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Letter to Jennie Guiney, 1863 November 12

Patrick Guiney

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Camp near Bealton Va.

Nov. 12. 1863

My dear Jennie

This is quite a lazy day - we are lying still in camp by the road side and the time hangs heavily upon us - not even the shaggy visage of fabled Gwillas breaking in ~~on~~ to disturb the monotony to which the crack of his rifle would be a relief and a gratifying contrast. I have nothing to do. You may think it strange that it is only now, under such circumstances, I sit down to converse with your dear Jennie. Why should I not at all times, in the midst of duties and conflicts, write to her on whom I do and ever must, rely for my ~~happiest~~ happiness here? Why should the head have such mastery over the heart? But so it is here. The certainly of being loved - although it is the very sweetest thing in life - makes us more or less careless about it, and we sacrifice, (at least I often do) the duties which love & home improve, to the less important

duties of every day life in the Army. Postponement in affairs of the heart, indeed in religious matters, is too much our inclination. While we are always ready to accept and wrestle with the other duties and incidents as they occur. God loves us and we know it, and are careless. Those of our bosom love us and we know it, and are careless. The world does not love us and we know it, and we must be vigilant, ever active and bold to keep our status in it. Hence, dear, I am sometimes apparently neglectful in writing to you - but if I never wrote you my thought and hope for the future, are by your side and around you.

I received a letter from you this morning in which our meeting in Virginia or at home is looked upon as probable and soon to come. I wish I could comfort myself by thinking so too - but that realization is so doubtful and distant that I am afraid to even hope. I do not think it possible under existing regulations for you to come here. Indeed if it were possible - as I am satisfied that no proper "Winter Quarters" will be allowed this Army - it would not ^{be} pleasant for you to be here. Some people say that when they

have company misery is not half so miserable to them but I am certain that if you were here without proper comfort - I should feel worse than if alone. I applied some weeks ago for leave of absence to Gen. Meade but I have not heard from it since - if matters become quiet again he may let me go. On this subject I guess we had better make up our minds - as Gen. Meade said of his plan of battle at Gettysburg - "Let the thing develop itself."

All our friends in the Ninth are in good spirits; and in fact the whole Regiment is jovial, prompt and remarkably healthy.

The Command of the Brigade which devolved upon me was purely temporary and owing to the illness of Gen. Siffer. He is still in Washington. Old Smith commanded the division, if you please, but a General was assigned to the div. afterwards, so Smith is now back to his Brigade, and I to the Ninth. I honestly think I ought to be appointed a Brigadier General in which capacity a portion of the world, at least, would hear from me - but I indulge no hopes as I have no influential political friends. Still, I feel convinced that destiny is not done with me yet. These are stirring times and new arrangements will be made by swift events.

Quincy