

Office of Surgeon in Chief
2d Division XI Corps
Lookout Valley, January 12th, 1864

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My dearest Lis,

Yours of the 3d of January has just reached me and I am surprised and pained to learn that you had heard nothing from me since our return from the campaign of Knoxville.

I wrote you several times during that campaign and have written you often since our return and I am astonished to learn that none of my letters have got through.

I have received 4 letters from you since my return --15th, 23d & 28th Dec. and 3rd January 1864! The mail arrangements are as bad here as can be but where the fault is we can't learn precisely. We expect it will be better soon as the R.R. is expected to be in running order through to Chattanooga in 3 or 4 days. Now everything is brought from Bridgeport by steamer--a sort of scow on the Tennessee River. The transportation facilities are not equal to the needs of the Government--and the newspapers, to the contrary notwithstanding, the army here has been on short rations more or less of the time ever since we have been in this department. Hundreds and thousands of mules and horses have died here of sheer starvation--the forage can't be brought thru for them and the country is bare.

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From your account of the draft excitement up there, the men that are left at home are devoid of all manly feelings and instinct and I would think were a set of pusillanimous cowards. The soldiers that are in the field have borne the heat and huthen of this war--many of them entering the service in the darkest hours of nation's history--in the summer of 1862--when there were days without sunshine and nights without stars--and through their toil and sweat and blood since have well nigh crushed the rebellion--and the Government calls for more men for one more great effort and a final victory and these patriotic stay-at-homes are making all manner of subterfuges to save their miserable necks from the draft--when the work is already done and they would be drafted to reap the harvest and share the of a final great victory. As you say, they have adopted a mean argument to turn these inexperienced and tender boys to take their places in the field. Really such manhood deserves no country nor home nor institutions! Notwithstanding, such demonstrations as these from home--and they are a real wet blanket to the feeling of the soldiers in the field. They have determined that this rebellion shall perish and all the Regiments like the 6th Cavalry when term of service will perhaps then re-enlist as Veterans are doing now. I know only one in the service that have served two years but that are re-enlisting again--not a few in a Regiment full all except a few whose health will not permit. These men know what war is from a terrible experience--they know the toil and weariness of long marches, the cold and hunger and hardships of eventful campaigns--the heart aches of the loved ones at home and the blood and terrors of the battlefield--yet they will endure all and brave all for the cause of the Government and they will succeed. One more campaign and the war is over--for they are now driven to their last extremity--the soldiers all see it--and all want to be in at the "death", and all I think who remain until June will be!