

Strasburg, Shenandoah Co., Va.,  
Dec. 23, 1861.

Dear Father;

I again embrace this opportunity to write you a few lines to let you know how I am, and where I am. I am well at present except a cold. I had the Mumps in one jaw when I was at Staunton, though it was very slight.

We received marching orders Sunday 15, and on Monday 16 about noon we set out and came ten miles that day. Tuesday we came fifteen miles - Wednesday fourteen - Thursday about the same distance - and Friday twenty odd. We are now at Strasburg, but how long we will stay here I do not know. We may leave in a day or two. We will either go to Winchester or Masses.

Our march was down the Valley Turnpike, one of the best roads that ever I saw; and I must think it is the best in the State of Virginia. There is not a mud hole in it. It is <sup>ma</sup> ~~ca~~ <sub>n</sub> ~~ada~~ mized from Staunton to Winchester.

The Valley of Virginia is one of the most beautiful regions that ever my eyes beheld. The land, in general, looks fertile and rich. There are splendid buildings in the most part of this valley. Some of them are built of bricks, some of stones—and some of wood. The people, I must think, for the most part, are rich. They have the largest and finest granaries that ever I saw.

The men's feet got very sore from the march. The road was so hard that their feet blistered. We have had some of the prettiest weather that we have had altogether since we have been in service. The weather was warm and pretty during our entire march, though it is raining now.

We will probably get in a fight soon. If there be any fight at Manassas I expect to be there. I see no other alternative now but a fight.

No winter-quarters for us, but I rather expect a winter campaign. We will be carried from place to place, I expect, until our time is out. Col. Gilham determines that we shall be in a fight, it seems: and if it is necessary

I am willing that we should. And as the old adage is, we are carried "through thick and thin." If we fight I hope the God of battles will fight with us, and determine the victory in our favour. And if I fall in battle all will be right in the eyes of God. The Lord of hosts will do what is right. The Man that preserves us in time of peace can preserve us in time of war. I have <sup>nothing</sup> more to write you at present. Give my love to all, and receive a portion yourself.

Yours truly,  
W. M. Rawlings.

To J. M. Rawlings.