

Madison County, Va.
May 28th, 1862

Sister Mary,

This evening, the 20th of May, affords me the delightful pleasure of writing to you all at home. Home. Home. How much pleasure there is in that word home? There is more than tongue can express. How oft have I thought of home. That place that I formerly so little appreciated. And to think of those that are there. The kind Father, the indulgent Mother to which I have been so disrespectful in days gone by. The fond sisters that I have so oft mistreated. Oh, that I could have my time over again how different I would live.

One may imagine something as to the ties that home has. Though, it is nothing compared to realizing the true state of things. I will tell you how much I think of home. That delightful home I have so often thought of the greater portion of my day in quietude enjoying the pleasures and comforts of life, and those that are dear to me. I think just enough of home to spend the remnant of my days, though they may be long, or short, in difference. There is of home a delightful place where one can have peace, and just rights with it. But, without those two items death is far preferable. I will stay in the field forever before I will have my country invaded. I will submit to the toils and hardships of camp. I will be found traversing the snow-clad cliffs of the Thoroughfare and the Blue Ridge Mountains first. I will endure the toil, forbear the pain produced thereby, before thinking of submitting to such tyrannical vandals as those negro-thieving, undermining, careless, unprincipled band of demons, which are really beneath the notice of the Devil himself.

I say and speak from my heart that life is sweet, though give me death before submitting to any such. Never has history, even in the days of uncivilization, not even the heathen when committing their brutal acts regardless of care, or Gospel, had to disgrace her pages with such detestable, disgraceful, disdainful, unprincipled stuff as the present in stating the whys and wherefores of this war, if it is truly accounted for. If it doesn't prove a disgrace to the Federals in the estimation of all nations, I can't see why. In short, to this end give me liberty, or give me death.

I have no message of much importance to communicate to you. I have not heard from Gen. Beauregard for several days. The last account from Richmond, they were sick of fighting, as few expected a general engagement shortly. Gen. Jackson had a skirmish with the Feds the other day. He took 2000 prisoners, saying nothing of killed and wounded. Our loss was 100 killed and wounded. The enemy totally routed, we captured five car loads of coffee, all of their commissary stores, and also their artillery. What I have stated as to this fight is true, for the man I am staying with saw them with his own eyes, as they came with them from Richmond. Since that time, they have captured 4000, including 1000 cavalrymen, horses and all. If this be true, I say glory to God for it. I have great faith in Jackson and Beauregard, but not so much in Johnson as the others.

I can't think of anything else that will interest you. My health is fairly good at this time. You will right to me immediately to tell all you know of about Joseph and Isaac. I have not heard much from home in three months. Direct your letters to Oak Park, Oak Park, Madison County, Va. They will be forwarded from there to me. Write immediately.

Nothing more remains,
your warrior brother, until death,
Thomas D. Newton