Mr. Sterling: By Nov. 17th, 1863

Dear Brother:

You have probably seen this letter all about our leaving Newport News of our departure. We seem to be moving forward journey at Uncle Tom's expense. We had a very interesting trip somewhat between journey of about 100 miles by rail and steamboat. We arrived here last Friday night, having marched from Paris, Bourbon County, a distance of 22 miles on that day. We were all jaded out with riding day and night, getting no rest except what we could catch in the crowded rocking boat and rocking car there comes to finish up with a march of 12 miles our backs aching from our feet tender, was a pure
Dear Brother:

You have probably ere this learned all about our leaving Newport News & of our departure West. We seem to be a moving Corps, journeying at Uncle Sam’s expense. We had a very interesting though somewhat tedious journey of about 1000 miles by rail & steamboat. We arrived here last Friday night, having marched from Paris Borbon County a distance of 22 miles on that day. We were all jaded out with riding day & night getting no sleep except what we could catch in the crowded rocking boat & jolting car then come to finish up with a march of 22 miles our knapsacks heavy & our feet tender, was a severe
test of the patience of the boys of the 2nd Brigade. But I understand we were ordered to camp here that night, by Gen. Burnside. Perhaps it was necessary we should come here rapidly to prevent another such game as the rebels played on our forces two weeks ago. But here we are & Clarke & his band of Marauders had better look out for their carcasses and so may the rebel sympathizers in this vicinity look out for their pigs & turkeys. A large majority of the inhabitants in this part of the state are truly loyal but there is a thorough sprinkling of "rebel" who are union while we are here. Rebel when the rebels are here. This war is making better friends among neighborhood & even families. The people tell me the union & rebel will not visit or even speak to each other.
test of the patience of the boys of the 2d Brigade. But I understand we were ordered to camp here that night, by Gen. Burnside. Perhaps it was necessary we should come here rapidly to prevent another such game as the rebs played on our forces two weeks ago. But here we are & Cluke & his band of Marauders had better look out fore their carcases and so may the rebel sympathizers in this vicinity look out for their pigs & turkeys. A large majority of the inhabitance in this part of the state are truly loyal but there is a thorough sprinkling of “secesh” who are union while we are here, rebel when the rebs are here. This war is making bitter feuds among neighborhoods & even families. The people tell me the union & secesh will not visit or even speak to each other.
I find the union men here are union to the book bone they are very bitter against the secesh & can't say or wish anything too bad for them. Some families here have one son in the rebel while another in the union army. Two fellows from our Co. took breakfast in Paris at the house of a lady who had a son in a cafe in the union army while her husband was a private in the rebel army. Pity her heart & for it is no very enviable possession a private in the union army. What can a privates possih be in the secesh army. The white people here say this war is making the niggers dreadful savages & heaps on & run away. While the blacks will point us out the secesh & tell us to help ourselves. Early this morning delighted with
I find the union men here are union to the back bone, they are very bitter against the secesh & can’t say or wish anything too bad for them. Some families here have one son in the rebel while another in the union army, two fellows from our Co. took breakfast in Paris at the house of a lady who had a son a Cap. in the union army while her husband was a private in the Rebel army. pity her husband for it is no very enviable possession a private in the union army. What can a privates possish be in the secesh army. The white people here say “this war is making the niggers dreadful sausy & heaps on um run away”. While the blacks will point us out the secesh & tell us to help ourselves Early this morning I started of with
a cantine to get some milk after going half a mile came to a house and in the yard found a "yellow gal" milking asked her if I could buy a little milk here. "No sir master don't sell anything to the soldiers nor the slaves to give away, but please sit down and get a cantine full just walk into the kitchen wait a while & I will fill it." Do so I parted the kitchen was a large room in the ell part of the house a huge fireplace and two beds in it there was two negro women cooking a girl about a 12 years old waiting on the master's family a black man playing on his color & a little boy five or six years of age. The "yellow gal" whispered to the cook that who said "if Misses know we should give you a cantine full of milk she would kill me." asked her if her master was on the road inside the garden & talked with the master gentlemen who was very pleasant filled "cook" said had hard work to fill it Misses watched me." The little boy stood by make out the letters on my calash kind if he could read it no said work don't know no to learn to read me are too smart now"
a canteen to get some milk after going half a mile came to a house and in the yard found a “yellow gal” milking. Asked her if I could buy a little milk here. “No sir Masser don’t sell anything to the soldiers nor low us to give any away, but I reckon Ill spare ye a canteen full jist walk into the kitchen wait a while & I fill it” So [?] [?] the kitchen was a large room in the ell part of the house a huge fireplace and two beds in it here was two negrow woman cooking a girl about 12 years old waiting on the family’s table a black man pulling on his boots & a little boy five or six years of age.

The “yellow gal” whispered to the cook who said “if Misses knew we should give you a canteen full of milk she would kill us. Asked her if her Master was secesh “yes indeed they hate you fellows worse than the devil. Misses came in gave directions about the breakfast. I went through into the garden & talked with the master sometime who was very pleasant & sociable went back found my canteen filled “cook” said had hard work to fill it Misses watched me” The little boy tried to make out the letters on my cap I asked him if he could read. “No said cook they don’t low us to larn to read we are too smart now”
There is nothing further to be added. I can only say that I have not heard from any of you since the last letter. I am writing this letter from my room in the hotel. There is a beautiful view of the city from my window. I am not sure if I will be able to come back soon. I hope you are all well and healthy. If I were to write more, I would not be able to write it here. My health is not the best. I hope to see you soon.
2 PM.

I find I must put on two stamps so I guess I will write another sheet. We are encamped about 2 miles from the village of Winchester in a beautiful field well shaded by large oak, ash & walnut trees.

Although the trees are as thick as they commonly are in an apple orchard yet the grass is as thick & green as in the best cultivated field in NH. The soil must be very rich it is everywhere of the same black rich mould. The farmers say it will bear corn for half a dozen years than if they put it into grass a few years it will bear equally as good corn without any manure. Near our Camp at Mt. Sterling was a field of 75 acres all planted with corn. The other day a
I find I must put on two stands so I guess I will write another check.

We are encamped about 3 miles from the village of Winchester in a beautiful field well shaded by large oak ash & walnut trees. Although the trees are as thick as they commonly are in an apple orchard yet the grass is as thick & green as in the best cultivated field in New York. The soil must be very rich it is everywhere of the same black rich mould. The farmers say it will bear corn for half a dozen years than if they put it into grass a few years it will bear equally as good corn without any manure. We are camping at Mill Sterbing was a field of 75 acres all planted with corn. The other day a
a man living close by this camp said he with his two men slaves carried on 75 acres of corn 20 acres of wheat 20 acres of rye He was greatly surprised when I told him how many acres two hands would cultivate in NH. This is the most beautiful country I have ever been in. The land is gently rolling & fenced off into pieces of from 10 to 100 acres by high zigag fences, made entirely of rails about 8 feet high, not a stake being used Except the plowed ground every spot is of the same beautiful green which is given it by the thickly groth of grass

The people here seem to be very good sort of folks, they are mostly strong Union but they can’t like the proclamation they all say it has helped the southern cause in this state a good deal
I suppose the cause of this dislike of the Emancipation is because it is making slavery unprofitable. A man who owns three slaves told me yesterday that a good field bond who was worth $1250 on 8.15.00 before the war would now hardly bring $200 in fact there was no sale for them anybody wished to buy. I have often thought as I have spoken a kind word to a yong "Niggin" (as the whites all call them) when in hearing of their masters I could see a disdaining look which said louder than words what fools these gamblers are to notice a nigger.

Hundreds of the blacks come in every day with pies cakes, biscuits, milk, butter, eggs, chickens, molasses, sugar, etc., etc. They say they fiddle for their masters one way the other day if Missis can't do wrong I find it right.
I supposed the cause of this dislike of The Proclamation is because it is making slavery unprofitable. A man who owns three slaves told me yesterday that a good field hand who was worth $1200 or $1500 before the war would now hardly bring $600 in fact there was no sale for them nobody wished to buy. I have often thought as I have spoken a kind word to a young “Nigger” (as the whites all call them) when in hearing of their masters I could see a disdainful look which said louder than words what fools these yankees are to notice a nigger.

Hundreds of the blacks come in every day with pies cakes, buscuits, milk butter, eggs, chickens maple syrup & c. & c. They say they peddle for their masters one says the other day “if Missis cont de money & find it right I am
many bugs are quite very contented. I met an old negro on the Pike yesterday he had a few pigs to sell. But one on tattling with him he said he was a slave and must live on for he had got to go to Planting and he was fellows must work for they best have to work for nothing.

The masts here are called pilces at every certain distance there is a toll gate a toll is paid by all who pass except government teams soldiers. The pilces are made by making a bed of broken rock covering it with soil. In some places the ground is hilly the planks of rock can be pounded readily. I got a cart full of maple syrup for 60c.

Monday, I got a letter from 60c. Alford & one from J.L. Gannett.

Alford is well he is in the 45th. Mary has been sick with the cough.
contented”, I met an old negrow on the Pike yesterday he had a few pies to sell I bot. one & on talking with him he said he was a slave & must hurry on for he had got to go to planting said he “You fellows work for pay but I have to work for nothing”

The roads here are called pikes & at evry certain distance there is a toll gate & toll is paid by all who pass except government teams soldiers & c The pikes are made by making a bed of broken rock & covering it with soil

In some places the ground is ledgy & the slabs of rock can be pounded & broken readily. I bot a canteen full of Maple syrup for 40 cts Monday. I got a letter from C [?] Atwood & one from J L Syminds Atwood is well he is in the 43rd Mass John has been sick with the camp

I guess you will find it difficult to read this I did not know when I began it was so badly oiled

fever but is getting better

I stewed the last of my dried apple yesterday it was very nice Is there any signs of drafting? Stay at Homes may look out. The regiments have been mustered so as to be consolidated or filled up with conscripts