

Falmouth Va Dec 30th 1862

Ever Dear Wife, I rec'd a letter from you about 3 weeks ago, bearing date of Nov 23rd which I answered the same day. We broke Camp the next morning and started for Fredericksburg the City of the late Union slaughter. We marched si days and one night in succession and arrived on the banks of the Rappahannrek about one mile from Fredericksburg, up the river, where we are encamped now in sight of the City. Winford and C _____ and myself were sick but we went with the Reg't. and came up with them every night. We heard heavy cannonading every day until the day before we got there when the infantry were being slaughtered. But when we got there they had recrossed the river and buried their dead and got their wounded into the hospitals. The next morning Squire Payne and Abner and Jim and myself went to the Hospital to see Frank Pease who was wounded before he had a chance to fire his gun. He was wounded in the bowels, but is doing well. He thinks he shall get well again. I hope that you, nor any of my children will ever be called to see such a sight as I saw in that Hospital, lets cut off and being cut off and throwed out doors, and feet and hands and corpses lying on stretchers ready to be carried off and buried. Some frantic on account of wounds in the head, others dead and apparently unnoticed in the tents, whilst others were groaning seemingly in the agonies of death. And many slightly wounded and feeling good to think that they were likely to get home with their lives and get out of the army of which they are heartily sick. I rec'd a letter from Joe the second night after we started from Fairfax, I answered it the other day. I have not written to our folks but once since I left home, but I must write soon. I have waited from day to day to get a letter from you and have written two that have not been ans'd. I have waited patiently and looked wishfully for a letter from home and the loved ones there, and not the loved ones there, and not rec'ng any whilst the rest of the boys have rec'd. 4 or five each makes me feel a great deal of anxiety concerning your welfare. If you or the children are sick, do not keep it from me, but let me know all your cares and troubles. I am very well now excepting the breaking out on my legs which is pretty bad but my appetite is extremely good and the 1st & 2nd & 3rd Sergeants have been and are sick so I have had most all the duties of camp to do which makes it rather hard but I can stand it so long as the blessing of good health is continued as now. Last Sunday our Reg't. were called out to do Picket Duty. We were stationed on the North bank of the Rappahannrek River about a mile above our camp. The Rebs were on the opposite side in plain sight and in talking distance of us. The privates are very social, before the fight they used to come over and train with our boys, trade tobacco for coffee, shoes, clothing, and knives, etc. They have some since the fight but not so much as before when we were out. They had orders not to hold communication with us, and we had the same. A short time before the fight the rebel picket came over when the 66th were on picket on our side, and staid 2 or 3 hours with our boys, he said that they were sick of the war and wished it was ended. He made this proposition that we should bring Lincoln and they would bring Jeff and meet in the river and let them fight it out and the soldiers go home. The river is as wide as the Allegany at Redhouse and is very rocky, the bottom is all rock for a mile where we were on picket so that if anyone could cross on the rocks in places and looks beautiful. In some places the rocks are so large that trees grow on them. I was Sergeant of the Guard and our Capt. Was out with us, he and I went up the river along the lines we

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found some grapevines and clum the trees and shook them off, so we had all the frost grapes we wanted. They tasted some like fruit but had we been at home we should have said as for did they are sour. Jim had a letter from Bill Hart on Sunday last stating that Henry Thomas was buried on the 19th inst. Abner has had no letter yet, we told him yesterday, he takes to very hard. I feel very thankful every letter that I receive stating that my Partner in the conflicts of life and those precious little treasures entrusted to us are well, but as disease and death are abroad in the land doing their work of destruction I think it be (to say the least) a wonder if I should stay in the Army 3 yrs and return and find my family all as I left them, but I feel disposed to trust in that Power that has guided us thus far, for future guidance knowing he will do all things well. Pray for me, would be a useless phrase, as I know that your loving heart oftentimes goes up to God for guidance for me while here & a speedy return to the joys of my own fireside. I never witnessed such a change in the sentiment of any people in the same time as there is in the Army of the Potomac in the past 2 months not only in private but in officers, a Lieutenant handed a letter to me the other day whilst on picket that he had written to a friend giving a plain true & wholesale statement of the present condition of Army and the way it is managed at present, which one year ago would have caused him to be Cashier'd and tried for treason but it is talked out in plain words by the officers and privates now, and the facts are so palpable that there is nothing said about it. I believe I don't overestimate it when I say that 9 out of 10 of our Generals and Colonels do not see one day in a week when they are not under the influence of intoxicating liquor and it is a rare thing to see two of them meet but that one will hand the other an Canteen before they part, or express regret for not being able. My sympathies with a Republican form of Government are strong as ever, and my antipathy against Secession the same but I do protest against the way this war is carried on. But I do not think that President Lincoln or his Cabinet are altogether to blame, but a large majority of those employed by the Government have no busyness at home that pays so well so of course they want to make a long job of it, but enough of this. I am not homesick but would like to see the thing carried on successfully and unitedly till peace shall be restored to our country and we return to our homes to enjoy it. Squire Payne was here yesterday to spend New Years with us. He is in the Division Ambulance Corps so he is mostly out of danger, he says that during the slaughter on Saturday General Burnside was behind a large brick building on the side of the river with a spy glass watching the movements of the troops and got out of Brandy and had to send an Orderly to Headqtrs after some more, what is our Country coming to? I commenced this letter on the 30th by candlelight, and after we had got to bed I rec'd a letter from home. Oh! How welcome! I have many good visits with you in miniature but Oh! How I would like to enjoy the same in reality, but I dare not give way as it would disqualify for duty and consequently

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This letter was from Frank (Francis) to Caty (Catherine)