

# 8

Headquarters 154th Regiment  
Camp on Creek 5 miles from Leesburg and  
about the same distance from Ball's Bluff  
1½ miles above Leesburg and Chain Bridge Turnpike  
Loudon County, Va.  
January 21st, 1863

My dearest Lis,

I wrote you a hurried letter yesterday but fearing it might not get beyond the lines or miscarry and knowing how anxious you would be to hear from me and how long and weariful suspense you would suffer until the campaign was over, I thought I would write to you again today as it would multiply our chances of easing you. That is my only object in writing as I have nothing new to say beyond what I said yesterday.

We are just where we have been since Tuesday night--and "all quiet".

I am entirely ignorant of the reason why the whole army was sent up here on such forced marches and when we get here no appearance of the enemy in the vicinity--or anywhere about these parts in any considerable numbers.

*Stanton's*

We have occasionally, at intervals every day for the past two weeks, heard distant cannonading--but nothing like a fight with any considerable force. We don't know who it is that is firing--where it is but suppose it to be the light artillery (as Stanton's 5th Cavalry who are coming up and clearing out the Valley between the Bull Run and the Blue Ridge Mountains. I think the whole army is massed between Leesburg and Centerville with supports at Fairfax Co. H. and Vienna and the reserve artillery at Chattanooga.

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In peaceful times this was indeed pleasant country. Loudon County was one of the wealthiest and best counties in the state and one of the greatest slave producing counties in the whole south. Of course it was originally inherently and intensely "secesh" and the poison yet remains unadulterated with the few who have not been swept away by the storm of war. *rec'd*

The other day when on the march here a few miles this side of Centerville Dr. Hovey and myself called at a Planter's Mansion away out in the fields from any road on which the army was passing to get some breakfast. We found it the residence of a widow of about 50 whose son was in the "reb" army and she was malignantly and intensely "secesh".

From the surroundings the old woman's story the family were among the most wealthy and aristocratic in this part of the State two years ago but they are thoroughly played out now. She says they have lost 50 valuable young field hands and any number of northern "niggers" in that time but added, with patriarch complacency, that she cared nothing about it. She reckoned that they were sorry enough that they had left and

would be glad to get back. She said this coolly while you could see the fires of disappointment and malignancy were burning fierce within her. She seemed a genteel intelligent lady, but, strange to say, she believes Lincoln was a negro or part negro and added, with ill concealed rage, that the South never would submit to being ruled by a nigger! Now here was one of the First Families--and apparently an intelligent Lady living within 40 miles of Washington who not only believes that Lincoln was a nigger but affirmed time after time on our denial of the impeachment that she "knew it". What wonder that such a people could be led blindfold into a rebellion against the best government the sun ever shone upon. Should the rebellion succeed one of the most absolute despotism would be built up on the ruins of the republic--the world ever saw.

The instituting of the south have blotted out the moral sensibilities of the people.

Now this widow in talking about her losses dwelt prominently on the 50 young valuable field hands and added as coolly as we at the North would talk about cattle that she had also lost 8 best breeding women there was about here!

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What greater degradation can be left for a people than this. And yet we have people in the North who claim to be intelligent and decent who believe slavery the normal condition of the human family. Here we have positive proofs that the curse of God visits on all that come in contact with this atrocious institution. The free air of the north should blister the lungs of her ingrate children who believe or advocate a doctrine repugnant to the Gospel they pretend to believe!

*Pavilion, N.Y.*  
We know nothing of the outside world--having neither mail or papers since leaving Centerville.

Write me often, for you cannot realize how glad I am to hear from you and home. Write often for a letter is the kiss of the absent--and were we together could we live a day without a kiss?

My love and kisses to the children, ask them to write me. I should be glad to hear from them and you at anytime. Don't wait for me to answer. I am awfully busy. Good-by.

Affectionately,

Henry