

*Copies of
Surgeon Henry Van Arman*

Fairfax Court House, Va.
October 15, 1862

My dear Dora,

Well, here I am in "Old Virginia" and since I have seen you my life has been like a moving panorama. We left our camp at Jamestown on the 29th of September last about 4 o'clock P.M. I got aboard the cars about 6—filling 23 cars—arrived at Elmira about daylight the next morning. There the Army were supplied to the Regiment. While there I went to the Camp—saw Captain Woodworth and many of the Farmersville boys. They were expecting marching orders every day. I presume they are now in Virginia. Just at noon we left Elmira for Baltimore via Harrisburg and arrived at our destination about 10 o'clock next day. All along our route throngs of people were at all the Depots and road crossings greeting us with great hearty cheers and the waving of handkerchiefs.

Decrepit old age left its retreat in the quiet corner to give us God speed and even totting childhood caught the enthusiasm! This was really gratifying to us who were leaving all the comforts and endearments of home and subject ourselves to all the trials and self-denials and hardships and perils of a soldiers life in our country's cause.

We remained at Baltimore until late in the night and shipped once more for Washington where we arrived early in the morning, stayed about Washington all day getting ready to really take up Camp life. About dark we took up the March for Camp Seward about 4 miles from Washington in a s.w. direction. Camp Seward is on Arlington Heights a place owned by the rebel General Lee and was once occupied by the rebel forces. While there Washington lay at our feet in plain sight while Georgetown was a little to our left but hid from view by a high point jutting into the river. Washington arc encircled by 27 large forts which are located in commanding positions about 4 or 5 miles from the city—stretching along from Fort to Fort are strong rifle pits and entrenchments and stockades.—Within that circle of forts and rifle pits the new recruits are encamped. At present there are as many as 100,000 or more, while just outside of the Forts and rifle pits the old battered and scarred veterans who have been in the stom of all the horrible and bloody battles are encamped.—You know something how rough camp life was in Barracks at Jamestown—but that is only the beginning—a sort of intermediate stage between civilized life and real camp life—Do you want to know just how tent life is? I being one of the Field Officers have a tent 9 ft. sq. and 4½ ft. high at the eaves. It is, in fact, a little cloth house. In this little tent 5 of us are quartered, the 3 surgeons, Frank, the Hospital steward. Already we have encamped two nights on the open field without tents—one night very rainy at that—

Well last Sunday noon we left Camp Seward for this place—encamped or rather lay in the open field—and a rainy night—about a mile from the ruins of the village of Arondale. The village was burned last winter by the Union Forces under General Blenker—not a house left. It was sort

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of a nest for the rebels—but he broke it up thoroughly!!

All along from Washington here a distance of 18 miles nearly all the houses are burned and the whole country looks a dreary desolation—no crops—no houses—no cattle—no nothing! Such is war! At Bailey's Cross Roads, 7 miles from Washington we came across the rebel entrenchments and fortifications, which were erected to prevent our folks from advancing on this place and Manassas—and these works are all along the road as far as this place at least.

This place is about the size of Cadiz^(N.Y.) and in its day it must have had a woebegone appearance. Now it is almost in ruins. The folks owning the best houses were Secessionists and of course have left for parts further South. The soldiers have riddled and destroyed their houses. This is an old town being the County Seat of the County where Washington resided. His will is here recorded in the County Clerk's Office. The old Books are here in the Provost Marshall's Office. I have seen the record of the will. The place has been settled over 160 years. It makes one feel a sort of veneration for the old buildings, etc. when standing in the presence of each antiquity—But enough of this. ^{such}

We are now almost in the front of the Army in General Segels' Corps. General Segels is one of the very best Generals this war has produced.

He is a small bony active man about 45 years of age with light auburn and a sandy goatee and mustache. Looks dutchy and speaks quite broken. His headquarters are here in a smallish brick house. Carl Schurz the greatest orator in America is also here. He is about 50 years old, tall and lean with light hair with a long thin face—and awful dutchy look. Well, well I see I have written about 2 sheets and I shall be quite likely to weary your patience in reading it.

I am anxious to see you all, that even writing is a great solace.

Hasten the day when I can return once more to the quiet village and our pleasant home!

I know you will be a good girl. Be obedient and dutiful to Ma and Charley and write me often. I will write you again soon, should we remain here. If not, as soon as I can command time. Good night.

Your affectionate father

P.S. There are some 20,000 troops here and about 3000 beyond at Centreville.

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