

Camp near Belle Plain Landing, Va.

Dec. 24. 1862.

Dear Mother,

Since Gustavus left for Washington, I have written to Eliza, & also to him, but haven't had time to write home before now. - Last Friday we came to this place, which is about 3 miles from Belle Plain Landing, marching about 10 miles. The roads in some places being quite bad, our wagons did not get up with the Brigade that night, so that we found ourselves without tents or blankets, that is the Officers. - It being quite cold, having hovered around a fire until 9.30 P.M. Dr. Little & I started off to find the wagons, going back about 2 miles, where we met them, got our blankets, & staid all night. - We hardly expected to remain here so long as we have, thinking that perhaps we were destined to cross the Rappahannock at some point lower down. But here we are, with immense bodies of troops encamped about us in all directions, & all making preparations for winter quarters. It doesn't seem as if our Reg. or Brigade, or Div. or in fact, a large part of the army was in a condition to make another advance, & fight more battles this season, though we would cheerfully do so, with a good prospect of success, but the failure of the present campaign, will render new plans necessary, which will again necessitate a comparatively new organization, to accomplish which, would

cause more time than now remains, before the bad,  
raining season sets in. I presume we shall soon return  
to the vicinity of Alexandria, as it would hardly be  
necessary to remain at this distance from the great  
supply depots, during the winter. - During these days past,  
the weather has been quite moderate, being comfortable  
without overcoats. Today I am sitting in my tent, writing,  
without a fire. But there is a prospect of snow, & it  
is growing colder. -

We are getting along quite  
well, in our mess, which now consists of Dr. Little,  
Lt. Col. Spofford, Dr. Carpenter & myself, - also Chaplain F. when  
he returns to the Reg. He has been at the Hospital assisting in  
the care of the wounded, since the battle. I have  
been out several times, among the neighbors, both  
alone & in company with Dr. C., exchanging coffee, su-  
gar, molasses &c, for potatoes, turnips, chickens, meal,  
milk &c. So that we have succeeded in obtaining quite  
a variety of provisions, thus being enabled to "live up  
on the top shelf", as one has an excellent cook.

While on the march, & perhaps Riverbanking  
for several days without tents & baggage, our fare  
is often meagre, & we content ourselves with raw  
salt pork, & crackers, with or without coffee & but-  
ter while in camp, we intend to live as well as pass-  
ible, & generally do. A large share of the comfort &  
satisfaction of camp life, is derived from this source.

Quite a number of promotions have lately  
been made in the Reg., and the recommendations of

Maj. Hartung, before we left - Mo. - I supposed that  
Col. Haddock had sent for my commission as 1<sup>st</sup> Lieut.  
but he had not yet done so. He is now about to,  
& also one for Alexander as 2<sup>d</sup> Lieut. to date  
back to Sept. 25. the date of Warren's discharges

My package has not come from Wash-  
ington, - expect one Saturday daily. - Christmas, Evng.  
is at hand, with its tender & pleasant associations,  
& happy home memories. Dear Aefan, I think,  
have we been separated as now, on this oc-  
casion. - It is a fruitful subject for contempla-  
tion. Would that I were home again, as in former  
years, to enjoy the Holiday festivities. I see by  
the Citizen, that they are to have a Christmas tree &  
Exercises, as usual, at the M. Church, this evening.  
Of course the occasion will be replete with interest  
& pleasure; but if I were at home now, I should  
prefer to remain at our own fireside, but  
I must close, as 'tis supper time (we are to have  
"pudding & milk") & the mail goes out in a few min.  
Will send letters for the Citizen tomorrow, with  
soon & often, Love to Father, Grandmother & all  
the children.

Yours affectionately  
Sam<sup>l</sup> P. Leady.

Dec 24<sup>th</sup>