

In Camp 2 miles from Falmouth
Sunday Jan 25, 1863

Ever Dear Wife,

After so long I again take pencil in hand to let you know my whereabouts. I must confess that I have waited longer than I ought and longer than I have been wont in the past, but our Regt has been in such an unsettled condition that I have had but little chance to write. And as we have been expecting a fight for some time, I thought it might give you unnecessary uneasiness about my welfare to let you know it. But now as we are again in Camp and in somewhat of a settled condition I thought I would again write and let you know where I was, and where I have been etc. I recd a letter from you & Portius a short time ago for which I was thankful not only to hear from you but to hear that you were well and enjoying yourself so well. I would really like to step in and spend the evening with you and enjoy the delicious preparations found in your cupboard etc but that cannot be at present. Our Army has met another of those reversions so sumptuously served out to it. One week ago last Friday at about 1 Oclk our Regt had orders to take 3 days rations and go up the river on fatigue duty, making roads etc. But I had been sick with Dyssentery for about 10 days and the Dr. thought I hadnt better go so I staid in charge of the Camp. The Regt came back on Saturday night and we then recd orders to have 5 days rations on hand and be ready to march at one hour's notice. We were kept in suspense untill the next Saturday morn when we were ordered out. We marched up the River about 9 miles to where the Regt went before, what is called the American ford, where Genl Washington crossed with his troops in the Revolution. We staid there doing picket & fatigue duty untill Tuesday, when we were ordered back 3 miles to escort a Pontoon train down to the river which was said to be about 4 miles. We started with the train consisting of 45 waggons mostly drawn by six horses or mules each. About 5 Oclk P.M. we started for the river supposing that we should be there soon after dark and have the bridge ready to cross on in the morning. About dark it commenced raining, and the Captain in charge of the train got so drunk that he got on the wrong road and led us on through the rain and darkness up hill and down through the woods untill 3 Oclk in the morning when the men and teams became so exhausted that they couldnt go any further. So we thre up a few cedar brush to break off the wind, and built a fire and staid there in the rain till morning, when the mud was so deep that it was almost impossible to walk. We were then relieved by an Indiana Regt. We then collected in groups along the bank of a brook and built fires and made some coffee and had a soldiers breakfast. It still continuing to rain and the mud got so deep that the train didnt move more than a mile the next day. Talk about York State mud, but come down to Virginia if you want to see mud.

(It seemed as though the Almighty had thrown in his protest against the bloodshed & slaughter that must have ensued had those two armies been brought together in a struggle for supremacy) by sending this drenching rain to keep the attacking part from moving their weapons of warfare onward to the attack. We had about 200 cannon in all, they have most all been moved back now together with the troops to near where they started from. I saw 10 horses drawing one Caisson past our camp and then all the men that could get hold of it had to help them start it after they stop. We are all pretty well and have got

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a good shanty built to stay in, but do not know how long we shall stay here to enjoy it. I would like to have you all step in and make us a visit some evening will you do it?

We could see the enemy in large force on the opposite side of the river, awaiting our approach and seemingly well prepared for giving us a hearty reception, but I think if the weather had continued good so we could have moved our artillery and baggage, we could have drove them. But it would have been with heavy loss of life for us, as they had their position well chosen, and our troops have not had any pay for 8 & 11 months some of them and they declare they wont fight anymore untill they get their pay. I dont blame them do you?

Perhaps the families of those who have not had their pay for so long are suffering at home for the needfuls of life. I have written to our folks at Coldspring and to Burgett. He sent word to me that he had got my Acct. of \$2 against the Town allowed, and had the Supervisor order. I told him to pay it to the Collector. So there will probably be \$2 paid on my taxes. The talk is now that we are going to get our pay next Tuesday or Wednesday but I am afraid we shant get but 2 months pay now. But if I get that, it will help you a little and it certainly will me, as this is the last strip of paper that I have and this is borrowed. Whilst writing this I am sweetening my mouth with those delicacies sent me for a santa claus by those loving little hearts at home (of which I so often think but do not dwell upon). Tell the dear little creatures that they taste so good because they sent them. Oh! How I would like to squeeze them all. Tell them to be good children and if their Pa cant come home to see them he will write to them once in a while. Tell Clara & Lottie & Ida to learn to read, and Clara can learn to write so she can write a little letter to Pa if it aint more than six words. The rest of the boys have sent for boxes of things, and if you think it is best you may send me a few notions, a pair or two of your kind of socks and a little yarn for darning, a little can or crock of butter, dried fruit or preserves, or both, some paper & a good lead pencil, and such things as you may see it. If you conclude to send a box get the stuff into as small a box as you can and send as soon as you can as we do not know how long we shall stay here. It will cost at the rate of about \$3 per hundred lbs to Washington. You will have to send it by express. Father will know how, the rest of the boys have theirs sent to Washington, and we can get them from there. Direct F. Strickland Co. I 154 Regt N.Y.S.V. Washington D.C. care of John Manley Esq. John Manley is now our Sutler, Mr Petit the fawn man having gone home. Good night from your ever affectionate Husband Frank.

(On a small scrap of paper which was attached to this letter)

I had sent a letter to you a short time before I got the one from you and Portius which you have got long ere this I hope. Tell Portius that Virginia would be a very pleasant State in time of peace and in the absence of slavery. But the marks of both are plainly visible now, and the splendid peach orchards which yielded so abundantly in time of peace are now being fast destroyed by having Cavalry & Artillery horses tied to them. The apples in this State would scarcely make good cider in York State. The climate does not seem to be congenial for them. The soil of land is yellow almost as gold, but still it seems to be fertile. The weather is about the same as it is in York State in Oct. or the last of Sept. I am getting tires as my seat is composed of a strip of board about 3 inches wide laid across

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the top of a camp kettle and my writing desk is a board on my lap. If you dont believe it is a hard position to write in just try it. Abner is writing by my side, the rest of have gone out today on picket duty. Wont be back till Tuesday. Our candle is going out so good night from Frank.

Good morning. How are you? I hope you are well, we are going to build a fireplace today. Keep up good courage, you have the children to kiss for sweetening.
Frank

We have commenced to build our fireplace, and as it is most time for the mail to go out we have stopt to finish and mail our letters.

It is cloudy today but quite warm and the blue birds sing the same as they do in Apr. or the 1st of May in Erie County.

The red pepper you sent me came just in time as the paper that Mother put up for me was just gone. It is very useful here.

The boys got each a letter night before last from which we learned that Lodemia Rolph died on the 19th inst. Of Diptheria or black canker. Such is life. Although it is with great pleasure that I receive letters from home, yet I open them with trembling hands, thinking that perhaps they may convey to me the sad intelligence of the death of some of my family. I first look to see whether you have directed the letters from Evans or not. If I find your hand writing on the direction I feel somewhat relieved, but when I read the words we are all well it makes me feel thankful to the great Giver of all blessings. I frequently imagine that I can see you with that sweet little Nellie on your lap, and the little man boy by your side kissing each in turn, whilst I (who used to enjoy the same privilege) am now deprived of the chance of seeing my own or any other children. But it cannot last long. The iniquity committed in the management of this war will bring it to a close soon, perhaps not till I am dead but the end will come.

Give my love to all the folks keeping a good share for yourself & children. Kiss them all for me. Frank