any good. His resignation will have to go to St. Louis.

& then if excepted, his discharge papers will have to come back here before he can leave the Regiment for home, so it may be six weeks before he gets away from here. But I don't tell her anything about it, for I think we don't intend to write her anything about it till he gets it all fixed up. She has no money, neither have I any to let him have, I have all told about \$150.00, & that is in all probability as much as any man in the Regiment has, except the Snitter. He has just come on & has plenty, but of course we can't get of him. There is some talk that the Paymaster will be here in a few days, & then we will have plenty of money. But if he should fail to give us a bill, we will all be a penniless set of fellows.

The Col. told me the other day that he had, a few days before run clear out, but he accidentally met with a friend, who gave him twenty five dollars. I think that must be all gone by this time judging from the way he pitches in. If we keep well we will not have to use much money. We can draw our rations, & as to fine clothes they have played out. We are not sorry of it. The Col. still has us to put on our fine suits every evening on dress parades, but then there are a good many who have nothing but the Common Soldiers Uniform. They get along just as well as any of us.

If Lieut May goes home & the Orderly is promoted, he will have nothing but his old clothes. But he won't care. In all probability Will Kemper's backwardness will prevent his being Orderly Sergeant. I have tried my best to put him forward, but he is just as backward as ever. I wish he was different for his own sake, not mine.

I have not determined in my own mind whom I will
appoint, probably Henry Swallow. If he will exercise a
sufficient amount of authority, he will be the best man I can
get, because he is the best calculated to do the business.

Will Wareing is still in the ranks, & will be likely to remain
there for some time to come. Jacob Grimes will not get promotion
very soon. We have not the first Sergeant below the Orderly
that will exercise any authority. They are afraid to. Sient May will
leave the Co. with the good will of every man in the Co. She has
never reprimanded the first man for anything yet. Not that
he ought to have done it, but because he has shunned it - that
is the way to keep on the good side of the men. A Sient need never
have the ill will of any man, if he is so disposed.

But enough of this Golly for this time. Let me tell you how
much I love you. I will go to bed, & dream sweet dreams of
you Darling. But then I can't tell you how I do love you Dar-
ling, I can only say I love you more than all else on Earth but
our Kitten that though, don't you Golly. Then don't mistreat
me, for the time will surely come again when we can sit
by our own fire side & talk to each other as we used to at
Woodside. This cruel war will be over after a while. We will
not during the separation forget to love or appreciate each other
but learn to love & appreciate the more what good there is about
each other. The Golly Golly for this time. Send me your love -
and don't you wait for mine till I get mine.

Golly for this time

I can't tell you how I love you

Will Wareing

Mrs. M. Cartie, Thursday Morning, Jan 8, '69

My Dearest Love.

I got two letters from you last night. Somebody brought them to Mrs McGoughy's, and Lizzie Talbot came down here with them after dark. They were written at Memphis. You were sick, my own darling, and there was no Dollie there to love you and care for you. This is too hard, I can't bear it my love. I want to go to you, or have you come to me. I don't believe you can endure the hardships of camp life darling. I am afraid you are still sick. If you are, want you try to come home - or come to your Dollie, it shall be home for you wherever she is. To think of my dear one lying down, sick, on a blanket, or on the bare ground in the streets of Memphis! I can't talk about it. If I could only be with you, my husband. I could do more for you than everybody else in the world, because I love you more than every body else does; and you love me more than you do anybody else. I know you do, my pet. But, if I can't go to you, dearest, and you are sick, come to me. They are not good to you darling. I know you don't like them - the officers, and I don't want you to risk your life with them. Oh, it is worth so much to me, dearest, don't forget your Dollie and stay there and ^{(die}

Are you forgetting me, my pet? You say, if I am like I used
to be; and that you wonder if you know how I looked. Yes,
dearest, you do know how I look, and all about your Dollie.
She is just like she was at Woodside, only she loves you more
than she did, and, I hope, she is better. If we are chastened
and purified by suffering, she ought to be better. Don't you
remember, darling, the old happy days, and how I loved you and
petted you? I didn't think it was possible for any human heart
to love more than mine did then. But it was. You are dearer
to me now. Your very danger and suffering makes you dearer.
I shall spoil you, when you come home, I know I shall, sweet love.
How I will wait on you, and do everything ~~in the~~ in the world to
please you, and stay with you always. You shall never go, even
to feed Recker, without me. We have had enough of separation
haven't we love? In the future we shall live together. I don't
know how to wait till you come, I want you here now, this moment.
But, if you can't come to me now, I would give everything if I could be with
you. I feel mean and unworthy dearest, to sit idly here, while your life is in
danger. I want to share the dangers with you. I want to fight by your side if
you fight, and die with you, if you die. That would be easier than waiting
here for you darling. I don't care for the hardships for myself. I know I
could do you some good, in some way, my own dear one. And
what else am I living for? Are you not "all in all" to me?

I sent you my likeness darling, last Friday. You ought to get it in a few days now. I wish I could have sent it sooner, but I did the best I could. If I had not got it for you, before I read your letter last night, I would have got it to day if I had walked to Green castle alone. I would have done that for you, loved one.

We have good news this morning. It is said Vicksburg has fallen into our hands with 25,000 prisoners! I'm almost afraid to believe this. It seems too good to be true. And Rosecrans has routed the rebels at Murfreesboro, and followed them ~~to~~ as far as Tullahoma which must be at least forty miles. Isn't this cheering news, darling? He was here, just now, and he says you will all be home by spring. He thinks the war is nearly over. God grant that it may be. I don't think it can last another year. If Burnside will only do his part of the work. And I still think he will. I don't think he is the man to go into winter quarters after Fredericksburg, without attempting another blow. I await his movements with intense impatience. I don't know where they will send you, my pet. I am afraid it will be to some place farther than Helena. Oh, I am so uneasy about you. How can I rest one ^{minute} contented darling? If you go farther away, you may hardly ever get my letters, but don't doubt me, my good darling. I will write twice a week and as much oftener as I can. I want you to feel sure of this, whether you get my letters or not. I never will neglect you my husband, never.

I got letters last night from father and Jimmy. They were all well. Jimmy had been sick for two weeks, but was all right, he said the 31st. Father wrote the 27th. He was at Isonium the day before and saw Mullinix. He said they were well and doing well at Wood side. Jake Fees was married on Christmas day to John Scott's daughter. Poor insignificant! Thos. Dykes was married to one of the Boutletts. This was about all the news he wrote. Jim said Blue was elected Captain in their Company. Matt has no doubt been in all this Vicksburg battle. He may be killed. But I don't feel uneasy about him. I can't feel uneasy, or interested about anybody but you, my own love. I am afraid this is selfish and wicked, but I can't help it, dearest. Julia has had no letter yet from Humphrey. She is in trouble about him. Sally Denny has not heard from her husband for more than a month. He was at Oxford Miss. then. She is nearly crazy. Poor thing, I pity her from the bottom of my heart. I don't know how soon I may suffer just such suspense as that. You have been so good to write to me so far, dear love, that I don't know how to love you and thank you enough. You know your letters do me good, but you don't know how much good darling. Tell me everything. Let Dollie be your best friend, far off as she is. I know she is your truest. I was quite sick yesterday, but I am nearly well today. I doctored myself up last night, and took some opium. It about cured me. They are all good and kind to me here. Aunt Anne and I are eating some "firmity" today. It is good. I wish you had some. Lina is gone to Putnamville to have her tooth extracted. Goodby,

Mrs. McCarty's, Sunday morning, Jan. 11, '63

My Chrs. Darling:

I have been writing to Will this morning and I could hardly take time to finish his letter. I wanted to talk to you, my love. I didn't get any letter from you last night, and I am afraid you are sick. I am so afraid of it darling! I will try to hope for the best. Yesterday afternoon Julia and I went up to Mrs. M^cGuoghe's. Lizzie was going to the store, and she said if we would stay with her grandmother till she came back, she would wait for the mail. It was after dark when she got back, and then she had no letter from you, dear love. That was what troubled me. I can't get one now, before Wednesday. It is a long time to wait! I didn't get my Tribune either. I am very impatient to hear the news. Matt has, no doubt, been fighting at Vicksburgh, and Jimmy at Springfield, and both may be dead or wounded. But I could bear all this, my good love, without a murmur, if I could only know that you were well and safe. Don't you remember how troubled I was about Matt, after we heard of the Shiloh battle? now I hardly think of either of them. One far more precious than all the world beside, is in danger, and I

(can't think of other)

The news yesterday was that Sherman had not suffered so dreadfully at Vicksburg as we had heard before. I don't know when we shall know the truth. I listen every day to hear that the troops at Helena are gone there. I dread to hear it, darling. Won't you tell me, dear one, how you feel about it. Do you want to go? Do you still think that you will come home to your Dollie? Oh, dearest, if you could only be here one hour, this morning, I would give anything in the world. There are so many things I want to talk to you about. So many things I want you to tell me. And I want to see ^{you} again, and put my arms around you, and tell you how much I love you. Do you think I shall ever see you, sweet love? Sometimes I feel hopeful. I think you will come home, that the war will soon be over, and we shall go home, and be so happy together. Do you think so ever, dear one? And sometimes my courage utterly fails me. I wish I were braver for your dear sake. But I am not a Roman matron - I am only a weak, loving woman. I can't be anything else, unless you will let me come to you, and work with you, for our cause, then I could do something worthy of you. I feel as if I could, my love. I wish you had a good position in some hospital and I would come and help you. I never thought of it till this minute, but I do wish it, dear

I got a letter last night from Ally Mullinnis. They were all right at Woodside. She says Roker is getting young again and Horah is fat enough for beef, and John talked of killing her for New Zealand! Wouldn't we have made him pay dearly for his beef, if he had? John wrote some in the letter. He says the stock is doing well; and that he gets a letter from you about every three weeks. I am glad you write to him darling. And I am glad to hear a good report from our home. - Our home, my dear one, how sweet those words are! I think Woodside is the dearest spot on earth, for there we were so happy together. I wish I could be there awhile. I think father and John are taking very good care of our things. It is clever in them.

We have just been to dinner. We had fresh bones and potatoes stewed, and prunella and apple butter and cornbread an' milk. You would have liked it. I never sit down to eat without thinking of you and wishing for you. I wish I knew whether you have anything good to eat. I am afraid you are living hard, dear one. This troubles me. Do you eat with any of the men? Oh, I wish I could see you, and know just how you are getting on. Have you nothing but your blanket to sleep on? I know I never shall get tired petting you when you come home, and cooking you something nice and trying to make amends for all the hardships you have ^{been} suffering.

I saw a disabled soldier the other day. ^{He} was here. ^{He} used to live at John Mcarty's - and is there now. ^{He} was wounded in both legs at Antietam. ^{He} can walk about now with a cane. Says he is going into the service again, when he gets well. ^{He} seems like a very worthy sort of man, but he looks pitiable. I am sorry for a sick soldier, be he who he may.

The weather is fine and clear - not cold. I am sitting upstairs. I brought up some wood, and made a nice fire up here this morning, and it is very comfortable. Julia has been writing. She has not had a letter from ^{my} Humphrey for two weeks. She talks about not writing to him any more till she hears from him. I scold her for this. She ought to write, whether she gets his letters or not. I will to you, my darling. I will write to you all the time, whether you get them or not. And I believe you will write to your Dollie. Won't you dear love? If you can do no better send me just one line to tell me where and how you are. I am always so glad to hear even one word from you. But you have been good, and I know you will be, darling. You are always good and noble. When you write again, send me a lock of your hair. I want it, my dear. Won't you love? And when you have time send me some little keepsake from Dixie, if it is only a sprig of cedar or pine - anything would be sacred that your hands had touched. I have not heard from your father's since he was here last Sunday. I feel anxious to hear from ^{my} Henry. I hope he is better by this time. Sally Peck is here and she says she can send our letters to the office to-morrow, so I will finish my letter and let her take it. She is very kind to us. Goodbye, my pet, Take care of yourself and don't forget your Dollie.

Helena Arkansas

Jan 11th 1863

My DearOLLIE.

This is Sunday & it has been a busy day here in Helena. Yesterday morning there were some Fifteen Thousand troops here, now four or five thousand would be a large estimate. Where the ten thousand are gone I do not know probably to Little Rock. You will have learned before you get this letter that Gen. Sherman failed at Vicksburg (Failures are common these days) After that repulse the fleet fell back up the river to Napoleon, where Sumner says it lay a few days & then went up the Arkansas River, for the purpose of taking Little Rock. Yesterday Gen. Sherman commenced issuing orders to the troops quartered here, to go aboard the transports lying here. We looked & expected orders all day yesterday, but got none. This morning, while we were yet in doubt as to what our fate would be, & while every one else apparently was going aboard the boats, we were ordered up here to hold the fort. But since I come to think Ollie you don't know where the fort is I will stop & make a map.

There it is Ollie the best I can make. Will it do for the first. Look at it good & ^{get} all the information you can from it.

We came up here about one o'clock this P.M. (We have all been busy this evening cleaning out our Cobins. And by the way we have very good Winter quarters. Lieut Wright & the Orderly are in in Cobin & Sweet May & myself in another. Ours is very comfortable, as comfortable as any ordinary Cobin in Iowa. Which makes it a good thing for this climate.

We think we are held here for the purpose of holding this place, while the rest of our forces operate on the Arkansas & White Rivers. We may be ordered to move in a few days, but the indications are that we will be kept here for some time. We are the only regiment that is quartered so near the fort.

Well if the fighting is to go as it did at Fredicksburg & Vicksburg I am not sorry. Such places are not healthy my Voller. But if we had had any assurance that we would have had a fair show we would all I believe rather have gone a long with the Fleet. The boys are becoming indifferent to danger. They seem to think, now care very little about the hard fighting we may be called on to do. They want to be going all the time.

For my own part Voller, if there are any more such blunders as were made at Vicksburg to be made, I must confess I would rather not be in them. While we can have a fair chance with the rebels Voller I am willing & ready to go. But I don't want to be slaughtered simply to make or sustain the reputation of some Major General. We have too many Commanders who are thinking more of their own reputation than they do of their Country. What the expedition will "do" up the Arkansas & White Rivers I do not know. If they clean them out up there, this State soon be brought back under the control of the United States Government.

It is quite late Voller & I will quit writing till morning. I will go to bed & think of Voller. Good night.

Monday morning.

This morning everything is a stir, & of course I will have but little time to write anything. Our grounds are all cleaned off - are to clean off I mean. John Wright is going out on Picket this morning. Humphrey is walking a round, tolerably well. He has sent in his resignation, but it may be some weeks before he get home.

This papers have to go to Gen Curtis, at St. Louis. He is
both sick & home sick.

Be of good cheer (Dollie) for I weigh one hundred
& seventy pounds. That is a gain of twelve pounds since
I left Keokuk. I am quite well. Will is well
Jake Grimes is sick - not very bad. Will is a little
sore from James the other day he was well. We did not
get to see that. He was out near Holly Springs. We heard
from him - he was well.

Goodbye My Darling, My good love

W. F. Vermilion

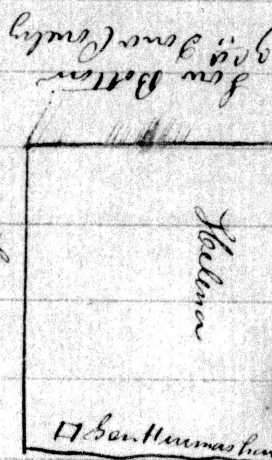
Mississippi River

Lower

Upper Camp 1st 49nd 2nd 24th

Will ground

Helena



San. Thomas

San. Thomas

San. Thomas

San. Thomas

San. Thomas

San. Thomas

San. Thomas

San. Thomas

San. Thomas

San. Thomas

San. Thomas

San. Thomas

Scale of miles

1 mile

The above scale is correct for up & down the river
Probably not quite for East & West.

If you will notice right above, North East of the star
That you will see the position of Co. F. My Cabin is the
dot just at the West end - that little line extends over there
a little too far
W. F. L.

Helena Arkansas Jan 13th 1863

Dear Dollie

This is a very nice morning. Some few clouds but mostly clear. No wind scarcely. Hardly enough to keep the flag over the fat floating. This would be a very nice (May) morning for Iowa. The old oats & rye are quite green. For the last three or four days, we have used but little fire.

This morning the boys are all tolerably comfortable. The sick list was made up with the names of Srgt. Grimes Samuel Smith Wilson & Trim & one or two others, all of whom were able to walk to the Surgeon's quarters. By the well boys some are washing, some cooking, some are gone about one half mile up North, to the old camp of ^{the} twenty eighth Iowa, who left night before last, for down the river. Sient Wright & seven of the boys are out on Picket. Seven more are gone out this morning to relieve them. They will have to remain out twenty four hours. Sient Wright has just come in from picket. He looks tired & sleepy. The other boys are gone out.

Good, Dollie. Sient May has just brought me your letter of the 2nd inst. Thank you for it. It is a good one. I am sorry Henry is still poorly. After a while I can't ^{help} being a little sorry for father. But he & all of the rest of ^{them} ~~me~~ just such punicks, not as they are a thing. If they want to be treated & respected as patriots, let them learn to treat us as we should be treated.

As to your going back there to stay Dollie. I don't think it will do at all. You can't be comfortable. With them, the way they live it is impossible. We can't afford to sacrifice your comfort & feelings for their feelings. They ^{they are too} rough & ungentle for your tender nature Dollie. They don't think it, but it is so, & we can't help it. You had better make your home just where you are. I am better satisfied about you now, than I have been since I left you, because I know you are comfortable.

As to Aunt Anna's charging seventy five cts a for your board, that of all things is just what I want them to do or her to do. That Dolie does not amount to anything. (I hate for you to pay Mrs. McElarty that amount for making you comfortable while I am away. Why Dolie of all things that pleases me the best. Use all of the money you want, & if you get out, before I send you more, you can, have your father send you plenty of it. You must not be afraid of using my money Dolie, for it is ours, not mine.

About your going home. I think you had better stay where you are & write me letters. That is enough for you to do, till this war is over. It may be necessary for you to go home in the spring to attend to some business, but I will write in time, concerning it. Lieut. May will be there in a few months, & he my Darling will tell you the utter impossibility of your coming down here. That is just the thing above all others that I don't want you to do. And Dollie if you understand, you will be of the same opinion. The thing will not do for a woman like you to be coming home this winter - a big good cheer collision but I fear that will be impossible. There is too much being done, in these parts, for a man who is well & able for duty, to be allowed such privileges. But rest assured Dollie, that my will is good. I would like to come, as well as you could like to have me come. (We are on duty here now while every person else nearly are out fighting, & if we don't do it well we will be put in the field & some one else, will be put in our place.

Your likeness came two or three days ago. It is one of the best I ever saw. You don't know how much good it's done me. It was the first time you know I had seen you since I left you at father's. I thank you with all of my heart for it. But Dollie wants the one you have of mine do you till I clear more money. We are nearly all out of money here. We have to be economical, all of us I have about fifteen dollars

(While I think of it, let me tell you, that, you may go to fathers
on a visit; that, if you will make that visit or short one, it must not
be long. Volle. Let me tell you why. I know them all better than you do
& unless they have changed - which I suppose they have not, you will never be
comfortable there. Reason will get mad, & won't go to the office of a man.
They will be using all of the horses & you can't go unless you walk & then
you can't do that my Darling. (When do you suppose you would have got to
Greencastle, if you had staid there. And my love I don't want to show
very near people who are opposed to me in this war, & all who wish the
rebels well are opposed to me. The men & women here, on whom they bestow
so much pity, are my mortal foes. They would take the last drop of my
heart's blood if they could. They would poison me if they could, they would
shoot me by the road side, if they could do it. They would not bury
me if they were to find me dead. I have no friends here except the U.S.
soldiers & negroes & neither of these are they friends to. The Negroes they hate, they
are my friends here. The native whites they pity, believe in & respect, they are
seeking my heart's blood. Thought they & I to come very close together, when
there is so much between us. They - who ought to be my best friend, I love, pity
& respect those who have caused all the troubles, that are besetting this County.
Let them go this way & we will go ours. But to stop & settle this Volle visit then
if you want to on your own account - but not on mine.

I am officer of the day, & will have to be up the most of the night.
The troops have nearly all been called or ordered away from here. We on the
authorities here are on the look out. We don't know but the rebel Guerrillas
may make a run on this place, not to fight & whip us, but to get in the
town long enough to burn & destroy what military stores there are here - which
amounts to probably two millions of dollars. There is but little fear of a fight
here, at present - that is any more than is indicated above. The union forces
are probably three thousand strong, with Gen. Bussey of Bloomfield Iowa commanding

We have just heard good news from below. Gen. Sherman has taken
Great Arkansas, thirty five hundred prisoners, & all of their military stores
Good for that more. If it is but a little victory it is better than none.
We get the blues about the news - or war occasionally, but it does no good
we may just as well take it coolly as any way else.
Will was out on picket duty last night. I have not seen him but once
since yesterday evening. He is as quiet as ever. Just as hard to get
him to go a head as it was at Camp Lincoln. I guess it is so much ground
in him that he will never do any other way. I don't think Dollie that
it will do to make him orderly Sergeant, on that account. I wish I had some
one else in John Wright's place. Humphrey & I don't let him room with us.
Humphrey won't sleep with him & I am sure I will not. When we were
camped down on the river bank, I got him a good tent & told him to put
it up & make himself comfortable, but he was too lazy to do it. So when I
got my tent all fixed up he had no room to sleep. I fixed a place for
me & Lieut May to sleep. The first night - as usual he got in with us. The
next night I told him he could not do it. It was late at night. Then he
began for the first time to realize the fact, that he had made no prepara-
tions what so ever for himself. There was no room in our tent for him. We had
a very good place for two of us to sleep, three could hardly sleep on it, by crowding
but I will not sleep where there are three in a bed. We told him he would
have to look out for himself. It gave him the blues. He went & tumbled in with
the five Sergeants, & then he staid till we moved. That is, he slept there & set
a round in my tent.

The wind is just beginning to blow. It is raining a little. It may rain hard before
day, for it is very warm. Every person else in our quarters is asleep. It seems
as though the whole County is filled with barking dogs. Lieut May is lying on his
bunk sound asleep. There is a little fire in the fireplace. The table I am writing
on is sitting back some little distance from the fire place. I am sitting by
it writing. The candle is sitting just before me. My revolver & sword are
lying on the table a little to the left, ready to be used if necessary - on the
very prospect, father folks think have been so much abused.

I have a war map lying on the table. When necessary I look at it occasionally.
Dollie. I never get a news paper. Can't you send me one every week. That
would be better than none at all. Think of it if you please Darling.

Now Dollie it is very late & I will have to sleep a little now if I sleep
at all. So goodly my darling. I hope I will get a paper a little to morrow.

Be of good cheer. I will take the best care of myself & possibly can.
Goodly Dollie,

N. F. Hamilton

When you are in the army, you will find it very hard to get a letter to your family.

Wednesday Morning Jan 14 1863

My Dearest Love

It is raining this morning, and has been since last evening. The earth is flooded with water. I had no chance to send my letter to the office yesterday, so I will continue writing till I can send it. I am not very well this morning; I have taken cold. But I am not sick dear, don't be uneasy about me. I have not heard any army news, if there is any news we can't hear it, it seems. But we have some home news that is rather startling. Indiana, they say, is on the very verge of revolution. Day before yesterday they had wild times at Indianapolis. The secesh tried to get possession of the arsenal, but were prevented by the Governor, who called out the militia. The Legislature broke up in a row, and some of the members went home. The democrats are determined that the state shall "secede" and they think now is the time to strike. They don't propose yet to join Jeff Davis' Confederacy, but to form a South Western Confederacy of their own. The opposition in Ohio and Illinois are ripe for it too. They say Lincoln has violated the Constitution - in issuing his late Proclamation - and that now is their time, if ever. The Governor of Kentucky, too, counsels armed resistance to the Proclamation. Things are getting in a pretty bad fix. What the end will

be, no one knows. For every friend the Government has in this state now, it has two bitter and malignant and ignorant foes. They were working on the roads about Westland yesterday, and in a company of eight or ten Abe McBarty was the only professed Dr Unionist. Tom Bridges - you knew him, didn't you - told that 9,000 soldiers had thrown down their arms, and gone home, in consequence of the Proclamation! And that four carloads of "niggers" had just been landed at Terre Haute! Another said that white men couldn't walk the streets of Lafayette without being insulted by great black "niggers," even now! My dearest, I blush to write such things about Indiana. I could not have believed such ignorance and baseness possible in a country that was so long my home, and yours. It is by just such stories as the above that the ignorant masses are inflamed and led astray. So one can foresee the end; but if our armies in the field meet with another reverse or two, I believe Indiana will reap the fruits of her own sowing in just such a civil war as has ravaged Missouri and Kentucky. For my own part, I feel sometimes like I don't care much how soon it comes. A people so degenerate need severe treatment. But my heart aches for a few good and sincere Unionists whom I have found here. And they would be the first and the worst sufferers. If the trouble comes it will come soon. I have not been able to get any late papers myself. All I tell you is what I hear from others. If I learn anything of any interest at all, I always

want to tell you about it. Don't that right, my pet? I wish though I could have some good news to tell you sometimes. I get tired of hearing and telling only bad news. I wish I could see you and talk with you about all these things. I want to know whether you think this war will ever be ended-honorably? I get out of heart sometimes, but not for long. I still believe that the righteous cause will prevail. It must prevail. Old Mr. Wright and his wife were here yesterday. They look just like they always did, and talk as much as ever. They didn't stay long. They are Unionists. It is turning cold fast, but still raining. I fear I can't go to the post office to night. Or send this letter either. I will go down stairs now and warm my hands, and if I hear any news I will tell you. God bless you, my own good darlings. I do want to see you so much. I love you too much, darling, I know I do, but I can't help it.

Evening - It has rained and snowed and stormed all day. I can't go to the office to night. I wish I could for I think there is a letter for me. I will go early in the morning. Julia went to Mrs Johnsons yesterday and just now came back. She says Sam Johnson got a letter yesterday from Wesley May, written the 4th of this month. This is several days later than either of us had heard. There was not much news, only that you were then at Helena. He never mentioned you, but if you were sick when he wrote, he would not likely have spoken of it. I can't help feeling very uneasy about you, my dear one. Every one is talking about the trouble at Indianapolis. We have heard nothing new. Only there is a report to day that Kentucky and Missouri have both seceded. This is not true, I am sure, as regards Missouri. Missouri is

regenerated and saved, I believe we shall have no more trouble with her. As to Kentucky, I could not be surprised at anything she might do, unless she were to do something to sustain the government. They claim here that Iowa even will be sure to join Indiana and Illinois. When she does, darling, you and I will move to Massachusetts, won't we, love? I believe they don't expect the old Bay State to secede from the Union. I am not in the least frightened, if they want a civil war here among their homes, let them have it. I really think many of them have earned it. But my letter is getting too long. Don't think I am getting savage. I am not. But I am more bitter perhaps than I ought to be. I can't forget that if there had been no traitors my beloved would now be at home with me; instead of being in constant peril, where I can hardly even hear from him. Goodly dear love. Aunt Anne said I must give you her love and best wishes. Says she "tell him I do wish him well, with all my heart." "Tell him we all wish him well," said Emily, "all of us women, who can't do anything else." And they all do, I know. Are you not tired of such a long rambling letter, darling? Again, goodly. My own precious love, goodly. Don't forget. Dollie

Wednesday morning Jan. 14th.
 Good morning, Collie.

It is now about five o'clock. Everything is going on quietly. I thought I would talk to Collie awhile.

The last page on the other sheet was written up side down, but if you will hunt for it, right yoad, you can find it Collie. It is just begining to rain quite hard. We are going to have a wet time of it. The roads are going to be very muddy. The other day I was down in town, in the business portion of it, then I saw a board or post stuck in the ground, with a sign on it stating "there was no bottom there." It did not look like there was either. Helena is the poorest looking town I have ever seen in all of my life, & that is sayin a good deal, for I have seen some hard looking places. It is very low with prairie all around & some in it. Plenty of Cyperus swamps, running right up in the town. I would not live here, for all of the Sunny South. In giving you a sketch of the place the other day, I made a mistake. The fort - which is an earth work - is in the edge of the town. There is a little more town than I thought there was then. There are some houses, in the hollow west of the F. T. There are none on the Hills. No houses, but the boys say plenty of graves, both new & old. The old graves they say are, or have been pretty well cared for. The new ones which are soldiers graves, are principally without any mark. Some few have boards with the names, rank, Co., Regt., State &c. on them. It ought to be put on all. But unfortunately it is not done. Not that it would be of any benefit to the poor fellow who sleeps in a rebel's cemetery. But that much ought to be done for their friends. They may have to lay always in an enemy's cemetery, but that we don't know yet - I hope not.

This letter is long enough Collie. Is it not. I have written till I am

am tired, at any rate.

But let me tell you how we are getting along with our eating
We have a Negro woman cooking for us. That is the office of Co. A
& us. They are situated now about thirty or forty rods from us. They have
the mess box & all of the cooking concerns around them. We have
tried a Negro man, but we could not get one worth having. So Capt
Warner being appointed to ^{get} a cook, he hired a woman who has a husband
& two little boys. We have to board the children. The man will cook for
Warner Co. so they can be together all of the time. She washes
& looks for seven of us for five dollars a month. She does our washing
for 20. Mr. Wolf, the sutler boards with us

Goodly Darling for this time. You can't grumble at this
that little more, Goodly,

Will. Hamilton

Helena Jan 17th 1867

Good evening Dollie,

I got my paper in early this evening fully intending to write you a long letter, but have been prohibited by company. The Sergeant came around to notify me that I had to go on Picket Duty tomorrow morning at eight o'clock & remain out for twenty four hours. He is a very clever Appraiser man, & stay until a very few minutes ago. Consequently I can't write much, this time Dollie, I should not write any, but if I have to remain out for twenty four hours I will not get in in time to write for the mail which goes out Monday morning. If I miss that mail I can't start you a letter till Wednesday morning. You see we only have mail here every other day, & some time it is four days between the comings. So if you don't get letters regular you must not be uneasy.

I must tell you Dollie I will tell you. I love you. Don't forget that my Darling. I will not forget it.

Thomas Tucker has just overtaken the Regt. again. This time he comes with the Consumption. He can't live long. The Doctors have examined him twice today. They are going to get him a furlough & let him go home. I will have to let him have some money to go on. I will tell you what I want you to do my good Dollie. Send me Five Dollars in a letter, then write to your father & have him express all of the money he has of ours to you, then if I want money you can send it to me. Don't be uneasy about me, I will get along.

I will give you the letter I received from your father today. Read it & then you will know as much about our concerns as I do.

I will write again in a few days again. Friend Gray is a bit as usual. He is waiting for his Discharge papers.

Goodbye, good Dollie. I want to see you. How I love you. I will love you now & when we meet again. Goodbye,

Will Garrison

P.S. You must so much to your father about the money. I want you to have it & keep it. Will.

Sunday, Jan. 18, 1869

My Own (Darling:

I have just come back from Mt Meridian, and I am so chilly and nervous that I can hardly write at all, but you can read it, can't you love? Last week it rained and snowed and stormed and turned cold, so that I couldn't go to the office myself, and I couldn't get any one to go for me. I never got the letter that came Wednesday till Friday evening, then John Shuttle brought it for me. It was written the 10 ult. I was still so uneasy about you, darling, that I couldn't rest, and I determined yesterday to go to the office myself. Men have been completely housed up for several days, on account of the roads and the cold; they couldn't get out at all. It was bad. There is a deep snow, then a crust of ice, then mud, I wouldn't like to say how deep. But I knew "where there is a will, there is a way" and I felt like I must hear from you, before another night. So after dinner I wrapped up, and walked to Mrs. M. Longhe's, and borrowed old Pony, and went to town. I got along better than I expected; got to Bourne's before three o'clock, and before the mail came in. Do you think, sweet love, I got paid for going? Yes, paid many times over, for I got three letters from you. They were dated the 2nd, 5th & 7th. Oh, how I loved you, darling, and how much I thanked

you in my heart, for being so good to write to your Dollie. Your letters
always do me more good than anything in the world - except seeing
you - could. I have not burnt any of them, and I am not going to, dearest, as
long as I live. My darling, I have here a little note that you wrote at
Iconium once and sent to me by Jake Fees, just before we left
Woodside. I have kept it all this while, and I read it now every few
days. I have nothing of yours here, but your letters, and your old blouse
coat. I look at that often. I can't wash it. I want to keep it just as you
wore it. There is not gold enough to buy it of me, or one line of your letters.
Mrs. Bourne wouldn't let me come back last night, so I staid and
came this morning. It is pretty cold, but the sun shines. I went to
Tom's store and bought calico to make me a sun bonnet. He was very
obliging. Isaiah went to the office and got my letters and sent them to
me, as soon as the mail came. I didn't talk five minutes with them.
They say Henry is well, excepting ^{his} feet. He can't walk yet. I don't
know what ails his feet. I had a very pleasant visit at Bourne's.
They are first-rate people. I slept in the room where I first prom-
ised to be yours. Do you remember that rainy Sunday, years and
years ago? I do, my dear one. The first time I staid there, and slept
in that room, I cried nearly all night. I couldn't help it, darling.
And the first time you ever kissed me, I was sitting in that room, by
the fire, just as I sat last night. I thought of every thing, and I
couldn't sleep much. But I am glad of one thing my own love.

A long time ago, I promised, right there, to give myself to you, and
I have kept the promise. Are not you glad too, love? If there ever
was a promise sacredly kept on earth, that one has been, and
shall be, to the end. I feel blue to day, and not one bit like
writing; and I wouldn't try to write to any one else. But I will talk to
my "Booies." I saw several daily papers last night, and the news
is not cheering. I fear you will be in the next battle at Vicksburg.
Oh, darling how can I bear it? I have not learned a word yet about
Mott or Jimmy. I don't know but they are both killed. If it were
you, instead of them, I don't know how I could live. Even while I am
writing this, you may be on your way there. I am afraid you are. I
know we must take Vicksburg, but I am terrified at the thought
of what I may have to pay for it. God help us all!
I feel badly about Humphrey coming home; not that I want him
to stay if he is not able, but it will be so hard to see him come
while you are left. And then you may miss him a good deal.
He would have cared for you, if you should be sick. But I will try
not to be selfish, not to grudge Julia her happiness. She takes it
very hard about him. She will be proud when she hears it, and
I don't blame her. You must send me lots of letters by him, when
he comes - and keepsakes - anything love that you can send your
Dollie. I don't care how simple or worthless in itself, it may be, so it
something your hands have touched, something from you to me.

I have been thinking a good deal about going home. If I can't go to you my loved one, I would rather be at home. It looks badly, dearest for me to go anywhere else to stay after your leaving me at father's. People don't understand it, and if they knew the facts they would all except two or three widow women, blame us, and not them. You have no idea, darling, how little genuine loyalty there is in this community. Treason is fashionable here. People say boldly that they wish or hope this state may secede! and the party now in power here are doing their best to take her out of the union. These things being so my good darling, why need I stay here, if I can't go to you, or do any thing for you? If I could, I would stay here or any place else in the world. You know that, don't you dear one? I want to go to you, and stay with you, above everything else. But, if I can't do that, I want to go home. If Humphrey comes I expect they will go back to Iowa. Had not I better go with them? I can hear from you there dear nearly as often as I can here—though not quite as late news—and I can have a horse of our own to ride to the office, and can be independent. This would be a great deal, my sweet love. Here, I can't get a letter mailed to you without being dependant on some body. This is pretty hard to bear sometimes. Here they are as good to me as they can be but there is only a house full of women of us, and now, that the weather has got so bad, they can't help themselves hardly. We have had a great time feeding and making fires since the snow fell. It is not so nice living alone as it was while the weather was warm. Still we get on very well. I would not care for a little inconvenience in this way. But I am doing nothing to profit ourselves or any one else. And I am a little homesick to tell the truth. And then again if you should be able sometime to come to see me, I think you would rather come to our home, than to come here. I know you could enjoy your visit much better. Don't you think so darling? I am afraid if I stay here you will never try to come to see me. I am darling

Illinois, Arkansas

Jan. 30th 1863

My Darling,

The clouds have cleared a way, & the morning is tolerably fine. Night before last it commenced raining about ten o'clock & rained on till yesterday evening. Last night was a tolerably good night for the boys who were out on picket. But you had better believe the night before was bad. It rained all night long. But after all we kept tolerably dry. I did not get wet much. Neither did the boys. We neither saw nor heard any thing worth noticing.

But last night, on the same post the boys fired on a rebel who was trying to creep up on them. They missed him, & ^{he} got away.

Capt. Sidney was out last night. This morning when he came in he brought a rebel in with him, who crept up on ^{one} of his boys who fired on him, but missed. He then halted him & called for the Sergeant, who took him in charge. We don't mind picketing when the weather is good, although we don't get to sleep any.

There are several of the boys sick again. Thomas Tucker is no better. I believe I told you about him the last time I wrote you. I have not got him started for home yet. I wish he was there with his friends. He can't be of any use here.

Henderson is sick in Hospital. He has Pneumonia, but not very bad. Albert Hancock is quite unwell this morning. All of the rest of the boys are doing tolerably well. Jake Grimes is better, although he is very much out of heart.

I believe I will stop writing Dollie for a while till the mail comes in & see if there won't be some letters from you. I think I will get two or three.

Three o'clock P.M. No letter yet Dollie. I was almost sure I would get some from you, but I did not. The last was last Thursday I believe. That Dollie is a long time for me to do without a letter. But then I know you have written & started them, so it is not your fault. But how can I help wanting them when you write such good letters. They are worth more to me than anything else here. People at home may think "if they were in the army" that they would like to hear from home. But they can't mean appreciate how much

good I would do them. They can't mean but how glad the boys are every time a letter comes for them. They are in better spirits. They are more willing to do their duty. I am the same way, Dollie only it don't do me much good to get letters from any one but Dollie. I have other friends but what is that to me if I can't hear from you. What would every body else be to me if you were gone. Then why do I want to hear from any person else when I can't hear from you. If you don't write they need not for I won't pay much attention to them.

We have a new paper the first we have had since last Sunday was a week. Lint may bought it. He is sitting by the fire reading it. It is the Memphis Bulletin - a sort of a semi-weekly paper, contains ^{little} news, but plenty of encouragement for the rebels. When he gets through reading it I am going to look over it. I think it will do me some good to read what little news there is in it any how - if I do get mad over the concern.

Nine o'clock P.M. I have just come up from the mess quarters. Albert Hancock is quite sick - suffering again. I think he will be better in a few days. The orderly is not well this evening. He ^{has} Diarrhea but is able to do his duty. Lint May's health is about as usual. His discharge has not come on yet, so need not look for him yet awhile. When he comes he will tell you all about, how we are getting along. The boys I think like us pretty well. They may have something against us that we know nothing of, but it can't be much. We hear no grumbling. We don't know yet who will be Orderly, probably Henry Swallow. It may be ^{we} will let the boys elect him.

Write me all the news you know Dollie. Be sure & keep posted on the war so you can tell me when I come home.

Write me all you know about fathers folks. What they are doing, what they say about the war, what they say about us - you & I Dollie.

Have you been there yet, have you heard what they say about your not staying there. Write me all of these things, for of course I would like to hear it all.

If ever I come by there after you Dollie my stay will ^{be} short
very short. But then it will ^{not} be our fault. They surely cant expect
me to stay long. I wont stay long, I wont stay where I cant
talk about this war. When I go home I will have nothing to do
with any man who has ^{not} been loyal to this Government. But I will
wait & talk about this when we meet.

The talk is now that we will be paid off before long. If Congress
has provided the money we will surely get some of it soon. We are all
short of that precious article, at the present time. But after all
a fellow can get a long in the service with but little money.

Lieut May is going to bed. I will quit writing & go to bed & think
of Dollie till I go to sleep then if I can I will dream of her the rest
of the night. Sometimes I dream of Dollie & sometimes I dream
of shooting the rebels. I wish I could always dream of you my
Darling I do. When I get home this time I think I will stay
there with you. So dont be uneasy about my forgetting you
That is impossible. Goodly love,

Will Permitt

Helena Jan 23rd 1862

My Good Dollie,

It is already quite late, but as I have the blues a little I thought I would talk to my Dear & little sister, not that I have any thing new to write, but because I love to talk to you when I am lonely. From some cause I don't know what. Mostly May, I am talking to me about old times this evening, & as usual it makes me a little sad, not because I wanted to be, for I always when the blues come a stage, but because I could not help it. My life in Illinois came up, a thing I have not thought of as I have of for a year or more. It always makes me blue, Dollie you know for me to think of my first life - I have done so little. (What was I made for? To do nothing all my life? It is an excellent fact that I have not done much during the 32 years I have lived. Whether I will live to do anything worthy of a man or not is yet to be tried. If we judge the future by the past I will not. Time will only tell, I must wait.

I picked up a book of Mills this evening in little writing, "It said the writer to write a good letter must have a clear vision of the subject matter." If that be the case under all circumstances, you will not get a good letter from me this time, my Dollie.

Jan 20th three o'clock P.M. The date of this letter at the head is not correct. It should be the 24th. I speak of it as you will think I am two days writing one letter. You know I don't generally keep one letter on hand that long.

Capt. Phillips is back to the fight again. The boys say he could not get a Discharge. That is what is the matter. His discharge would not be accepted. The Col. says now that it was never sent up. It may be the case but it was not Capt. Phillips' fault. At St Louis he tried to get the Surgeons to give him a certificate of disability, but they would not do it. At Memphis he wrote out his discharge on a sheet of foolscap paper stating the cause of his disability & that he regretted very much having to resign. Some one happened to get to see it before he handed it in, & told him that was not the way to write a resignation. So then for me were just about to start for this place, asked Dr. Cousins if he would not write it for him. The Dr. told him he would, & sent it up with the certificate of disability. With that understanding Phillips went to St Louis on a hospital boat that started the same day we started here. But when Cousins came to write the discharge, the Capt. was not there to sign it & of course it was worth while to send it up without Phillips' name to it. So I suppose when he went to St Louis, & waited a reasonable length of time for his discharge, as the boys call it, he thought it best to come

back to the Regt. When he came in this morning, he told every person he met 'he wanted to see the boys, so bad, he ~~could~~ not stay any longer. Poor fellow. If it had been one I would have gone home, I would ^{as} have soon be dishonorably discharged from the service, as to remain in it, in such a dishonorable manner. I'll him go it, however it will suit him & his friends when he gets back where he lives, in Iowa. He can tell them that he went in to the service to get shot of the Draft, & as soon as he found there was going to be no Draft to amount to anything, he gave his best to get out. I don't envy him, his reputation here.

The news from every quarter to day is rather conflicting. From below we have it that the water is running through the Canal at Hickslong, to the depth of five feet, & that one Gun Boat has run through & gone down to get some from Banks. The report says there is three feet of blue clay in the bottom of the channel, that the water doesn't wash out. There are sixteen regt working, taking it out, besides all the pirogues they can get. Whether it is correct or not I am unable to say. They believe it here at head quarters, the fountain of all knowledge. I am inclined to believe it myself, since head quarters think it is true.

The news from the east is that the army has not crossed the Rappahannock (I don't know whether that word is spelled right or not). That Burnside is superseded by Hooker. I don't know whether to believe it or not. You no doubt have heard the correct news before this, We may in a day or two.

Our Brigade is all here now I believe. Gen Fiske is our Brigadier. We can't tell when we will go down the river. We may not go at all. We here don't know here one day what ^{we} will do the next. But let me tell you one thing Dollie. I want you to do - or not to do - rather don't be uneasy. If you say you will do as I tell you. Then don't be unnecessarily troubled about your Peaches. She will do the best he can for himself & that is all any one can do here Dollie. Every one who is in the army runs the risks of a soldier. We can't be soldiers without running such risks. Be hopeful, then my sweet Dollie, I will come to you after while, when we have decided whether we have a County to live in or not. If we have no County, my Darling, we will have no place to live.

You seem to be uneasy about the way Col Kittredge & I are getting a long. Let me tell you it is with us just now. We all got our Commissions a few days ago & they all date in the fourth day of Oct. So you see no one of us can claim rank over an other. This the Col says will not do. Which I think is very true. For instance were it necessary for a Capt. to command the Regt. - which is frequently the case, we

would not know who to give the Command to, or who Command to obey
For this reason it is necessary to know who the ranking Capt. is. The question
comes up, how are we to determine it? By lot the Col. says. (We tell him to
show us the law & we will act as he says. He says he will not split hairs with
us. "But" says he last Sunday evening "you gentlemen must determine this
matter, or do the other thing, which other thing will not be very pleasant". Be
sure you are right & then go & head Col. says I. (When you have the law on your
side & ^{you} want any thing done Col. have it done I will submit. But sir, says I
when the law is in my favor you must expect me to have the benefit of it,
if I can get at the proper authority to have it dealt out. I am always willing
to abide by the law. That got him a little, for ^{he} pays very little attention to the
Regulations. (Not changing the subject, but just here let me tell you that the G/M
wanted us the other to receive twenty days rations at one time, when the Regulations
provides, that they shall be issued, while in the field, for from five to ten
days. (We would not take them. The law was to much. That is specimen of their law
There ^{are} eight of us who are concerned in this matter of rank. Five out of the eight
are in favor of giving it to me. Because they say I am wounded & ought to
have it. You need not be uneasy when I have such backing as that. But
the Col. says - or did say last Sunday evening. that we had to determine the
matter immediately or do the other thing. (We did not determine. Neither have
we done that other thing he spoke of. I supposed he would have all eight of us
under arrest before this time. But I guess he is afraid to do that. I will
keep where there will be no danger. I will assure you of that. I am
perfectly easy about it now. I don't say any thing about it to any one.
When the time comes I will act right & honorable. The Capts. all say I have acted hon-
orable in the matter so far more so than they could have asked. Now my Darling
I have told you all about this matter, & I hope you will still not be uneasy about
it any more. The Col. & I will get along all right.

I let the Company elect an orderly Sergeant, of ^{ten} Wes. May was promoted
to 1st Lieut. (Who do you mean they elected? I will tell you - I Humphrey has
not already. They elected Henry Swallow almost unanimously. He is acting
now. He will make a first rate Orderly. He will not be a good Commander
but he will be clever, & can do the business well - very well

What else shall I write about home. That Cracker that keeps sake I guess. We don't eat them here all of the time. Keep it till I come home - that is if you have not eaten it up before you get this letter. The ink stand, you fill with ink & write out of it, I do every till I get home. Write something every day you can my Dollie.

My room is getting cold (May, you want me to take good care of myself, so I will have to quit & go to bed & finish this in the morning if I write any more.

Saturday morning early. I guess Dollie I will be two days writing this letter. Probably I had better stop here, I will.

No news this morning. I think I will get a letter from you to day, when the mail gets up. It will be up about eleven o'clock. There is nothing new this morning. The boys have no news yet to day, which is a very uncommon thing. In our mess, when ever any goes out, & fails to bring in any extraordinary news they make him carry a pottle of water. None of them have been out yet.

I love you this morning Dollie with all of my heart. Don't doubt me here. Will & I are quite hearty.

I will not take time to read this. If there are errors - which no doubt there are plenty, look over them. You will know what I mean.

Goodly my Darling

Will. Vermilion

Friday Evening, Jan 23rd 1863

My Good Darling:

I wrote to you yesterday, but my letter was a poor thing, and I promised to send you a better one to day. But I am afraid I shall fail, my love. I am not very well. I have a bad cold, and you see how nervous I am. But I will do my best. I won't neglect my dear one.

Julie didn't go to the office yesterday. We had a chance to send our letters to town, and she had neuralgia, and aunt Anne was not willing for her to go out. I wish she could get a letter. I might hear something from you.

But I must wait till Saturday. If I don't hear them I shall be nearly wild. I am so much more uneasy than I was at first, darling, I can hardly bear it. You are in danger now, every day, I know. And then I don't get used to the separation. I miss you more every day. I want to see you worse every hour. I don't know that I ought to write you about such things, but I can't help it. What else can I write about? I tell you all the news I hear. It is not good or interesting news. And the one thing that I ^{always} want to tell you, is that your Dollie loves you, as no man was ever loved before, and that she can't hardly live without you at all. I am astonished that I ever consented to your going. I don't know what possessed me, dearest. I don't indeed. I could not hear it now as I did then. But I don't blame you, sweet love; you did right. It is I

who are wrong. I wish I were braver. But I was never made for a heroine. I have been reading my Tribune to day. There is not much news in it. Greeley thinks we will have the offer of some foreign mediation soon. And he seems willing to leave the adjustment of our difficulties to Switzerland - if the rebels will agree to abide by her decision. At least, he urges, we should meet such an offer, in a friendly spirit and set ourselves right before the world. He doesn't seem discouraged at all. And seems to think the war is drawing to a close - in some way. Oh, if it only would end! You said once that I must cut out the good things and send you. I can't find anything here, that I think you would care for when you would get it - it would be so old. The Tribune has not been quite up to its own standard for a few weeks, which is accounted for I think by the fact that Greeley himself has been in Washington, that long. The papers say he has had several long interviews with the President. I was glad to hear that. Things seem to go very smoothly at Washington just now. Everything would be promising now, if it were not for these detestable traitors in the North. If we are defeated and our cause lost, we may thank them, and not the Southern rebels for it. But let us not despair, my good darling. We can get along if everybody else can. It will all be well, in a few years - if we can only live to see it. We little dreamed three years ago that we were to live in such eventful times! We can never complain again that our lives had not enough of activity and interest in them.

As to myself dearest, I feel ashamed of the life I am living. It is not worthy of a patriotic American woman. I ought to be up and doing for the cause! Doing something however humble. I shall always be ashamed of myself, I think. And I am afraid my husband will be ashamed of me too. I want to make myself worthy of you, sweet Lou. But I can do nothing here, and that makes me want to go home. I can do nothing for you here darling, and since I learned this I have wanted to be off. I will wait, though, till you tell me what to do. Ever since you left me I have constantly tried to do just what I thought you would approve if you were here. I act all the time with reference to your wishes, my dear one. And I will always. Whom else, in all the world, have I to please? They are all getting on here as usual. Lina is going home with Jacob Peck, and will stay out there and go to school. Emily and I have made a large bouquet of flowers, this week. They are very pretty. Aunt Anne is going to send them to Martha. I worked at them darling, but I had no heart in the work. I cared nothing about them. I thought all the time of a little tent pitched on the bank of the "Great River," and my heart went out to the dear, lonely occupants, and I felt that to be there with you to comfort you and care for you would be a far richer boon, than to ^{be} given to dwell in the palace of kings. If you never come home to your Dottie, she will be left without one object or interest in life. I feel this more and more every day. But you will come home. You must come, darling.

I have been making a collar for Jane. It will please her. It is a plain one with "tutting" around it. The weather is warm and cloudy. The roads as bad as they can be. Lige McCarty is at Memphis speculating in cotton! His wife is with him. She is sickly, and they think she won't live long. How dearest my sheet is filled, but I can't quit writing without telling you again how much I love you, and want to see you. There are so many things I want you to write me darling. If I can't see your face, it is the greatest comfort in the world to get a letter from you. Be good, as you have been to write to me my love, and tell me all about yourself. That is what I want to hear.

God bless you, my pet.

Dollie

My Col. Helena Jan 23rd 1863

My Willie,

I am just off picket again. We go out at eight o'clock A.M. & remain out twenty-four hours. I make it my business to remain up all night. The ^{order} command of the picket has no business to sleep. We consider there is no danger here, except from the Guamillos, but they need watching all of the time. They slip up & capture the boys every opportunity. Twenty six of the 98th Iowa got taken prisoner four or five weeks ago. It was in consequence of the carelessness of their commander. Some of them have been paroled & have come in. We don't want the 36th to be taken in, in that way.

We have a right to have some news here. The expedition up White river has returned. They found nothing very formidable. McClanahan's Division of Grant's Army has gone down the river. We are looking for Grant & the rest tomorrow. The Iowa sixth is not coming, so says rumor. There is going to be a big effort made against Bickelburg. It is thought here they will besiege it. We can't tell whether we will have to go or not. It is generally thought we will be left to guard this place. I think we will myself. Don't be uneasy. I will write if we go, so you will know where I am. The boys are willing to go.

The authorities here are organizing a Negro Regiment. While on picket yesterday evening I got out a couple of Negroes, who were going out to recruit. They gave them five days to return in, with the privilege of bringing in as many as they pleased. They said they could get plenty of them. There are plenty of them here.

While on picket yesterday I got acquainted with a Lieut. Greenwood who used to belong to Fremont's Body Guard. He was in the fight the Body Guard had at Springfield. He was a German & not very interesting, except in his marching of that fight. He belongs to the 48th Mo. Cavalry.

Jan 24th. We have orders to pack up, probably for Bickelburg. Grant is going to command the expedition this time, or at least that portion of it, we go under or in. It is thought there will be near one hundred thousand men in the expedition going down the river; then if Banks gets up from the other side we will be all right. Don't be uneasy my Darling.

Lieut. Gray will get a furlow to morrow I think. I have been trying to think of something to send you my Willie, but I have nothing but love

That & these few lines we all this time. It may be a good while before I hear from you again & it may be still longer before you hear from me Dollie, but be cheerful, I will write you just as soon as possible. The first mail up shall bring you a letter from me. Be sure of that. There may be hard fighting to do, but other we have done hard fighting for this Country, & why should not I I have a steel armor that covers me quite well. It will resist any rifle shot, I intend to wear it, not through cowardice but because I consider it my duty to protect myself in every manner possible. Don't speak of it to any one Dollie the boys here don't know it.

I have to much to do to write more now my Darling. I am cheerful the boys are all cheerful. I hope Dollie is cheerful.

(Keep writing Dollie I will get your letter some time)
Heave you father express you forty or fifty Dollars. Yes have him express you all he has but enough to buy a horse

Goodby my own Darling

Willie Harrison

Sunday Evening, Jan. 25, 1869

My Own Darling:

I wanted to hear from you so much, that I could hardly wait till Saturday, but it came at last, dear, and I got no letter. I have not had one from you for more than a week. The last I got was written the 12th. That has been nearly three weeks ago. I am so uneasy about you, darling, that I hardly know what I am doing half my time. I don't doubt you, my love; I know, if you are well, that you have written to your Dollie. But I am afraid you are sick. Then if you have written, I may never get the letters. I do try to wait in patience and hope that it will be all right yet. But you know how your Dollie loves you, and that you are all the world to her. How can I be patient and contented? I am at father's to day, darling. Yesterday, just as we were going to dinner, John came for me, and brought a horse and saddle. I wanted to come and see Henry and Jane and all of them, before I started home - I have told you darling, that I want to go home when Humphrey comes - but I was afraid you would not like it, and I didn't know what to do. I went to aunt Anne and asked her advice. She said I ought to come and make them a visit anyhow. Then I could go back there. If I didn't come, she was afraid father's folks would all blame her, and think she had "put me up to mischief." Father has been her preacher, for twentyfive years, and

she thinks a great deal of him, as a preacher. There was no truth at all in the report we heard about their disagreement. She said she didn't want me to hurt their feelings, and I must bear with their politics while I staid. When I get home and you come back, I will have some body to take care of me, and we could do as we like. Julia and Emily agreed with her. They all know that I should find no one here to take my part if I come out and told them I couldn't stay for political reasons. How you won't think hard of me for coming, will you darling. They all said you would be willing if you could be here yourself, a little while and see just how we are situated. I think you would too. If fact there was nothing else I could do. I told aunt Anne I would go back there as soon as I could get back. I left my trunk and most of my things. I had the blues, dear love, when I came, because I was doing something you had told me not to do. But I was alone my pet, I had no "Peaches" to do any thing for me, or to tell me what to do, and I had to do the best I could under the circumstances. If I have done wrong, dear one, you must scold me, but don't say any thing to them here to make them mad at me, dear. I do hope Humphrey will come soon, and I can go home. May I dearest? They all seemed glad to see me here, and they are just as kind to me as they can be. Henry is sitting up all the time, and can walk a little, but he looks badly yet. He is like a skeleton almost. The rest of them here are well, and doing as of old. Isaiah is not

strong. He coughs and spits blood, and looks very bad. I am afraid
darling, he won't live long. They say Tom is very uneasy about him.
They are all anxious about you now. Mother laments a great deal a-
bout you. And they haven't said one word against the war. The
truth is, I think, they are pretty badly scared about the troubles
at home. They see now, how the men they elected to office, are keep-
ing the promises they made, to end the war. I had a plain talk
with John as we came along yesterday. He asked me, as soon as we
started what I thought of the aspect of affairs. I told him all I did
think. That I believed the war would be moved from Kentucky to Ind-
and that every man who voted for this democratic legislature, would
have to assume his share of the responsibility. They were the very men
who would have to answer to God for it. John didn't know what
to say, and at last he burst out with "Well, I didn't think it! I didn't
believe things would go the way they have." He says father is com-
ing around, too. He don't talk at all, as he did before. Why even
a blind man, darling, can see who is making the trouble here.
Then another thing hit him. - They have just got a letter from
one of your cousins in Kentucky - Green Stevens his name is, all
honor to it! He said a good deal about the war there, and that he and
his house were standing under the Stars and Stripes that floated
over Washington. He called the rebels "hell hounds," and said he
wished he had the power to blow them all to eternity in a

minute, and other hood, but, righteous things about them. This, coming from a Southern man, I think staggered them all. It will have its influence. Henry gets mad and pitches in as usual, and no one disputes with him now. He says if they want war here, let them have it. He dont care how soon. If it comes to blows, dearest I believe, they will every one be converted! When they were sympathizing ^{with} the rebels, they never dreamed that anybody would conclude they wanted to secede themselves. They are caught in a trap of their own making. But I have told you all I know on this subject. I cant write much my darling. I didnt sleep any hardly last night, and my head aches to day. Amanda was here all night. Jane and I are going to her house tomorrow evening, and then we are going to see Ellen Kempton. I have not been there yet. I told them that I thought I would start home in two weeks, and about Humphreys coming. If he dont come, or dont go home, I can go alone. They insist on my staying till spring, but I told them I couldnt stay any longer. Oh, dear one, I do want to see you and talk with you so much. If I go home I shall tell Dr. Brewton to forward all my letters to I can run, as fast as they come here. I will get them all. I got one from Matt. last night. He is at Grand Junction Miss. He was well, and was not at Vicksburg at all. But he expects to go there now. He says he expects to serve all his time out if he dont get killed at Vicksburg. He believes in Gen. Sherman. He said he expected to meet you and Will, at Vicksburg. He seems discouraged. Poor fellow! I have not heard from Jimmy since the Springfield battle. There was a rumor Friday that Burnside was fighting. I have heard nothing since. But a hard battle is pending in Virginia. I can hear nothing from Helene or below, any more, the papers say there are no boats up. This may be the reason that I get no letters from you. I want to be with you, my love. I wish I were beside you this moment, and I would stay with you, in life or death. I am sorry that I didnt go to you before you got so far away. I could live in your tent. I could nurse in some hospital. I could do something. I know I could, my pet. Now dear please forgive me, if I have done wrong by coming here. I will only stay a few days. When I leave now I shall tell them "goodby." I will start home from aunt Annies. I look for May in a week from now. I dont think they will stop here many days. I will write again to morrow, and try to do it better. Good night, my own sweet love. Forgive your Dallis

I had a cold but I am better to day. He will come home tomorrow. He needs see my dad, but if we don't we can go to day after. Mother says she will send my letter to the office this evening. Is the good care of your money? Well we have you see getting on there with three dollars and some change. I will send you some more money as soon as I can.

[1867]

Tuesday Morning, Jan. 27,

My Dearest Love: I tried to write you Sunday, but I was not very well, and I couldn't write. I will try to finish my letter this morning. I can't send it till tomorrow, but you shall have a long one then. I wonder if you are as glad to get a long letter as I always am. We didn't go to Amanda's yesterday. It rained all day long, and last night snowed. This morning it is cold and cloudy. I guess we will go this afternoon. I don't want to go much, but Jane says I must, and if I do it will be just to please her. I would rather wait for a pleasant day. She says if we don't go when we can, something will happen, and we won't get there at all.

Mother is weaving this morning. Jane is sewing, father is hauling wood, Preason is whistling, Henry, in the other room singing. John is gone to work at his place. I forgot to tell you that he has bought 80 acres of land. It is the place that Dave Mullinnis first lived on after he was married. John gave 1400 dollars for it. They all seem very kind to me. They know I am not going to stay long. Yesterday mother gave me a beautiful new blanket. I thought you would not want it, dear one, and I didn't take it. I told her I couldn't take it home, that my trunk would be full. Did I do right about it darling? I have taken nothing from them but yarn

enough to knit you, and myself, each a pair of stockings. I wish I could send yours to you. I am afraid you are needing them. I can't write darling, to do any good. I can't any more till I hear from you. You see that yourself, don't you love? I will go to Amanda's and try to pass the time till tomorrow evening, and I will surely get letters from you. Surely, dear love. Julia said if she got letters and learned anything of interest to me, while I staid here, she would come and tell me. But if she can get letters, I can, for you are a great deal better to write now than he is, ^YHumphrey I mean - for all he set out so valiantly at first. Julia had only heard from him once, in four weeks, when I came away. But I suppose he thought he would soon be home, and could tell her every thing. Are you sorry he is coming, darling? Shall you miss him much? I was afraid you were out of money. I was really troubled about it, but the papers say the troops are all to be paid immediately - the last dollar that is due them. Indeed it is time! I think you have been paid before now. You will have plenty of money then, darling, and I want you to try and live comfortably, if you possibly can. Get you something good to eat, & a good place to sleep. Money will do almost anything. I never sit down to eat without thinking of you, and wondering what you are eating. I wish I could know what you will have for dinner to day. Jane is going to make us a blackberry pie. You would like that.

I have heard no war news, this week. If the weather should be favorable I think there will be hard fighting on the Rappahannock very soon. Burnside's army has become dreadfully demoralized since his repulse at Fredericksburg, and he must fight or do something. I still have faith in Burnside. He will do good service ^{to} the cause yet I think. I have heard nothing from Rosecrans for several days. I am anxious about matters in his Department. And Vicksburg! I would give any thing in the world to hear good news now from Vicksburg. I am afraid you are there, or one, or will go there. My hope is that Rosecrans will fight the rebels again in Tenn and defeat them. If he does, I think they will evacuate Vicksburg, as they did Columbus, without fighting. Aside, from the divisions in the North, their cause is getting desperate. They can't, surely, hold out much longer. I have nothing reliable from Illinois for several days. There was a rumor that she had seceded, but I think it was not true then. But her Legislature is acting worse, if possible than Indiana's. What they do, will be done soon in both states. Dr. Brenton has just come from Mattoon Ill., and he says the people there are arming themselves, and preparing for the struggle. They all think it will come. They are getting arms, too, it is said, at Danville, and other places in this state. Eckels of Greencastle, says there are two thousand men in Putnam County just awaiting the tap of the drum to rise against the Administration.

He is the leader of the traitors in this county. Abe McCarty says he is the shrewdest man and the best public speaker in this state! I have been familiar with his history all my life, and I never heard any thing like that of him before. Did you, darling? He ought to be hung, and I hope he will be, some day. But the strongest side is the right side, with most of the people here. They will get their reward. How darling I will quit. I make such a poor out, I fear you are tired. I have sent you nine letters since new years. Tell me whether you got my likeness, and how you like it. Tell me everything, my pet. Oh, darling I do want to see you so much. If I go home, won't you try to come and see your Dollie? I want to get home before Mullinn's moves from Woodside, if I can. You never have told me darling what you want me to do, but I am sure you will tell me to go. ~~How~~ ^{How} is a paradise compared to this country. Goodly my precious love. I love you, and think of you every minute I live. I lay and studied about you all night nearly, last night. I don't want to sleep. I will sleep after my dear one, comes home safe. Goodly, and may God bless you
Dollie

Holena Jan. 27th 1863

My Good Dollie,

I wrote you night before last, but Humphrey has the letter in his pocket. I gave it to him, thinking he would get home sooner than it could get there by mail. He will no doubt. That you will find to be a short letter, for there every thing there was commotion. Since then we have become quiet again. The reason is we are not going to picket now. Night before last when every thing was going on rapidly for the moment, orders came from Gen. McClelland, ordering us to remain here for the present, for he had not dry ground enough at Millboro' to land (that is on dry ground) what troops he had there. The "Kwaker master" had picked up all of our traps on board the Boat. He had to bring them nearly all back to day. Nearly all I say, because he turned a part of the rats over to the Post Commissary. This evening finds us all back in our cots, about as easy & comfortable. Each man is sitting around just as we did three or four days ago. Last night a half a lot of fun in two or three ways. One was with the boys. I was down at Sgt. Hancock's mess set a while with them. While I was there the boys got to talking about getting their pay. Dave Stewart spoke up & said, "when the Regt. got paid off there were a good many men who would desert & go home, that their pay was all that was keeping them now. Several of the boys spoke & sanctioned it. I told them I hoped there was no man in my Company who thought so little of himself as to desert. Dave Stewart said he would not be surprised if some of our Regt. deserted - our Company I mean. (Well says I "I am very glad you spoke of it boys, I have just been around the head quarters & says I" they

have heard of such talk there, & are going to have an investigation, & ascertain just what every man who has been talking so, has said. And say I "boys you will be called upon to tell all you have heard on the subject, & just who you have heard heard say it." Every man of them rushed as quick as if he had been shot. I went on and talked to them for some time about it and told them what danger there was in talking so, & especially what a miserable thing a man was that had deserted. They said nothing more about it while I staid. I left them all rather serious. This morning Stoneback tells me that they cannot get the hole thing after I left, & wonder who I would have called upon to testify. They were very much alarmed for fear something they had said would come out. I did it not because I was afraid someone would desert, but because it is wrong for any soldiers to talk so. It has a tendency to demoralize the army. I like to get to the bottom of every thing, & then it was to know to the real sense of what they are saying.

In the afternoon of June 25th with Lieut Wright. I yesterday while every thing in our camp was in commotion, & we had every thing packed up to start, some of the boys belonging to the 4th Ind. walked in to Lieut Wright & the Orderly's room and carried off every thing they had in the way of bunks, tables, stools &c. After we got orders to remain, he gathered up his concerns & walked into my room. I coolly asked him what he was going to do, & says he "I thought I would move in here" all right" says I "if you want to stay here it is right only but if you expect to remain here permanently you need not come for you can't do it, there is not room." What is the reason" says he, "there are" says I, "we wanted you to come in here a few days ago so we could use that room for a cock room, but ^{you} would not do that." Now says I you can't come it, you ought to have been sharper than to have let those boys carry off what little you had. So he went to work to day he & Orderly Swallow & fixed up their room over, and it did not take them long either.

"Do you ever get tired of such long letters" (Dollie they are my life now I could not do without them. Please send them on - I love them & I love the Dollie who writes them. I wish I had one every day. I don't think I don't like to read them - they are all I have to read - every thing

If you want to go home Dollie, go if you think you would be better satisfied. I want you to go where you will be best contented. But we don't get letters from there near as soon as we do from where you are. Then if any thing should happen me it would be harder for us if you were where you are. But let what may happen me I am not going to father to be cured for, I will assure you of that Dollie. If you go to Iowa you can't get mail but once a week. They don't carry the mail there but about often. That is all Dollie otherwise I much rather you were in Iowa. If you were where you could get a mail twice a week it would be all right. But talk to Humphrey & do what you think best. If you go home you must write to your father not to express that money for fear you should not be there. Write to him in time to get an answer before you start. If possible go to see O'Neals folks before you leave there.

It is very cold Dollie & cold in here, the fire has burned down. Humphrey had intended starting this evening but did not get off. He will go in the morning if he can get a boat. I shall send this by him if I don't get to write any more in the morning, Goodbye Dollie.

Wednesday morning.

I have not received your letter of the 30th. Don't be discouraged, I don't study much about it. Let the thing as it may I will do my duty. Let traitors hang at home if they want to when we get home we will settle them. Now is their time then will be ours. That is what we think.

You still want to go home Dollie. Well you may go, though it will be
so long then before we can hear from each other. Now it, but six days for a
letter to come from you to me & they come quite regular now. When you
get to Iowa, it will full two weeks for a letter to get here, & probably
longer than that for them to come on to you. This Dollie is the only thing in
the world that makes me hit - & ever imagine you had better stay where you are
If you go back to Iowa, where they will get you mail. Your father gets his
at Opeza, where they have a mail only one week. At Leominster they get it but
one week. You can go to Meravia or Sagony. I thought it would be easier
for you to go to Sagony than Meravia, & better, for there they have mail
twice a week. At Meravia they get mail but semi-weekly. I think of these
things Dollie & then do as you think best. If you want to go home so
& do the best you can. If you stay where you are till Spring, if I sick or hurt
in battle, you can meet me again I get to Paris. If you go to Iowa, then
not telling him long it will be before you can get home Dollie. If I have to
fight on the Mississippi River it will be between this & the time for flowers
to bloom in the Spring. Then would be a good time for you to go Dollie,
The thing will be over in three parts by that time. What do you think of it?
From where you are it is only about twenty hours travel to Paris. From Iowa -
your father it is nearly one week's travel - if not quite. If I ever had a
hint that would be a good deal to you poor dear Dollie. don't you
know it would. I don't let these things keep you from me if you want to go
I will get a long way home. Humphreys will tell you how utterly impossible it is
for you to come & stay here. Of all things that is the last my Darling
If you go home I am determined father & folks shall know what I think of
traitors. That is mine. While you are there I will not waste paper & time writing
to them. What I think of it let me tell you. Thos Davis was preaching
over at the school house a few weeks ago. He spoke in favor of the
Government, on Saturday or Sunday the seceders drove him off. They wouldn't
not let him preach.

Tell Aunt Anna & Emily. I thank them for their good wishes.
Such cheering words seldom reaches the seceder here. I don't think of them
often. My shut is about full my Darling. I want May will go in the
first Boat. Be cheerful Dollie. I will always love you, as I always
have. Goodbye home. We will always have to see that mail

Will Vermilion

Thursday Evening, Jan. 29, 1863

My Dearest Love:

I got two letters from you this morning. There was good news in them, and I feel ten years younger since I read them. No body ever got letters that did them more good - but then I think that about all your letters, the last is always the best. They were a long time coming. They were dated the 11th and 14th. I had not heard from you for so long, that I was dreadfully uneasy about you. I feared everything bad. But instead of being sick and suffering as I imagined, you are comfortable in your cabin, and getting fat! That is right, my pet. If I can hear such news from you all the time I could get on much better. Then I am so glad that there is a prospect of your staying at Helena. Aside from the danger, service in the field would be much harder on you, than the work ^{you} will have to do where you are. I hope you will stay there all winter. Oh, I wish I could see your cabin, see how you look at home. You must keep house right, darling, and be neat, and have clean things about you. I don't want you to sleep with John Wright, dear. Humphrey said when he was here that he wouldn't sleep with him because he was so filthy in his person and habits. And Humphrey could put up with a great deal in that respect that you could not.

When he comes away there will be no one you can sleep with. Will there, darling? I shall begin to look for him home now in a short time. I hope he will come soon. He will not come till he is paid off, of course, but I think you are paid before now.

You tell me to stay here and write you letters till spring, my love. Spring is nearly here darling. It will be here by the time I get home. But if you would really rather have me stay, I will, my pet. I will do anything that pleases you. I get "indignant" and out of patience oftentimes with the traitors here, who are trying to work us so much harm, and I feel like I must go home any how. They are an "abomination" in my eyes, and I want to get out of sight and hearing of them. I have told you about them, darling, and I think when you know it all you will want me to go home, - home to our brave, loyal Iowa. But you shall judge, my dear one. It shall be just as you say.

I got a letter yesterday from Jimmie. It was the first word I had heard of him since the Springfield fight. He was in the thickest of the battle. The balls flew around him like hail, and one spent ball struck him on the cheek, but didn't hurt him. That was the only one that touched him. His Capt. Blue was mortally wounded and died soon after. Fifteen others of his Company were wounded but none that I knew. I feel very sorry about Blue. Don't you dear? Poor fellow! He got his commission the day before Christmas, and Jimmie said he made a good Capt. I pity his young wife. Poor thing.

There is not much war news now, darling. I got three papers to day. I will send them all to you, and you can read them for yourself. They will be old, but Dollie can't help that, and they will be, as you say, better than none. Why didn't you tell me sooner dear one, and I would have been sending you some all this time. I know you can't do without papers. I will send you all mine and we will get to read the same paper again! You will hear before you get this that Burnside is relieved, and the command of the Army of the Potomac given to Hooker. Let us hope, my darling, that the right man is in the right place at last. I do most devoutly hope so. I am in pretty good spirits about the war. Our secesh Legislatures up here are quieted down wonderfully. The quit-may bode us no good, and may not last long. I can't tell. But I believe Lincoln is, at last, awake to his danger, and he will do his best to end the war speedily. He will surely try to finish the work while his nine months men are in the field. This time will be up about May. But you see and hear enough of war darling, without Dollie talking to you all the time on this subject. Tuesday Jane and I went to see Amanda. We had a very good visit. They are comfortably fixed about their house, and have plenty of every thing. They were glad to see us. Alice was coming after me Thursday, if I hadn't gone. Amanda had "lots" of nice things to eat. Fresh peaches and blackberries among the rest. They have

a big, rough log house, and they look as much like "old folks" as you ever saw in your life. The worst is Amanda, is not neat at all. In that respect things look worse than they did before she went there, mother says. Little Esther is the only bright thing about the place. And she looks out of place there I think. She thinks a great deal of her "aunt Mary", and would sleep with me. I don't believe she will live to grow up, darling. She is the image of her father, but she is not strong as he was at her age. She is growing up slender and shadowy, with a sunken chest, and a stoop in her shoulders. Amanda says she thinks she will go like her father and Davis. I want to buy her something nice before I go home.

Allie was very sociable and clever. He staid in the house and talked nearly all the time we were there. He is troubled about affairs here. He says we are just as sure to have civil war here, as if it were here now. He don't know how to stand it hardly. His neighbors say that they prefer Jeff Davis' government to Lincoln's!

He and Amanda are all right. They seem to agree about everything and she gets on very well with his children. He has three at home.

-They will have a larger family afterwhile! We came home next day the roads were frozen on top, and were nearly impossible. We could hardly get home at all. I don't want to venture out again while they are like they were then. Jane told me as we went up that she and young Wilcox are engaged, and mean to be married next fall. She has told no one else. They made this arrangement while I was at aunt Annie's. She said she needn't wait thinking she would go to stay a while with us, for they would never give her money enough to take her there. I told her if she would come, you would send her the money. I knew you would do it for her cheerfully, and she should have everything she needed while she staid. She nearly cried, and said it would be too much for us to do for her. But I think you would like to do it, dear. She wanted me to tell her what I thought about her marrying. I told her, I couldn't advise her, further than to "be sure she was right", before she went ahead." I don't know anything ^{about} the man. I hope she will do well. She likes him I know.

Friday Morning, Jan. 30th

My Darling: - I must write something to you this morning, not that there is anything to tell, but just because I love to talk to you. We are all well. Mother is weaving, Jane washing, father and the boys out gathering corn. Father was in just now, and told me to tell you that he is as hearty as he ever was in his life. And that when you get home he and mother are going to Iowa to spend a few weeks with us. Mother sends love to you, and says she wants to see you. They are very good to me, my dear one, and I am glad you are willing for me to come to see them. It is right, darling. And when we get home we will both feel better, than if I had hurt their feelings about it. Don't you know me with my pet? I don't want to do or say anything to them that I will be ashamed of or sorry for when I get home. But now I have really nothing to complain of. They ^{have} learned several things about us since I came here and I know they want to be good to me. I told them what you said about my going home, and they were pleased, and wanted me to give out going right away. I laughed at mother and told her they would hang me here directly, for being a traitor to their confederacy, and I had better get out of the way. They want me to stay till you can get a parlor to come and see me.

But I am afraid I would have to stay a long time for that my love.
And then I think you would enjoy your visit more if you were to come
home than you could here. We could not be together much here, in such
a large family, and Dollie couldn't cook you little suppers and set
them on the round table by the fire, and pet you and spoil you, like
she could at home. What do ^{you} think about it, darling? And then you would
not like most of the people you would see here, unless you should
be far more fortunate than I have. I have thought of everything, love,
and I came to the conclusion that you would much rather go home. I
want you to tell me though, all you think about it. How you, dear?
Henry is better. He has walked out to the kitchen once or twice. He
thinks he will be well in a few weeks. He says he has stayed in the
house so long that he don't want to go out doors much. He has some
disease of the kidneys that, mother says, troubles him more than any
thing else now. He has had it ever since he first got sick. He is
very good natured now, but he don't talk much like he did when
he was sick. I have been here nearly a week, and I begin to want to
see aunt Anne and the girls. Julia is cross if she has had no letters
yet. Father is going to Deer Creek to-morrow, and when he comes back
I shall hear from her. I want to go to see Ellen Bunyan before
I leave here. We will go Monday or Tuesday if the roads are so we
can. It would never do to go home without seeing where Ellen lives.
Jane and I are going to make some vair baskets too, next week

She is going to teach me to how to smoke them. We went and gathered
our willows yesterday. Jane and I could live sisters always. I hope she
will, some day, come to Iowa to live. I think Henry will come there
to see you when you get home. Cass Lewis and Lloyd Brinton
were in here just now. They look ragged and hard. I merely said
"good morning" to them. I would not like to live in this neighborhood
darning, at all. There are too many ignorant people living around.
I don't wonder that after you once got away, you never cared to come
back much. I used to wonder at it, love. Sometimes I feel sorry
that I ever came back to this country, it cost us so much; then
again I conclude that I have had the worth of my money. I should
always have wanted to come. Now I am cured. It will be a pretty
country in fifty years from now - and so will Iowa. If I had my
choice to have this farm of patches or Woodside, to live on all my days
I would take Woodside without a moment's hesitation. John and I set
and talk very often about business and farming &c. That is all he cares
to talk about, and it pleases him to have somebody to talk to who takes any
interest in such subjects. Sometimes we agree, and sometimes we don't.
I like John pretty well; though none of the rest seem to like him much.
I thank you for your map, darling. I can understand it perfectly. It
was just what I wanted. You are a good "Peaches," and I love you
with all my heart, my precious darling. You know I do.
I am glad you got the likeness safely, and that you think it a good one.

You can have a Dollie in your cabin with you now, if it is a mule one!
I will wait for you, darling, till you are paid off. But if you get money
in time try to send it by Humphrey. Have it taken large as possible.
I am going to send the one I have to town and have one taken from it
for mother. She wants to keep this one, but I can't let her have it.
Ought I to darling? when I think so much of it? But I know she wants one
and I will get one from it. I wish I could get Esther's for you while I am
here. She is the only child among us all, but she can't go to town now.
Now, love, I have filled my paper, and written a very poor letter, but
I felt like gossiping to you a little. I want to say more about going
to you, darling. I want to see you, but I know you can judge better than I.
So I give up all thought of that. Write to me often my good darling.
You will have more time to write, while you stay at Helena. Send me
some cotton seeds by Humphrey if you can. I want to raise some. Don't
laugh now, my pet. Love, my own good love. Don't forget to write to
Your Dollie