

flinching, need have no fear of success-
ionists, and their infernal masked bat-
teries. No, no, my dear "Ped." I know
you too well for that, and such a thought
never entered my head, or that of any
one else who knows you as well
as I do. But the evils of "Arab Bells"
or "Arab Bells" are but slight in com-
parison with those of soldier-life. Then
at least once in two weeks, you had
the privilege of returning to civilization
to see friends and taste of palatable food.
There you were your own "nigger" with
the right to express just such opinions
as you thought were right with no
fear of the consequences. Then you had
the right to go where you chose to, and
had the satisfaction of knowing that
when you wished to retire at night
you had some sort of a burning place
to go to, with no lonely vigil to keep or
met ground to lie on. But it's slight-
ly different here, and if ever a class of
men lived like beasts, I think soldiers
must have the preference. It's simply
barbarous, and that word more nearly ex-
presses it than any other that I know
of. At the distance at which you are from
the seat of war, there is a sort of domestic
thrown about this mode of life
which danger makes

(1)

Wilmington, Del.
August 12th 61

My Dear Friend.

I am seldom in the
habit of making apologies to any one
so I should make some very hum-
ble ones to you for not having answered
your kind and welcome letter before.
The fact is I have considerable cor-
respondence to write, and nearly every-
thing unfavorable for it. The days are
very hot, and it is almost impossible
to make ourselves comfortable, by main-
taining a state of "perfect inactivity,"
let alone the fatigue of writing on your
knee in a cramped position. In the
evening we have parades and drills
to go through with, or else are shut
up three or four in a small tent.
We had one good place to write, but
a guard of our own men has shut us
off even from that, so that we are left
to shift as best we can for coolness and

(2)

shade. judging from your letter, I should say that you had had a very fine time at "Falling Seminary". Perhaps something besides good books, although I well know your devotion to them, may have had something to do with it. I understand you had a travelling companion, who was to sojourn in Fulton & the suburbs, and of course your gallantry would prevent your neglecting any unknown and unprotected female. That done, and who can tell what follows in the "brief space of three months". If the court understands herself, and she thinks she does, and if I understand the metaphorical poems with which you have surrounded the subject, I think that you mean to insinuate that I have been transgressing over forbidden territory. Coming from so reliable a source of course I must place confidence

(3)

in the assertion, especially as I have other good evidence to support it. If what you say is true, I must either be very smart or very fortunate as I left Roomville but a short time after you did, and consequently my time for mischief must have been very brief. I have no such high opinion of my luck or my ability, though I have always been reckoned considerable of an egotist. However I may be home again pretty soon and then we can discuss the matter to our mutual satisfaction. You need not have been at the trouble of telling me, that you lacked neither the patriotism nor the bravery to fly to the defence of your country, for I was fully satisfied on that point, already. The individual who could face the terrors of "Arab Hill", without

matter, but they are my honest sentiments and you know just how much they are worth. I guess I shall have to stop writing to the "Harvard" for you can't imagine what horrid blunders he makes in printing my letters. In my last letter, he makes it read, "244 parties of these (soldiers) are constantly engaged in playing 'bluff'," where I had not placed a single figure and in another place he makes two sentences and much nonsense, out of one straightforward sentence. My letters are poor enough at the best without receiving any help from blundering compositors, and stupid proof-readers. The boys from Boonville are doing as well as could be expected. None of them are sick, except a soldiering. We now have an idea isn't altogether as any of the rest. I would write more, but I have been ordered to put out my light once, and expect to receive it again every moment. Remember me to my friends and "cousins," and write as soon and as long as you can, and I'll try and do better, next time.

Yours sincere friends, Alexander.

all the more interesting. But to us it is worse than prosaic, and if it were not for the reception of letters, and the continual discussion of some mooted question. I don't know what would become of some of us. I can march, starve, fight, die or do most anything within a reasonable time, but I never can be "cabineted, crippled, confined" to camp and camp-life for two years. That is a settled thing in my mind. But I suppose I am wearying you by writing in this strain, so I will finish by giving you one word of advice, and that is, never go for a soldier. I suppose you are enjoying yourself with a "huge enjoyment" during vacation, although at the same time you have to labor pretty hard. I should

somewhat like to be with you, for I know there are some things within your reach which I should relish very much. Indeed I think I have an invitation to take tea (soldiers call it "grut") at your house which has never been cancelled, and you need not be surprised, if I should happen in some afternoon to claim your, and my "cousins" hospitality. There is a "big thing" at work in the 14th regiment, and if it comes out all right, I shall soon be at home to explain to you what it is. If it collapses, then we must take them on another tact. Rightfully we are entitled to go home in a short time, for we were among the very first to answer to the three months call of the President and can see no reason why by

a mere "catch" in a state law, we are to be transferred like so many cattle, without and knowledge or consent. I see they have been holding meetings in Boonville in regard to war matters. If I may be allowed to express my opinion on the subject, I believe there was a great deal more talk than cider, in those who participated. No doubt they thought when they had come with the munificent sum of 39 dollars, that they had done about the fair thing, and asked nothing more to their country, and so don't I. If I were worth just ten thousand dollars, and had my choice of giving that all away or of soldiering for two years without loss to life or limb, I should say take the money. You may think that I exaggerate the

↓ partial
transcription

Arlington Heights, Virginia
August 12, th 1861

My Dear Friend.

I am seldom in the habit of making apologies to anyone or I should make some very humble ones to you for not having answered your kind and welcome letter before: the fact is I have considerable correspondence to write, and nearly every thing unfavorable for it. The days are very hot and it is almost impossible to make ourselves comfortable by maintaining a state of "masterly inactivity" let alone the fatigue of writing on your knee in a cramped position. In the evening we have parades and drills to go through with, or else are shut up three or four in a small tnet.

-----*****

You need not of have been at the trouble of telling me that you lacked neither the patriotism nor the bravery to fly to the defense of your country, for I was fully satisfied on that point already. The individual who could face the terrors of "Arab Hill" without flinching, need have no fear of secessionists, and their infernal masked batteries.

In comparison with those of soldier-life; you have the privilege of returning to civilization to see friends and taste of palatable food. There you were your own 'Nigger' with the right to express just such opinions as you thought were right and with no fear of the consequences. Then you had the right to go where you chose to and had the satisfaction of knowing that when you wished to retire at night you have some sort of a human place to go to with no lonely vigil to keep or wet ground to lie on. But it is slightly different here, and if ever a class of men lived like beasts, I think soldiers must have the preference. Its simply barbarous and that word more nearly expresses it than any other that I know of. At the distance at which you are from the seat of war there is a sort of romance which danger makes all the more interesting. But to us it is worse than prosaic and it it were not for the reception of letters and the continual discussion of some mooted question. I don't know what would become of us. I can march, starve, fight, die or do most anything within a reasonable line, but I never can be "cabined, cribbed, confined" to camp and camp-life for two years. That is a settled thing in my mind. But I suppose I am wearing you by writing in the strain, so I will finish BY GIVING YOU A WORD OF ADVICE AND THAT IS

NEVER GO FOR A SOLDIER. (note this was under lined and capitols were used)

*****there is a "big thing" at work in the 14th regiment and if it comes out all right, I shall soon be at home to explain to you what it is. If it collapses then we must take them on another tack. Rightfully we are entitled to go home in a short time, for we were among the very first to anser to the three months call of the President and can see no reason why by a mere catch in a state law we are to be transferred like so many cattle without our knowledge or consent. (Explanation. President Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 volunteers for 3 months duty to put down the rebellion and those from New York were transferred to Federal Service and were kept beyond their original enlistment.)

Your sincere friend L eander.