

Camp Garret

December 27, 1863

Dear Del,

Your dear good letter of the 22nd came yesterday, and as you sometimes say "it was more than welcom."(sic) There is nothing that can do me as much good as one of your kind loving letters and especially such a long one as the last was. I wish I could see you that I might thank you for being such a sweet little pet, for I know I shall not be able to write anything that can justly be called an answer. But must and will show my good will by trying. You say you cannot recommend the quality. This you need not do but send the quantity and I will risk the quality. I do not know of anything you could write that would not be interesting to me. You mention it as one of the trials a christian young man like myself must meet and overcome. Well I do hope it is and that there are no worse ones, for then I shall surely get to Heaven. I trust that the Lord will put it into your heart to send

such trials very often. Hereafter I shall make this the burden of my prayers. As a Christmas gift your letter was very acceptable I assure you.

It came one day to (sic) late, but that did not injure it a bit. You say that if I don't send you as long a one in return you will think your gift was not acceptable. You should have your ears pulled for writing that, and if I do not forget it I will pull them (just a little) when I come home. And ^tthat if I do send you such a one you will prize it more highly than anything else. This I can not hope to do, but will do the best I can in the way of a letter, and when I come home bring you something better. I wish I could be there on Christmas morning. I know I should enjoy it very much, but as that can not be I can only wish^h you a happy new year. I spent my Christmas in camp. It was a beautiful day one of the finest I ever saw at this time of the year. I had several invitations to dinner at ⁱdifferent places but did not feel like going and stayed at home. I should have liked very much to have been at uncle Edward (sic) with you and the rest of our friends for I know I should have enjoyed it very much. Uncle was indeed not only very thoughtful but very kind in thus affording you an opportunity of seeing your friends all together once more. As in all human probability it will be the last time you will have such an opportunity in this uncertain world. I trust your visit will not only be very pleasant, but that it will improve your health. I feel very uneasy about you, and firmly believe that you are injuring your health by not taking exercise enough in the open air. I do not think Allegheny a good place for you under any circumstances. You would I think be much better in the country where the air is pure and healthy. Although it is a fact (strange as it may appear) that people do die in the country the same as they do in the citties. (sic)

And so you do not want me to reinlist (sic) for three years. You say you do not know wether (sic) I will or not, but that if you were meditating anything which^s you ascertained was as contrary to my wishes as my reenlisting is to yours, you would abandon it at once. Well that sounds just like you sweet little pet that you are. Nor do I doubt what you say, but on the contrary believe every word of it.

And when I think only of our present happiness and of ourselves (sic) alone, I think and reason as you do. But there are other considerations that sometimes lead me to think otherwise. In the first place it is (sic) right that we should think only of ourself. (sic) To the exclusion of every other interest. Do we not owe part of our time to our friends country and to the advancement of civil and religious liberty and if so should we not discharge these duties. But you say that I have done enough or done more than others have, but is this any reason why I should stop. Supposing all the officers in the army were to reason thus what would be the result. (sic) Would not the "rebs" soon have it all their own way, and you and I be no better than slaves, would we be ^{Se} ~~der~~iving of a better fate. It strikes me that the better qualified a person is to serve his country to more obligation is he under to do so. But that every man should or can with justice leave ~~the~~ ^{his} service as soon as he has become qualified by experience to be useful I can not believe. And the fact that many act thus makes the more necessary that others should not follow their example. The reasons that would induce me to reenlist are simply these. That I am in duty bound to do all that I can for my country

(letter incomplete)