

Camp Griffin VA Dec. 10th 1861

Dear Harriet

This morning as I came into camp from picket duty I received your worthy letter which was a very welcome visitor. I had not heard from Glover for sometime except a few lines that I received from Emily inside of the box of clothing & eatables concerning the contents. all of the Glover boys received a bundle of clothing & eatables I received 1 pr of boots 1 pr of gloves & a quarter of an excellent cheese some of the boys received cakes & cheese some butter pie & sugar cakes. as it arrived the night before thanksgiving we were able to have quite a thanksgiving There was great rejoicing over the contents I assure you It would have made you laugh to looked in upon us & seen how silly we looked as each one examined his bundle of Vt goodies We were very grateful to our thoughtful friends for them. I think we shall send for another

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box in a few weeks if we stop here. & I think we shall not more at present. I am well & enjoying myself first rate I would tell you how much flesh I have gained since I enlisted if you had not laughed at me about it so much in your letter but I will venture to tell you that I have gained 17½ lbs. since I enlisted or the scales lie I weigh 165½ lbs in my dress coat minus a vest 7 lbs more than I ever weighed before I have not been sick any length of time since I came here. The Glover boys are now all able to perform duty except Alec Davis he had the measles & got quite smart then took cold & was threatened with the fever but he is now able to walk out & take some food I think he will soon be able to perform duty. Hobart had the measles quite hard & got nearly well when he was taken sick with the mumps he was quite sick for a number of days he is now nearly well again. Tell Ellen that Edward is quite smart though he has been quite slim for a number of weeks. I dont believe that he writes to her very often I dont think he writes many letters to any one. Perhaps you know more

about his correspondence with Ellen than I do
please write as much about it as you can without

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breaking any secret promises & I will keep dark about it. About 3 weeks ago our Reg went out on a foraging expedition accompanied by the Vt 2ds. 3d. 4th & 5th Regts 5 Co of cavalry & 2 batteries of artillery our Reg went as far as flints hill this is situated about 2 miles this side of Vienna & about 5 miles from our camp our Reg was stationed there to protect 4 pieces of Capt Motts battery some of the Regts went on further We had orders not to leave the grounds but as the Officers say it is impossible to keep we yankees in one place long at a ime we are apt to break over the bounds & hunt up something good to eat or find some rebel trophy that day we slyed off to a deserted habitation & found 3 Percimmon trees well laden with fruit. this fruit is sweet & good to eat it resembles frozen apples in outward appearances some of them are nearly as large as hens eggs there are a number of large seeds in each one (I will enclose a number please plant them next spring) We ate all we wanted & brought some into camp in our haversacks. We started for camp about sun down we arrived at camp about 7½ in the eve with about 70 wagon loads of hay corn &c the result of our expedition

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We are having some Vt Sept weather here now for it has been uncomfortable warm for several days past the soldiers were out minus coat & vest & plenty warm yesterday when on drill I should have been glad to got into the shade. today it is quite cool I cant realize that you have good sleighing in Vt but according to all accounts you have upwards of a foot of snow I dont care about walking on your snow paths but I should like to take a sleigh ride some of these moonshiny evenings with Miss. H.B.C by my side firstrate well. We have not had any snow except a few scattering flakes 2 or 3 times just enough to say snow not enough to make any show on the ground. A week ago last Saturday E.H. Nye & I obtained passes to go to Washington city our Capt

went with us & as he was acquainted there he took us to see the fine sights we went on foot to Georgetown we there took an omnibus for W. City a distance of 4 miles I can ride through to the Capitol for 6 cts or if he rides but 10 rods it is the same we went into the treasury building where uncle Sam keeps his money it is a very large marble building finished in splendid style We also went to the Presidents house this is a beautiful marble house surrounded by a beautiful yard full of fine shade trees we went into the great celebrated east room this room is furnished in the most splendid manner imaginable. the carpet curtains & furniture was much nicer than any that I ever saw. there were mirrors set in the sides of the room larger than 1 side of your kitchen. I should judge there were quite a number of chandeliers as much nicer than the one in the meeting house at Glover

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village meetinghouse as you can imagine. In fact I cannot describe the splendor of it in a letter. of the green room as it is called ditto. We did not see Old Abe We then went to the Patent Office this is a splendid marble building of large dimensions where all models of Patents granted by Government are kept also many other curiosities. We saw the coat pants & vest of Gen Washington also his chest sword & camp furniture. also Gen Jacksons coat & eppauletts that he wore at the battle of New Orleans. also the original Declaration of Independence & Washingtons commission both were set in a frame or case that shut like a book case. some of the names of the signers were nearly obliterated. I saw many other curious things but I will not stop to describe them. I could spend a weeks time there pleasantly We then went to the Post Office where all the army letters & papers are distributed this is also a large marble building nicely finished We then visited the Smithsonian Institute this is a beautiful building surrounded by a large yard dotted here &

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there with beautiful shade trees. This is a building full of

natural curiosities We saw all kinds of stuffed birds little & great with glass eyes every feather was in its proper place. they looked as natural as life. some of them were very curious specimen. Also all kinds of fish & snakes of every kind in glass jars in some kind of liquid also 1 live snake. though not large he was a fine looking gentleman covered with bright spots also a live alligator about 4 feet in length also the first printing press also a chinese plow this was an awkward looking concern enough. also all kinds of beasts such as tigers leopards bears monkeys ourang outangs Deers &c standing up in glass cages as natural as life their glass eyes looked as bright as you please We also saw Dr. Kanes dress that he wore on his Arctic expedition it is made of long shaggy fur covering his person from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head except a little around the eyes mouth & nose it was stuffed & stook up life like. also a meteor stone that fell from the heavens it resembled a large piece of iron weighing perhaps 150 lbs. also some mummies or dried human bodies with the hair hanging from their heads & the dried flesh cleaving

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from their bones. also any quantity of other curiosities that I will not stop to describe. & in comparison with what there was to be seen we saw but very little I could find enough to feast his eyes on a week in this place We then went to the Capitol buildings. first we went into the basement on the back side into the great bakery We saw quite a number of mammoth ovens & cords of nice loves of bread We then went around to the front & walked up the splendid steps on to the veranda directly under the great dome which is supported by large marble pillars. on each side of the steps there are quite a number of marble statues standing out in bold relief looking very natural We then went into a large room called the rotunda this is a circular shaped room reaching from the basement to the top of the dome. The ceiling is covered with paintings on a very large scale such as the landing of Columbus the embarkation & landing of the pilgrims &c We went into several other large rooms that I have not time to describe We then went up onto the dome which is 264 feet in height above the basement

floor this we found to be a wearisome job. after ascending
a good many flights of stairs we at last reached

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the giddy heights .& as the Capitol is situated on an
eminence we had a splendid view of the surrounding
country we could see the whole city & a good many little
white villages the habitations of soldiers. after gazing
around as long as we wished we made our decent.
men in the street looked like small boys. At 6 ½
in the eve we took an omnibus bound for Georgetown
from there we walked a distance of 8 miles. we crossed
chain bridge about 8 ½ we reached camp about 9 ½ in
the eve safe & sound though somewhat fatigued.
but well satisfied with our days labor. I received
a letter from Emily last night she did not write any
news of importance also 1 from Albert Blake.
I will now draw this scrap to a close by asking
you to excuse all mistakes and asking you to accept the
best wishes of your absent lover.

Dan Mason

Write often & all the news that you can get.
You must be careful of your health
& be a good girl.

O EXCUSE

ME I should have said
Lady

Direct as before

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I commenced this letter the 10th today is the
12th & I am well

Topics include: boxes from Glover, foraging expedition, weather, sightseeing in
Washington, including the White House, Patent Office, Smithsonian Institute, and
Capitol Building

Transcribed by Gemma Philcox

Camp Griffin Dec 27th 1861

Dear Harriet

I received your worthy letter last evening I learned from it that you were enjoying good health which was the best news that you could have written I hope that you will be careful of yourself & enjoy this blessing for a long period. I am well except I have some cold about ten days ago I had an ill turn that lasted two days. one night I was very chilly I could not get clothes enough over me for sometime to feel comfortably warm I soaked my feet & Mr S D Gray made me a cup of hot sling & placed a hot brick at my feet & the next morning I felt quite smart & in 2 or 3 days I was able to perform duty. The Glover boys are all well & we have some jolly times We have raised our tent about 3 feet by setting posts 5 feet in length 2 feet below & 3 feet above the ground in a circular

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shape, then placed the canvass on top for a roof We then corked in between with splinters & mud we have a sheet iron stove that cost us 36 cts each. it has one place on it for cooking. we have a Coffee can & a frying pan we make crust coffee fry potatoes & flapjacks & beef steak I got up this morning before daylight & helped Chas Ufford fry flapjacks for breakfast We fried a big stack of them for we have quite a family only 14 the boys pronounced them good. I will bet 2 cts that I can beat half the girls frying flapjacks now. I dare say you have heard of the battle at Drainsville a few days since We heard the firing from our camp. Gen McCalls division of Penn soldiers went out in the morning on a foraging & scouting expedition (this Div is encamped about a mile north of our camp) Our division started about 2 oclock P M. to assist them if nessessary We marched 12 miles we came to a branch of the Potomac the rebels had burned the bridge so that we were compelled to face about & march homeward the boys were in the best of spirits until the

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order to about face came. that made them look disappointed quite a number fell out by the way & were picked up the ambulances which follow an army to pick up those that are wounded or sick & are not able to march (an Ambulance is a 2 wheeled covered carriage drawn by one horse) The rebels commenced the attack but according to all accounts they were badly beaten our men drove them back with great slaughter killing 170 & wounding a great number. our men lost 10 killed & 15 wounded they brought in as many blankets & over coats as they could bring in to camp. I learn by letters written to the Glover boys that Glover friends think that I am sick. After I had my poor turn I wrote to Emily about it stating that I was nearly well. a few days after Z Y Bickford was taken with a chilly turn same as I was Samuel D Gray made him some hot-sling & set up with him & kept fire. Mr G wrote that night to his wife stating that he was sitting up with a sick man not mentioning the name one of Mr. Gs girls told Emily about it

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this with what I wrote was enough to make them think that I was having a run of fever or some kind of a fit of sickness. There has been a great deal of sickness in our Reg & a number of deaths but I am happy to say that the sick list is greatly diminished. other Regts from Vt that have been here long enough to get acclimated are tough & rugged & I think that we shall be equaly so after we get naturalized The Col says that we shall stop here through the winter he thinks. I have but little news to write you but I am your affectionate lover here the same as when in the Green Mountain state. there is scarcely an hour passes but what I think of you. I will now close this confused mass of ideas by wishing you health & happiness

yours in haste from your
true love Dan

If it was a few days later
I would wish you a happy new
year perhaps you will get it by
that time so I will wish you the same

Topics include: camp life, food, battle of Dranesville, sickness in camp

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