

Documents

LETTERS OF A CIVIL WAR SURGEON.

Dr. E. W. H. Beck served through the Civil War as a physician and surgeon. Earlier he saw service in the Mexican War, following which he returned to his home in Delphi, Indiana, where he married Miss Frances M. Milroy. Some letters written on the Mexican front by Doctor Beck, Robert and Samuel Milroy, and William E. Pearsons were published in the *Indiana Magazine of History* in June, 1929 (XXV, 167-173). The letters printed below were written by Doctor Beck during the Civil War. The manuscript copies were kindly furnished, through Miss Esther U. McNitt of the Indiana State Library, by two grand-daughters of Dr. Beck, Mrs. Mildred Knight Richardson and Mrs. Dorothy Knight Green of Indianapolis.

[Dr. E. W. H. Beck to Mrs. (Frances M. Milroy) Beck]

Camp of 3rd Cavalry 2nd Bd [Brigade]
Sunday Nov. 11 [1861]

My Dearest.

Today I read your first letter—& how glad—& yet sorry I felt when I perused it—I immediately wrote a letter to Ed Davis to see the Commissioners the 1st Dec & I gave him an order for them to pay my $\frac{2}{3}$ to him instead of to Thomas & he will hand to you or Miss Skinner—they owe me $\frac{2}{3}$ of full amount due from their last sitting up to the 22 Oct.—it will be in the neighborhood of 5 dollars—take it and pay Miss Skinner—I was to pay her 12 dollars & 50 cts—per Quarter—that is every 3 months—\$4.12 pr month—I paid her in full on the Thursday of the commissioners last sitting about 1st Sept.—I owed her about a shilling more than they owed me & Thomas promised me faithfully to lift the amount at Commissioners next sitting—My share up to 22 Oct—when I left and pay Miss Skinner—Now I do not owe Dr. Thomas 5 dollars—I may owe him a dollar or so—pity he cant wait till I come home—when he owed me \$50—I waited till he made & collected it—which I had not agreed to—& do not pay him a cent—He also agreed to pay Miss Skinner just half the rent or I believe just \$2 per month out of his own pocket—just to keep the room unoccupied & Miss S—agreed to take this and no more—(or if 2 dollars more per annum—I'll pay this when I come home—& leave my things in—but if Thomas has backed out—see if Miss S—will let you then rent it to Dr. Shultz—see him—get him in if possible—If she wont let anyone in—& Thomas wont, pay the \$2 pr. month—

get a man & surely if you ask Joel [Dewey] to hunt you up a man at anytime hed do it. & either him or [David] Leonard would advance you \$5 in a pinch—or Dugan would. & Il send you some money just as soon as the paymaster comes 'round—& we are expecting him any day—John Allen on Sugar Creek was to bring Hay the week I left—Joel can see him any day or so—or if a nice day you ride out in buggy—(Is the top on the buggy as pr agreement) He [Allen] is to keep you in Hay—if he wont, tell Leonard to make him—I spoke to several men for corn & enclose a few lines to him & Hubbard—send them to both—Hubbard will certainly get wood hauled—& call on him or Leonard or Mitchell—or even ask Reed Case to send you a man to cut it all up (65 to 75 ct, pr cord is usual price) at once and throw it in—See Saml Jackson for the cow house & odd jobs—drum them up strong—stick to them is the only way to get a thing—Had you not better find a good Boy 12 to 16 years old to cut wood and take care of Horse—& go to school or even pay him \$8 pr month—hunt one up—I dont want you to work so—or if you can—sell Frank [horse] for \$110 cash—or \$125—Notes in 6 months—You are right in taking boarder—I would rather you had one & charge her nothing—than to be so lonely—Enjoy yourself all you can you distress me by your fretting & crying—Il try & keep all safe—if I accomplish my intention, all right;—Il be home in *Feb* I dream of you— love my home as mutch as man can & miss it now—yet I can make & save something more than at home—& will enjoy it doubly when I do get there—*Gen'l Scott* thinks it wont last long.

The Burr & County debt—bore my spirits down—& God knows when I could have paid it at home—here 2 months will pay—3 or 4 months will let me out of debt & 4 more will with our land, build our house—& if we both live that long—until this is accomplished I never will leave home again *By God* this is an oath to it— no preventing providence—only interfering—I can manage then—2 houses to rent & the 3rd to live in—& tho we cant tell the future . . . I dont think mortal man loves his family more than I do, & I am making these personal sacrifices solely for them—to aid me in doing my duty to them & get this burden of debt off shoulders once more—no more speculations—See Will Calvert get \$10 of him certainly \$18 per month will hire help for you—keep Kate & get a Boy— or Tom to find a man—Saml will certainly bring you corn—or see if he will keep Frank for so much per month—& leave him there—He cant work him & wont hurt him & will exercise him—do this now—Il pay him—then leave the corn in the stalk—& you can get the horse to ride—Larry going for him when you want him—Get money of Calvert till I send you some—Is the kitchen plastered yet—Buggy fixed &c—&c?

We moved our camp yesterday 4 miles further down the river—are still in tents—develish cold at nights yet I sleep pretty warm on a straw sack on a box and my trunk—sent to the city for a cot—camp stools &c I expect wel go into winter quarters—for I see no signs of moving—Mat Chapman brought my coat from Indianapolis \$23. Il send [the \$23] as soon as Im paid. If you hear from Robt or John let me hear from you—tell Ally and Larry to write . . . I want no money

from home—would like the wrapper—never mind the pen—Can of mangoes would be nice—kiss the children—tell Fanny I bring the baby—Keep in good heart & tell my spirit friends to stick by me.

God bless you my darling—I would love to kiss you—& hope to soon.

Your Husband.

[Dr. Beck to Mrs. Beck]

Camp Carter

Sunday night Dec. 29, 1861.

Dearest:

I received yours of the 22nd today You Speak of the victories everywhere else except here—Well—I have no doubt our Authorities have some doubt of trying them here—You see they have 1 line of fortifications behind another for 15 miles deep—and 30 or 40 long—then protected by water & mountains so you Cant flank them—McClellan has been heard to Say—Give him Indiana troops—& he will fight the devil but he has not so much Confidence in N—York & N England troops. Now—Supposing we commenced the fight—it would be a seige of from 1 week to a month to dislodge them—from their strongholds—for they have about 200,000 men—our Gov knows this—& there would be thousands of lives lost & should we be defeated—the jig is up—foreign nations would dictate the peace—Well—just the way we are doing will whip them—we are sending off Expeditions evry week—South—getting behind them—& will in 2 or 3 years whip them into submission—not sooner. I am sorry Tom Madden was killed.—Where is Roberts [Robert Milroy] troops going to? Remain there or go to Kentucky.

4 of this Reg'ts Companies are in Kentucky—& we shall be ordered there, or them here—immediately. I think the latter. 6 men start to morrow from our Regt—2 Commissioned & 4 non Commissioned officers back to Indiana to Recruit up to 95 men each & repair losses—from death & discharges—3 of our Companies have only 75 men—others 92.

God Bless my Dear little family—

Your Husband

[Dr. Beck to Mrs. Beck]

Camp Carter

Jan 30 1862

8 o'clock P.M.

Dearest.

Last night I wrote to Joel [Dewey]—& now to write to yours of the 20. Why do you appologise to me—as if you bored me in long letters &c—my God I wish I could read one every day from you—& dont fail to write 2 or 3 a week if it dont tax you too much—& I wouldnt care if they were a mile long—I devour evry word from you & the children—I feel as much lost from [not] being at home as you can feel—indeed its punish-

ment to me—but, I thought it best and I must confess—while I am patriotic—I am after money and experience in surgery more—& without these I should let the aspiring young men all get their fill ere I had left my little heaven of home Well Love I have no news—it has been so rainy & muddy I keep close—in a few days I shall ask for that furlough—& can't know the result till I try. Genl Hooker told our Col to day we should move in a week mud or no mud—this I don't believe unless we go by water—& I hear of no expedition fitting out to take troops at this time. I think he talks so, just to stop or keep *so very many* from annoying or applying at Head Quarters for furloughs. If he knows we are going to move—I'll not get off—if he don't know, he'll let my application go to Washington—& I'll write as to all my desires & see the result. There is such an outside pressure on the Government just now—on Congress & McClellan, I think he'll move wheather he is ready or not—but good heavens—it is raining yet—& roads [are] so they Cant haul our tents or provisions or Cannon—so why should we attempt to go.

I may sell my horse tomorrow—I can get a horse that will do me for my gold watch—then I can send you a hundred dollars more home I cant tell for a day or two—but if I think there is a poor prospect of my going home I'll send some money. But Frank you get out of Wm Calvert say 12 or 15 dollars every month *Sure* Cash you will have it—Show the money to Joel that it is on a good Bank—so he [Calvert] wont get behing too much—first thing you know he break & owe you 50 or 75 dollars rent & cant pay. See to this Get Juliens speech & read it—its good—I wrote him a letter—congratulating him on the effort & to get him to oppose a reduction of officers pay—I wrote also to Lane. I shall send & have you express my big watch if I sell mine immediately.

I'll write you again in a few days I hope tomorrow I'll get a letter from you.

God bless you all my Dears

Your Husband

Tell Ally & Larry to both write—

Frank keep up in good cheer—I expect its dull there & I wouldn't be satisfied if I was at home.

[Dr. Beck to Mrs. Beck]

Manassus

June the 25 1862

My *dearest*.

We have just landed from Port Royal—not 15 minutes ago Dr. Brusie had gone with the sick of the Division from P Royal to Washington & has just come back & meets us here—with the news that his wife is sick & he has a Furlough to go home for from 7 to 15 days—Gen'l Shields our Commander is Mad—he was not confirmed yesterday by the Senate as Major Gen'l—& we are here rumor says for 2 weeks to recruit—then possibly go back to Washington—dont know our destination. The

Dr starting to the city I only scribble a short letter now that you may the sooner get it.

While the Dr is saddling up I write—The whole Division is here spread over a Mile Square—We have had violent rains for several days I took cold and my lungs are quite Sore & I had a touch of Ague—but—not so as to have to lay up—I rode all the time—am now feeling better—I believe w'l hang 'round Washington all the summer—We had a nice trip thro Va oh how I enjoyed the lovely scenery—& how I wish you had been by my side to enjoy with me

My trunk is now at the St Charles Hotell Washington where you staid—I have a carpet bag & valise—

God bless you my Dearest—I write soon again dont distress yourself about me enjoy life all you can dont give up to melancholy—be firm

Dearest good bye

[Dr. Beck to Mrs. Beck]

Bristers [Bristoe's] Station near *Manassus*

July the 2 1862

My own Dearest.

Three days ago I wrote you—I then expected to write next from Alexandria—for we were ordered to be in readiness next day to go to Richmond by water. We have not heard a thing from our Division since then—wheather they have gone & design to leave us here—or wheather still in a day or two we are to follow—the delay being in getting vessels ready I do not know—our Col thinks now & we all think they dont want us to go to Richmond or have forgotten us, we are so insignificant—but I think when the order was first issued we were designed to go, but rumor has it to day that they have been fighting at Richmond for several days & that Mc Clellan has the City & so the order sending us there is changed. Well—I dont care what they do—we are here—plenty to eat, such as it is—nothing much to do—have been here a week to day—& I hope tho hardly expect we might be sent back to Washington City—as guards. There are a good many of our Boys sick Two broke their legs last week & I sent 35 to the Gen'l Hospital—& am prescribing for 30 daily—mostly Billious diseases. Today is a gloomy hard day. Raining hard—I sit in my tent alone the rain pouring down & quite cold—& the men have no tents but are clustered here & there under their Talma's . . . yesterday I made out Pay Rolls & Reports all day—Government owes me 400 more.

When I get ahead some I come home tho, I cant but think this War will close up this Fall. The D— Traitor McDowel is now down in Command so that—altho he ought to have been thrown out—he cant do much harm. Gen'l Pope is over him. This Pope I believe is the man that is to come upmost of all yet. If they [Confederates] have lost Richmond they will be disheartened. Oh, how it rains—evry man in Camp is asleep or stowed away to keep dry—not a sound is heard. & we are right out in open fields—what was once farms are now wastes—houses—fences—

everything destroyed. You speak of leaving Delphi—Yes, I would like to, but where can we go to better ourselves—I dont want to get rich anymore, but make a mere good living,—I believe Ft. Wayne a good point. I do wish you would try & sell the house you live in—get Twenty five hundred dollars for it (\$2500.00) — sell it—I cant buy a house in any other Town unless I sell that one—& if I cant sell it—I cant well move —& if I can I [might] try some other point. Enquire 'round & see if you cant sell it—the house is yours. The store soon Ill sell for the same—but prefer keeping it if I cant sell the house . . . Well—all our officers are Mad—half of them talk of resigning—they think we are of no consequence—wont get into any fighting & all want, they scarcely know what. I am patiently waiting time [as] I am working for 6 dollars cash a day—for to further the interest of my family. Pay off those cursd mill debts & get me a good house & start again even in the world —then Il try & stay even & leave wild foolish speculation alone 1500 dollars will do me, & if we are all spared till I get that Il come home—or before that if my family affairs necessitate me. If Death cuts some of us off, then we cant helpt—but must submit to the will of Providence & hope for a reunion in Spirit life.

Write me if you have found a name for our dear little Boy. Horace or Heber or Wilbur—Take good care of yourself— all them & Il take care of myself for your sakes. God bless you my heart is more at home with you, now, than when in my Boyish Maiden love in Mexico—tho then I thought I never could live without you—I think more of you now than then—Il write soon again—for I know not when or where our next move will be. Tell Holmes to sell the horse for 90 dollars only. 80 is too little.—Let him go at \$90.

I think your cough syrup will relieve you.

Yours truly E. W. H. Beck.

[Dr. Beck to his Father and Mother]

Fredricksburg Va
July the 14 1862

Dear Father & Mother.

It is about 4 weeks since I wrote you—We are running around so much, I can hardly find time to write the weather is so hot & flies so bad it is a punishment to sit long enough. Our Regt. has been shifted about just as tho' *we were nobody* first after Gen'l Wadsworth's division to McDowels under Gen' Gray at White Plains—here we run all over the Shannandoah Valley—then ordered to report to Genl Shields at Luray—from here to Winchester—then over near Harpers fery—then back near Strasburg then down again to Mannassus—then Warrentown—Culpeper & now last Tuesday noon we bring up at this Falmouth on the Rappanhannock river on the bluff opposite Fredricksburg. We were hunting Jackson & Ashby but took develish good care to keep out of their way—Il swear I could take Clay & Straw & make better Generals than any we have been under yet. I most honestly believe they are traitors to our

cause, or else want to protract this war, for the money that's in it. Shield's Division was broken up at Mannassus—& we transferred to Gen'l Rufus K King ([son of] the old Senator from N. York.)

Brig. Gen'l Commanding a Division & the old Army of the Valley instead of running entire under the Traitor Mc Dowel is given to Genl Pope & 3 Corps made of it Mc D—— commands the 3d (the third Army Corps.) From what Pope accomplished in the West, I am in hopes he will do some[th]ing. We drew 10 days rations yesterday & 4 more waggons & tis said we start to morrow for Gordonsville & Barbersville—west of this 40 miles & I think on toward Richmond—tho this will depend on how many recruits are sent McClellan from Washington [Peninsular Campaign]. This is the most lovely country I ever was in Fredericksburg has about 7000 whites,—is where Geo Washington's Mothers tomb remains—her Body was taken up sometime since & buried at Mt. Vernon. The people are in mourning here they sent a Regt from here (the Rebels) some-time since & it came out of the fight at Richmond with only about 50 left. All thro this country you see no young or middle aged men—the Conscription Act raked them all & half the women are dressed in mourning. The Negrows are the thriving population here—they live fat & saucey on the deserted farms; Business houses in towns are closed up, but Jews & pedlers & army hangers-on flock in & make business whether or no—tho the people are very bitter they buy rather than starve or go naked.

We are getting some sickness in our Regt. about 50 in the Genl Hospital's—10 or 15 on hand all the time—had one drown last week in the river, swimming his horse—I have 2 Ambulances & first haul 6 or 8 & over this I send off to Genl Hospital. There are about 11000 Troops here & Mc Dowel has 18000 30 miles above this at Warrentown. I believe we all move to gether to Barborsville. This is the greatest country for fruit I ever saw—Cherries—Berries &c every discription I eat a Pint of Bl'k Berries & milk for desert for dinner after my Bean soup. Apples & Peaches will be abundant here.

We are having it very dry here & hot for about 3 weeks been but one good rain in this time—the harvest is nearly through & wheat generally looks well—it is as fine a grass country as California especially West of Blue Ridge.

This river contains 4 times as much water as the Wabash but is not wider here than the W—— is at Lafayette. They are just completing R. R. Bridge for the 4th time since the Rebellion began. I think reinforcements will reach Mc C soon so that Richmond must fall & with its fall the Rebellion must soon close—the first of Nov. must certainly close the whole thing up—tho a large standing army must make the Devil's behave themselves for months to come—the best Act ever a Congress passed was the Confiscation Act.—Did you read Gen'l Banks reply to the Resolutions of inquiry of his letting Negrows ride & soldiers walk on his retreat from Winchester—? Ginny had better remain at home now Martha feels lost while I am away—& if Bowman comes back to Delphi he can Teach German & Larry can go to him & then be

at home to help take care of the horse &c—but if he does not come (he talks of it) Larry will go back to Lafayette.

Write me at Washington, Gen'l Kings Division.

Your Son

E. W. H. Beck.

[Dr. Beck to Mrs. Beck]

Camp Fredericksburg Va

Friday Evening August the 8 1862

Dearest.

Our six Companies, 8 Regt. Infantry & 8 pieces Artillery went out last Tuesday morning—in direction of Gordonsville, 14 miles from here, we being 1 mile in advance—we crossed a deep creek went up through a cut & raided the Bluff in a strip of woods & here about 400 yds to our left stood in line of Battle a Regt of Rebel Cavalry—they had Carbines & commenced firing on us our Col got in line our Boys—we had no Carbines & could not reach them with pistols,—I was in the rear and near my 2 horse Ambulance—I rode up to see the enemy & turn back to turn the Ambulance back into the hollow—when they opened Artillery on us and Shells grape and canister came rattling over our heads—a shell burst within ten feet of me—knocked my horse back on his haunches—then I *broke* down the hill & the whole Regt—was ordered down and on to the opposite bluff—but the Boys got alarmed & such a scrambling & skedaddaling you never saw—they followed us as full as the cut road would allow & on the sides fired down on us & Strange to say we had but one man seriously wounded—5 taken prisoners & 1 of them got away from them—8 or 10 slightly injured—10 horses wounded—1 killed—we killed two of them in the road coming down the hill certain—By the time we got up the hill—our men all saw 20 or 30 (week kneed) in line of Battle the Infantry came up & our Artillery opened on them then you should have seen them skedaddle—next morning we pursued 7 miles, & to the house where our wounded man lay I mentioned. 2 weeks ago he gave our Gen'l some idea of their force & that they were tolling us on with small force while their main body were getting in our rear on the Bolinggreen road—we wheeled around—came back—in the meantime Genl Gibbon a Dm squirt of a Brig Gen'l had sent back to town for reinforcements & Genl Hatch with more troops and Artillery came out & we got within 1 mile of our old Camp & Battleground of night before, Bang, Bang, went the Cannon—about 3 or 4000 Rebel Cavalry & 12 pieces artlry had got in our rear—Gibbons (our Genl) a lot of surgeons and myself were riding in a group, just behind the advanced guard—he was thunderstruck—looked pale—urged forward the Troops—our Cavalry went on ahead & reported to *Genl Hatch* he was in our old Camp (they in his rear too) he ordered our Cav'ly to charge on the enemy—they had only 5 or 6 companies & our men went in with a yell & drawn Sabres—The rebels had arranged a trap by forming behind a deep & terrible mudhole the entire width of the road our front ranks went down in this & fell & men & horses piled ten feet high—we here lost 1 horse & about

20 men cripeled—our Col badly hurt in the side—but on the ballance went (after the said check), and they skeedadled & we run them 8 miles when our horses were exhausted—all hands rested & I think 500 men fell from the ranks of the Infantry sun struck or overcome, injured by heat—the enemy planted themselves again & again our Cannon opened on them & again we charged on them & this time drove them about 5 miles & out of the way—here too they stood by beside a deep wide ditch & had it covered over with brush & the whole Regt. would have gone is as they did in the mud hole had not 2 or 3 horses outrun the ballance 20 or 30 yards & fell in, & the rest seeing it checked up in time. They shot one of our men here thro the Brains (Carbine ball) he never knew what hurt him—we killed one of theirs here whose body we buried & the Negrows told us the next day they had 80-110 killed & wounded in their Ambulances—During this time the ballance of their Cavalry were between us & Fredericksburg—burnt a Bridge Captured 7 of our trains taking out things to us—& 4 waggons full of the sick that we sent in (the sun struck I spoke of) & straglers amounting in all to near 100—fortunately I had 2-14 horse & 1-2 horse ambulance & I hauled all mine along & lost none—tho we all got in yesterday evening but rear guard & they lost 4 more this morning. One hour ago our pickets came running in, & their Cavalry are within 4 miles of town on 2 roads—& every available man is now sadling up their tired down and fagged out horses to go out to night & Infantry & artillery are going along but I am confident it is only Cavalry the enemy have they wouldnt risk Infantry, this [time] hot weather is so near. Burnside is here & in all about 30000 troops—but good heavens nothing can be done this hot weather Men cant walk in the dust & hot sun & carry the load they have to carry—full one half the men are lost to active service—We were badly out Generaled—they beat us to death—but they had all advantages—know every road & bye path & the citisens will fight one hour & work in the field the next—jump their horses & fight the next. Col Carter showd a want of judgement—had no decision—disobeyed orders in going so far ahead of his Regt. did not heed what our advance guards said but bulged ahead—*Great God* Such Generals as we have it Seems as tho, our men had lost all Strategy, skill or honesty. Genl Patrick goes to day, I have more faith in him—we need more Cavalry here & better armed—we are promised both. I had another man die this morning Typhoid fev—16 in Hosp'tl—weather very hot. I stand it well—& while evry one was sickened out or tired out yesterday I could have started out this morning I have recd no letter from you since I wrote you last—we are occupying a *nice new* 2½ story house for Hospital on the Hill back of Fredericksburg. & Brusie & I have a room upstairs & are now writing our Dear good wives, 5 o'clock not a breath of air stirring & the sun would almost boil one off—is it unusually hot at home? Im glad of the Draft—Will Sam [Milroy] stand a draft? or come out? Tell me as soon as they draft who are caught in the net, I hope Wilsons & Burntragers Boys. Did you get the money I sent you? via Lafayette? I don't believe any General movement will be made on our side until reinforced by new troops & cooler weather sets in—the rebels have at least 300,000 troops in Va & it will take 500,000 of us to whip them because they wont stand and fight, &

they are citisens one day & soldiers next—& we have to have so many to hold our points taken. I must see you all this fall if possible—how I wish it would close up by Nov or Dec—I hope to get a letter from you tomorrow—how does Dear little Warren our Baby Boy—God bless & preserve you all

My own Dear ones

Your Husband

I traded my gold watch for a horse a large fine colt I have two now—If I have luck with them.

[Dr. Beck to Mrs. Beck]

Washington D. C.

Thursday Sept the 4 1862

My own Dearest.

I am sitting on the grass in a shade—about $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile from the old Campground in the subberbs of Washington—Great God how humiliating—I would resign today—if not for pure shame when we are so badly beaten. What a panic is here. We left Fredricksburg last Sunday night at 9 o'clk—was in the saddle all night but only made eight miles—we brought up the rear—blowed up the Bridges—Depots &c &c—obstructed the roads &c to keep the enemy back while Burnside's 8000 men could embark at Aqua Creek for Washington—& We the last got on to the steamers last night [Wednesday] at 12 & reached this city at sun up—& now I sit here waiting for our waggon & Camp equipage—which may not get here ere enemy & our orders are to fix 3 days rations go out in the direction of Harper's ferry—the Rebels has whipped back our forces from all points & into our own fortifications. *Pope* is sunk lower than Hell—where he belongs—[after Battle of Manasses, August 30]

McDowell has showed himself a Traitor & murdered his own men & if Lincoln or Stanton keeps him in now the people in the North ought to rise and put down Lincoln & S—& take the reigns in their own hand—McClellan is again the Commander in the field & I have no confidence in him—We look tomorrow to hear of Jackson's force destroying the Ohio and Baltimore R R—& perhaps taking Baltimore—& going in to Pennsylvania. & indeed I should not be surprised to hear he had surrounded this City & cut off supplies—I wish the people would rise in their might at home—put out all the Generals & Stanton & get some honest men at the head of affairs—Lincoln is too easy.

Segels Command is eight or ten miles from here—& I try my best to see Robert [Milroy, a brother of Mrs. Beck] soon—dont know how I may succeed—He was in the hardest of the fighting Saturday—and all his men left wont make one Regiment & he was compelled to fall back twice—most of the new Regiments that went out & a good many in the old ones run at the first fire—I have changed my mind about the Southerners—they fight better than we & have better Generals & no Traitors—are all a unit & will whip us, unless we all turn out & also

change Generals and hang Traitors. Dr Brusie is not well and I shall go with the Regt—tonight & will try & write again when I return I dont feel by Dearest that I shall loose my life in this struggle—but yet I might then you would feel my loss I Know—Col Wm Brown of Logansport fell the other day—(he married a Perkins) Poor woman & 4 children how they must feel—If I should fall the Goverment will pay you a pension I think about 20 dollars a month or 250.00 a year—(get a Lawyer to get it started for you) & you should take 6 or 700 dollars & build you a neat story & half cottage on same lot and rent the old house for \$150.00 & store room for 200—here would be 5 or 600 dollars per year which would support you all easily with economy—There is \$700 in Bank at Lafayette now—& Gove'mnt owes me 350.00 more tho they have no money now & I dont when Il send it home—Il send you 50 more & \$300 to Bank—that will make an even \$1000.00. . . . the Waggon's haven't come yet—wel not get off before midnight—My trunk is at the St. Charles Hotell yet all safe—I might as well send it home—God Bless you all my Dear ones—hope Baby will get better

Your Husband

[Dr. Beck to Mrs. Beck and Children]

In the field in
Montgomery Co Maryland
near Barnsville—36 miles
from Washington & 5 miles from
the Potomac—15 this side of
Harpers ferry
Sept the 11 1862

My Dear good Wife & Babies

I received your last letter of August th4 & the Delphi Journal yesterday Glad to hear you are all well—I wrote Joel Dewey a letter on the morning of the 8th & just as I closed we were ordered up to the village of Poolsville then held by the rear guard of the enemy that had mostly past on—the 8th Ills Cavalry & ours were the advance & 2 pieces Cannon—(I forgot to say in my last letter, that the day after we left Washington Col Carter was put under arrest & sword taken from him for neglect of duty—poor old fool—it sickened him & I furloughed him for 20 days & he is in Washington) So we were under Buchannon & we marched in to the town [Poolsville]—A Regiment of old veterans—the old Ashby Cavalry—left as we entered—each party firing Carbines of course—then they opened a concealed Cannon on us—their shells went high over our heads—our Boys charged up to them—they run with the cannon after about a Dozen shots—the Regt—stood & 2 of our Companies A & B—charged into them—or about 80 men into 400—we had 10 wounded and 1 killed they had 15 killed and 15 or 20 wounded—Bob Kennedy run at least 3 lengths of his horse ahead of anyone & after emptying his pistol & Gun—cut for their flag—4

men protected it & he would have had it in one minute more—but one bullet cut his sword hand just above the thumb—another thro his Cartridge Box another thro Holster & another thro his left hand—they cut down his sword & it dropped & wounded in Bridle hand he wheeled out—but the men all mixed up & the Rebs whirled & cut dirt & had Col Farnsworth the Illinois Col who commanded ordered the rest of our Regt. around them we would have captured the whole Bunch—Next day the Illinois Regt tried & they dashed in same way—Killed 4 & wounded several & took their colors & lost none Killed or wounded—but took about 60 Prisoners—and we moved on to this place 6 miles—yesterday—we fought with Cannon and occasional skirmishers dismounted & killed some & drove them—but seen their waggons cross the river again into Va loaded down with Eatables & driving at least a thousand head of Cattle—To day we (& now there is about 20000 of us) scoured the Country 10 miles 'round—and over Sugarloaf Mountain where it is said they are concealed—but God knows where they are gone—If we let them get away now—across the river again we ought to be whipped tho—I have no confidence in our Generals at all. Burnside is 6 miles from here with a large Army—I would trust him more than any I know of—Sumner and Franklin are here—McClellan came close & went back—We travel without tents—slip around like hunting Deer pop-pop-poping at each other & shelling with Cannon but our Generals take good care to keep *just* behind a few hours & miles—they act as if afraid or desirous of protracting this war—I am sitting on the ground & by the Candle flicker write on my knee—it is all hum around & a thousand Camp fires shine on the hills around—Jackson is too Sma[r]t for us or our Gen's purposely neglect duty & let him get around them in the way he does—If they stay on this side the Potomac long—there will be a terrible fight soon or the people of the north will demand of Lincoln many changes—Great God how that scoundrel Pope let our men get cut up at the last Bull Run fight—some of our Boys were in it—we lost 2 to their 1 & many Cannon & Prisoners—Pope sending in a Brigade at a time until cut up and so on—and at least 70000 men never fired a shot—I dont think I can spend this winter in the Army unless they do better & then I must see you at home or you Come to me—no Dear it would not do for you to come now—We were at Fredricksburg 20 miles off when that Battle came off—now we are in the Big Main Army—if a Battle Comes off—I'll write you as often as I can—that was singular about Mrs. Burntrager. Do send me Baby's miniature or him sitting on your lap—showing you too—Dear I'll send an order for my horse money to morrow to 742 Broadway N York to Rev. T. W. Conway & have him Express to you \$120.00 so you live off it—if what you have & should collect much make more than you need in the house I would deposit half of it at Dugans or better—if you can—Keep it only be careful of it—if you leave the house I would take it along . . .

. I must Close God bless you all my Dear ones—Our wounded are doing well, I sent them back to Rockville & Dr Brusie with them—

he will be up some time to night again—Look on the Map & follow
our wanderings—this will learn Ally Geography—

Yours ever

Beck

[Dr. Beck to Mrs. Beck]

Battlefield
Near Williamsport & 12 Mil[e]s
from Harpers fery Maryland
7 o'clock morning Sept 18 [1862].

My Dearest.

I drop a few lines in haste to say I am yet all right—We are in a Brigade of Cavalry under Genl Pleasanton the 8th Illinois & ours commanded by Col Farnsworth of the 8th Ills—we have been in the advance & under fire of the enemys piquets this is 12 successive days—but last Saturday eveng at the Mountain Pass & Sunday al day till 10 o'clock at night—I it was a terrible Battle they had all advantages holding mountain passes— but we whipped them out—our loss is heavy but theirs much more so we chased them Monday fighting all the time—& yesterday Oh, a terrible Battle [Antietam] again ensued—there must be 60 or 80,000 a side we have driven them back about 2 miles but they stand like devils—now as I write the Artillery in front about 2 miles is opening and we predict annother Bloody day—but our Army is in good spirits and we are sure of a victory—the enemy is in bad spirits & short of ammunition—we took over a thousand prisoners yesterday—Many of them throwing down their Arms voluntarily & coming in—We had 5 Genls wounded yesterday—they say 1 is dead this mornng & a noble Major Genl Reno killed Sunday—Report is that Segel & Heintzelman is at the River with 80,000 & are keeping the Enemy from crossing if this is true we will bag most of the Rebels in a day or two. O God what a sight—the dead & wounded—Yet I have had but little to do with my own Regt—yesterday only 4 slightly wounded— last Sunday about 21 wounded & 4 dead—Cavalry Dont do much in Active battle only as the Enemy is leaving or we are Retreating they then fight to save or take Artillery—But I helped other surgeons all I could at the same time am obliged to keep close to my Regt—for I assure you can easily get lost there are so many Cavilry (15 or 20,000) this is a wearing time—I hope these may prove decisive battles—If they were as badly whipped as we think yesterday (for both Armys fired as long as they could see last night & Slep[ed] right on the field) & [if] it is true they [Union forces] have Harpers fery—the Enemy will Skedadle—or perhaps have now—for but few guns are firing as yet now (7:30 a.m.) & the Battle for the present is over—I wish they had been bagged—so as to end it—I long so for a letter from you . . . & one is due—your last was last Sunday week—The shells fell thick & fast around the Dr & me yesterday—often striking within 50 feet—& one going thro a Barn—the shed

of which we was under—but we can always hear them & dodge or lay down & thy pass over—I will write again in a few days

God Bless you all my Dears

Beck

P.S. The Artillery is increasing—and it may be a Bloody day—we are 3 miles from Sharpsburg.

[Dr. Beck to Mrs. Beck]

Sunrise Monday of
the 19 Friday [Sept. 19, 1862]
In Same Camp

Dearest—I could not get my letter written yesterday mornng off & enclose this scrap— The 2 Armies did not meet in full yesterday but each stood fast changing positions for advantages & each getting up heavy reinforcements— 3 Regts fought yesterday about 2 hours—Killing and wounding some— We all predict a terrible struggle to day—there might be 200 000 a side—I worked yesterday hard among the Wounded—I guess there are from 5 to 7 000 wounded—2 000 Killed—O God how horrible is the Battlefield—to Day 20 000 will fall if the Two Armies meet—and McClellan is sure to move on them—Yesterday he preferred to get Rid of the Killed & Wounded & get up Reinforcements.

Segel & Heintzelman we hope are on their south flank—I try & find Robt [Milroy]. McClellan is very popular—wherever he rides he is enthusiastically cheered by the troops—they all say victory is certain if he is present—Hooker is my favorite & Sumner the fighting man I got your letter yesterday & 2 papers & Baby Walters Minature He is a beautiful child—The Dr & I had 6 amputations yesterday & have more today. I must close as the mail goes. . . .

My love to all

God Bless

My own Dear Wife

Your Husband

[Dr. Beck to Joel Dewey]

In a field alongside Sharpsburg, Md.
Sunrise Sept. 21, 1861 [1862]

Dear Joel,

I wish I could see you for an hour this morning. I could say much more than I can write & I could swear this morning for an hour if that would do any good—Alas & a Kingdom for a *General*. Joel we have been fighting for fifteen days—our Cavalry against General Piquets [Picket's] & last Sunday & last Wednesday beginning Tuesday evening we had general engagement of which you have outlines by paper writers—but of course cannot realize the realities without being present—Even then you can only see effects often for our Battle-line Wednesday [Sept. 17—Antietam] extended over 5 miles in front. I send the B[altimore]

Clipper an account which I like the best of many—Today Sunday our Regt & the 8th Illinois (that remain together) are resting—the first for a long time—having actually been ruled out to day as unfit for service—Men tired and horses lame & run down & so I write a few minutes at a time as I can catch it—I have been over the Battle ground was in hot places during the Battle had my horse shot while riding him & God grant you may never see the destruction of human life & the human misery I have here witnessed. A week ago today we had a terrible battle at South Mountain & I think taking great pains to approximate as near the facts as possible that we then had about 1000 killed and 2000 wounded—of the latter I think this is a low estimate and just about double of the rebels & taking about 5000 prisoners. I may be far under the mark all around but the facts are so difficult to get at (the Battle front extending 7 miles) First reports so universally exaggerated that I come under even Genl McClellans first dispatch 6000—in the loss of Rebels—Next morning early after our victory our Cavalry—we are in a Brigade of 2500 commanded by Gen'l Pleasanton (Directly under McClellan) who was formerly a Major of Cavalry in Regular Service—We were ordered in pursuit & oh God how we slashed & cut their rear guards—took several hundred prisoners—Strewed the road with killed & wounded & guns & 4 cannons—the enemy took different roads—all toward the Potomac—panic stricken—leaving every superfluity that they could make the better race. Our loss in the race was about 50 killed & wounded—Jacksons front (their Army extending 15 miles) had crossed the River & now in consequence of the drubbing in the rear or drowning so many of necessity in their hurry to cross—he recrossed to Stop the panic & formed in line of Battle on the West Side of a creek [Antietam] deep & having a high Bluff in places & the town of Sharpsburg one mile in the Rear. A thousand Shells stoped our Cavalry about noon & by 4 o'clk P.M. the noble old Genl Hooker (God bless him) came up with the old McDowel Corps & attacked them on the right wing. At 9 P.M. both Cannonading & musketry ceased on account of the darkness & at 7 o'clk next morning—even before the field could be clearly seen for the dense fog that hung over it—as tho' sickening nature would prevent the impending bloodshed—A most terrible battle began ending with the darkness of night once more—Those who have been in all the Battles of the war think that no one days fighting was as terrible & general as this [Antietam, Sept 17]—& you see by our casualties among officers—Genls—Colonels &c how desperate was the fight—both parties determined not to yield until the last man fell—but strange to say—& I am confident it is true the Rebels lost in Killed 4 to our 1—Good old Genl Burnside (the ablest Genl in America) occupied the left—& Hawkins Zouaves were actually seen to charge bayonets 6 times lifting men on their bayonets—as Hay on a fork & throwing them down in desperate wrath plunging the deadly steel through them again—I was over Hooker's part of the field yesterday rather only a part of it—& thro the center—brought up by French & Sedgewick & I have gathered notes from two Pennsylvania Brigades that are bringing the enemys Dead—have also been to 11 Barns as many orchards & stackyards & thro the villages of Citesville & Sharpsburg—both on the pike which was the

center of the Battle-ground—& learned all I could of numbers wounded as well as killed— 11 o'clk Dr. Brusie my Asst—& my Steward & two nurses have [come] just this minute from the right wing $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from the village & notwithstanding about 2000 of our men have been bringing Rebels since yesterday morning (going over the ground & gathering men & interring first) they counted over 1800 laying in rows gathered for the ditch—while men in groups there in every direction were gathering from the yet untouched field. Death so dealt destruction on a front of 4 to 5 miles & on ground over whence thy were driven back about 3 miles. The calmest men—the clearest heads & my own beliefs—this morning make our losses at 6000 Killed and 12,000 wounded in the 2 Battles & if we had a force of 100,000 as I believe we had—this percentage is not heavy—or about an average of the hardest fought battles—the Enemy for some cause or other suffered more 10 or 12,000 Killed & 15,000 wounded & prisoners at this Battle alone is among the lowest estimates. The morning after the Battle—as if by common consent of both parties—sickened perhaps by the carnage the Armies remained quiet—changing positions & working for advantages till eleven o'clk one Brigade on each side fought *in duello* 3 hours & a storm [of] Cannonading on the enemy—& during the day we were reinforced by about 40000 troops—& rumor said the enemy were as strongly reinforced & we all supposed another terrible day—when low & behold they had all escaped over the river at *Braddocks ford* 14 miles above Harpers ferry & 1 mile below *Sheppardstown*. Next day Friday our Army scattered and even now where they have gone—I mean the two wings, we cannot say—we only hope they have crossed & are still right and left flanking the enemy on the sacred soil—but alas for the center—& while I would not Criticise the plans knowing no more of them as yet—Scowling faces—deep harsh imprecations & loud curses hiss at the course & repulse of our center colum and its misfortune of yesterday—a reenactment of Balls bluff on a smaller scale—& had the Rebels been smart,—as terrible as that ever to be remembered mistake. Yesterday our colum Infantry & Cavalry were ordered to cross the river. 10 pieces of artillery were placed on the bluff this side to cover our crossing—no Rebels could be seen—saw a few scattering piquets—Infantry & Cavalry waded side by side—tho on the ridge of a Dam just above as many walked or waded. When one Regt. of Cavalry had crossed the rest were halted until 6 or 7 Regts of Infantry had crossed—the ballance of our Cavalry rested in the edge of the river—on the shore between river and Canall & on the towpath—Myself my Asst. & 6 nurses & orderlies—we always remain together & immediately in the rear of our Regt. which rested at this moment on the towpath: Our Infantry now scattered along the high Bluff & cautiously ascended—a few Rebel piquets at first fired but soon as our entire force had gained the summit—10 times their number of Rebels swarmed in upon them forcing them [Union troops] back—pell mell down the Bluff & over the river as best they could—of course Our Artillery mowed them [Confederates] down—but they only slackened their pace & did not stop until we were forced back over the

river—The Bulets rained over on the towpath. My squad ran into a Barn & witnessed our Poor Boys dropping on the Bluff & in the river under the leaden hail—while all our Cavalry [came] back out at double quick—those that had crossed recrossing & breaking for the rear. Today our Troops are deploying in different directions & we only conjecture the future few hours—Hundreds bite their lips to day & wonder at the singular polocy—the Astute Strategy of the failure or the feint—tho as I said before I will not criticize—untill we see whether as alleged, Heintzelman & Seigle are on the other side & are at this moment taking the Rebels Jackson and Lee into their traps & securing what many believe could have been done on this side. At least the citizens say on this side the river that the Rebel Army was in a perfect panic—perfectly disorganized—every man for himself—many drowning in the river & that had we followed up our victory without waiting 24 or 36 hours—we would have captured the larger part of if not the whole of their Army—but why did we not? Because they sent in an Armistice early on the morning of the 18 asking privilege to bury their dead—& at noon annother truce to hunt for the body of Genl. Longstreet & *we* allowed them to go all *over* our positions in search of what was not—the Dead Body of their General—he was alive & perhaps the very author of the infamous Strategy to find our Strength & probable design—then, after burying but a very few—a ruse—they all left & left us to care for their dead (they manifest very little care for either their dead or wounded) & concluding it was not healthy to stand annother days fight Skeedadled in the hasty manner I have mentioned—might we, not have decimated them in following up our victory—or will you let the man you knock down rise & get away? Now they are on Va Soil & we shall probably have to follow them to Richmond—polocy—strategy, aside. I could relate many incidents of interest had I time, & but while many are laughable, some are exciting because dangerous & others heart rendering. I saw the Body of a Brooklyn Boy a new recruit & that married on Thursday at home Came on Friday & joined his Regt at Fredrick & was killed on Sunday on the Crest of the Mountain. One of the places desperately held by the Rebs was the Stone Bridge over the creek on the Pike—Their Batteries played right on to this bridge & a curve in the road coming to the Bridge.

Hooker & a large Body of Infantry Came over to be followed by another Division but these for the moment hesitating—Gent Pleasanton commanded the Colum of Calvary to go thru—the Illinois 8th led—Indiana 3d followed—Lancers next &c &c &c the Shells flew so hot & thick here that many a poor fellow quailed—the understanding was thtt we were to charge a Battery—but one man only dodged under the Bridge & one just as entering the narrow gorge, with his own pistol shot his own right index finger off & turned back—I was immediately in the rear of the Lancers & seeing him come bleeding to the rear—supposed him badly wounded & went aside & dressed the wound—&thus escaped passing at the time this very undescribable hot place—they went thru with a yell & in a Keen run & the Rebel Batteries Skeedadled—When I came thru I counted 13 dead horses 4 laying together at the end of the Bridge—Our Cavalry separated in Regts ours going in a

ravine to the right—my squad taking refuge under the shed of a Bank barn of stone basement—A cannon ball entering the roof & lodging in the grain while we were safe underneath—& I am sure a thousand shot & shell & missiles struck close around us,—in the road,—on the buildings—one passing thru the green blinds that were closed—of the elegant farmhouse across the road, making sad havoc among plastering & furniture—the old farmer being in the cellar—the women folks gone —& bounding against the solid rock of the bluff on the opposite side of the creek—Our Cannoniers now taking a nearer position & right on the Bluff to cover the Federal advance up and down the creek belching forth their thunder & the enemys guns replying the the shells giving a loud shriek as they burst—coupled with the incessant roar of musketry & occasionally you could hear in the momentary interval the loud cheers of the charging party—made the scene wild—grand—& intensely terrific. But I cannot tell you all & must close by mentioning how my horse was shot. On Friday we gave Jacksons rearguard an unpleasant push into the river—Our Cavalry charging on them & as the Boys Say hooping them over—I rode at least half mile in the rear—they riding fast—we passed [a] house about 200 yds on where [on the roof] men were signalling—a cornfield lay 2 or 300 yds to the left—Dr. Brusie & all but 2 left me for a moment & went a few rods off the road to the right—I stoped turned my horses head toward them, & looked back at the heavy Infantry column coming half mile in our rear—when a rifle cracked & a ball struck my horse about 6 inches behind my saddle—entering under the skin—passing over the spine & lodging, where it still remains near the opposite hip joint— Our man on the House with the signal saw 5 or 6 Rebels run after shooting—a near cut toward a bend in the river—these were the enemys sharp shooters—remaining in the rear to Spy & shoot &c the [protecting] bend in the river favoring this & our videttes failing to route them as they passed—

My horse is but slightly injured—I shall favor him a few days & hope no such luck for the future— —I had a showy new straw Hat on & a finely appearing horse I suppose is why they selected me. The Signal officer came to the road to tell me & the Col of the Infantry that just came up—that he saw the Rebel after he shot—& their objective might have been to have picked him but the corn field was too far off —We rode on the river—our Cavalry there stood at least 20 minutes under their shells concealing our Guns until ready then broke back into safe places—

I must close—I am in good health—tho dispirited that we lost our gains & I am not alone in this—if we manage no better by Nov or Dec —I shall quit in disgust Give my love to all—let my wife read this after you are done—Tell Dan Fichthorn I saw his Brother Lou yesterday —he is well & gets along well—was not in the Battle. write me all the news.

Yours truly

E W H Beck
Surgeon
3d Ind Cavalry
Army of Va

Address me
still at Washington

[Dr. Beck to Mrs. Beck]

Sharpsburg Md.

Thursday the 2 Oct 1862

Dearest.

I wrote you last Sunday—and have but little more to say to day—We still remain in status quo—and lord how our Camp stinks—hundreds of horses unburied & several thousand dead bodys only just under the surface the air is putrid—and our sick list is rapidly increasing—at least 50 now on sick report & our poor Contemptible onehorse General will not allow us to change Camps—12 Regts of Cavalry of us are here together & ours & the 8 Illinois are Considered by them the most efficient & every other day we are sent out on Scouts over the River to find the position of and strength of the Enemy—Tuesday I was out—yesterday Brusie—We take turn about in going Generally from 3 to 5 Regts. go together & 6 or 8 Cannon—it is like hunting game—we start their piquets & persue—yesterday quite a severe engagement ensued & our 3 Regts would all have been Captured but for the active & excellent Cannoniers—6 Cannon & grapeshot saved us—about 4 times our number of Cavalry came against us got on our side & rear—but our guns raked them & kept them at Bay—tho they charged up to the Cannons mouth once & tried to take it—the Illinois Regt saved it & repulsed them—had 12 wounded then—none killed—there must have been Thirty Killed & many wounded—our men seen a number of their dead—they are reckless of life—at one time Co A of our Regt—Kept 500 at Bay under a hill & without a Cannon—our Boys & they laid down their arms & approached within 20 yds of Each other. & conversed freely—about trading horses—about Compromising &c &c—They got 5 of us last day & we 4 of them yesterday—so it goes—M Clellan is 3 miles from here—and our Armies lies up & down the river 30 miles in extent The new Bridge at Harpers ferry will soon be done & I suppose then a forward movement will be made McC is very slow & Cautious—Robt & Segel is down near Mannasas & Warrentown—I believe we can starve out the Rebels this winter if not whip them & all [that] is need[ed] is an active Genl to whip them—You are mistaken about Pope he had all of McClelans forces he needed at Manasas—he had nearly t[w]o to one of the Rebs but he hadnt Brains to manage more than a Brigade of men [He] had the bad and treacherous McDowl for bad Company & besides he was *drunk* all the time his under Generals had no Confidence in him—How long we will lay here yet God only Knows—good weather still Continues—Dr. Bruisie will resign the last of Nov. & I aim to the last of Dec no preventing Providence While we are on the go—always I feel all right—but laying in Camp I think much of home & my Dear good wife & babys I long to embrace you all.

Hello Hello—a fuss around in Camp—President Lincoln has just rode up to Headquarters in an Ambulance & is talking now to McC & Burnsidess—he Came from Harpers ferry this morning The old fellow is drop[p]ing 'round everywhere—he is a good man if he had only more back-bone—no doubt he is here watching up our Generals & doing

all to push the war forward as rapidly as possible I expect he wants to Know the Cause of the delay.

[Dr. Beck to Mrs. Beck]

Bell Plain Va Dec the 12 1862

Dearest.

I wrote you last Sunday & we then had marching orders—We are up at Fredericksburg to day but I am here shiping off the sick of the Brigade—I Cant get them off until tomorrow morning at 6 o'clock—. Yesterday morning at 4 o'clk & just as our forces were Completing 3 pontoon Bridges at Fredericksburg—the *Rebs* fired from among the houses—out of cellars—off house tops &c &c—killing and wounding 50 or 60—Then our Batteries Commenced shelling the town & I never heard a more terrific Cannonading in my life—they knocked the town into *pie* burning very much of it up—& our troops were crossing all the night the *Rebs* retreating several miles—we expected to day to have a general & severe engagement *but*—I have heard but little firing all day. How far we can not pursue them without building up the R Road I do not know—I have no doubt they will make a stand at the next *stream* North Anna & then at each branch of the Matta-Po-Mi. If rain and mud—interferes I dont see how we can follow and we dont know but that forces are moving on Richmond from other directions—that will hurry them (The *Rebs*) back into their fortifications. I'll write occasionally—& hope soon to get into quiet quarters so that I can get off—tho my Asst Surgeon has not come yet, & from the Communication he sent Lt Col Chapman—we think he is small potatoes. I am very well—am anxious to get home to see you & as well as to see what will turn up the next month. this is a beautiful day. [Battle of Fredericksburg occurred the following day, Dec. 13].

I am glad Larry is back at Lafayette pursuing his German—Let them send him to any school that seems best. I want to make a schollar out of him if possible As soon as he can enter West Point I shall send him there if he is schollar enough at 17 to pass the examination & of stout build. I guess we'll make a preacher of the young Curly head—& Fanny & Jinny will make *Bonet makers*—I have nothing new to write. Il keep you posted if mails go back regularly & next month sometime will try to get home.

God Bless you all
Your *Husband*

P.S. Since I took out the Ball from my horse he is fating up—full of life & as good a horse as is in the Regt. Did you get my letter with the Chaplain Conways of *New York*?

The ring enclosed is sent to Fanny by Carey Smith—the young fellow that Sung for us—I got Fanny to sing for him—When we was chasing the Rebel Stewart one of his shells flew overhead lit in a flock of sheep & Killed several—Carey cleaned one for the mutton & made this ring out of the bone of the leg.

[Dr. Beck to Mrs. Beck]

Camp 3d Cavalry—near Potomac—
Creek bridge Va Sunday Morning
May 17 1863

Dearest.

I recd your last Sundays letter yesterday—I have for several weeks been getting your letters written Sunday, on Saturday. I was amused at the town being so deceived in rejoicing over the fall of Richmond. That was a good sell—Some bugar put that dispatch in on purpose to deceive Richmond could & ought to have been taken—but Stoneman says he recd postive orders from Hooker not to go into Richmond, which he S—friends Construe into the meaning that H—wanted the honor himself of first entering said City—on the contrary—Hookers friends dont believe this— & H. Condemns S. for doing so little—the fact is from all I can learn—he might have done as much more—but he acted as if scared at every bush—*Stoneman* is in bad odor with Hooker & the President— The fact is, all the Gen'ls are growelling thro each other—Poor little pusilanimous Pleasanton wants to Command the Army Corps—to have Stonemans place—& he is about as fit for it as any 2d Lieutenant in the Command. I think Stoneman will be superceded—*Anerd* was—but being related to Gov. Curtiss—he had to be respected. & so I learn is sent to a Western Command.—We Whipped the Rebs in the last fight [Chancellorsville] & had we followed them it would have been a most complete victory—but as it, was, it was a defeat—so far as prestige is concerned. Out generaled—driven back—began when the 11th Army Corps & part of the 12th had unloaded their Knapsacks & overcoats in a pile—to get ready for the fight—so the enemy, drove them from & held this ground—& got about 20 or 30 000 Knapsacks & Coats—& near 20 000 stand of arms—& would have driven this wing of the army right into the river, but for Pleasanton getting his guns (12) & stopping 12 of ennemys Guns—& getting them in line & belching away with grape & cannister—& it being dark (11 o'clk at night) they didnt know—but we had 10 000 infantry supporting—& we hadnt a man [supporting] at the time—tho in half an hour—the 3d Army Corps swung round & checked effectually a further progress—& this was Jackson's Army Massing itself on one of our weak pions—& here he got his death & the fact is that his Command was almost destroyed.—His men were seen to come in a body up to our Cannon mouth & pull their Hats down over their eyes and run bayonet in hand—right at our gunners—Our Dutchmen were scared to death at such Madness. From all I can gather our loss is from 12 to 15 000—Theirs about 18 000 to 20 000. They were glad to draw off — we not follow—& we—Hooker at least glad to stop & get away—altho he did not fight more than half his men—& he could not from the hemed up condition & the thick underwood—& the terrible fire raging thro—the woods—

Either Hooker hadnt heart enough or he could not manage so many men. & now—Great God—it seems we have settled down into Masterly inactivity for weeks or months perhaps—for yesterday I had orders to

send for my Hospital equipage & treat my own sick in Regt. again just as in winter—& this week Dr. Mitchell of the 8th Pa. & myself are to examine all the invalids of the Division & discharge the proper Cases, &c it will be a weeks work. In fact Hooker Cant move forward now—He had about 100 000 before the fight—Say 15 000 less from the Battle—& from 30 to 40 000 are now going home whose time expires—(every day 2 to 6 Regts) (We have beautiful & ve[r]y warm weather & we lay on a hill the R R—passing at the foot & as trains of old veterans pass us—playing music & cheering—they seem both happy & sad—glad to go home—& sad at leaving so many old Companions in arms behind.) Well I enclose you the orders—Congratulatory—Hooke[r]s—a very ingenious (opiate plaster) thing—Calculated to quiet the nervous fears of the Credulous. & Pleasantons—which is bombastic—tho his men, finding themselves hemmed in—fought their way out—& this is the only time during their *term* they ever done anything but run— & B—does ev[er]ything to bring himself in to notice. Hooker must be reinforced by 40 000 men before he Can advance—& God knows how long that will take—& I believe, we will simply hold this line—& let the fighting go on West that must end this Rebellion. They have lost their best man Jackson. & if Grant takes Vicksburg—this fall will wind it up. *Well Im* good health—wish the war would end by July—Will get out if I Can honorably—but fear I Cant.

Quite a cry raised again for McClellan—I expect the Rebs will try to hold on with this war until Lincolns time is up—& then expect MxClellan to be the next President—& I fear he will & feel like moving to the Sandwich Islands.

I enclose you *Col* Chapmans photograph—a conceity little upstart—tho he managed the Regt. well—& will fight. I cannot hear from Robt. —Wish he could get into a place to do something Send me the *Banner*—let *Dan* fold it at the office & send it—I get *all* the Journals.

I spent the other Afternoon in the 15 Pa Regt John Stroup Brother of Lawrence is the jun Major & Joe Beck son of Geo Beck is a sargent. I saw Lu Fitchthorn the day before he went home. We are to have *reaching* in our Regt. at 2 o'clock—Some Stray Chaplain. I enclose Miss Dickinson in Leslies you may have seen—it would be well to examine all these pictures for matters of interest to instruct the children. Do our papers say anything of her as a medium—the papers are all puffing her, as a (Joan of Arc). I wrote you in my last concerning the sale of the Drug store & Picture. I sent you by express last Tuesday 620 dollars—hope you have it—Get some one to keep it for you—unless you could hide it effectually & get nothing in the way of interest. 320 dollars more due me in 2 weeks. Ally & Larry never write me a word—Is Larry forgetting his Dutch or has he anyone to hear him read occasionally—he should have. Direct your letters as usual—Pleasanton is our Division Commander still—Stoneman—Commander of the Corps. Keep in good cheer—give me your impressions of Hooker God bless you all my Dear ones.

I will write often as I can

Your Husband

[Dr. Beck to Mrs. Beck]

1st Division Cav'ly Corps
 Hospitl Aquia Creek
 June the 10 1863

Dearst

Yours of the 31st ult. came last Monday. You seem to be satisfield if I am to have me remain from home till Oct 1864—Well, I wont do it—unless made to—I am not satisfied now—but feel it a duty—& at the same time think the Cash I make is better than back account—for awhile—& also that my stay will make an increase of my practice at home. I long for my good home & to romp with my little ones—I love the associations of home & feel that I am missing a great deal—yet, its all experience. No, I will never leave home again if I can help it after this adventure. I must get home this fall, if I can get out honorably—even tho. the war continues & if Grant succeeds—& the war declines—I will get out much sooner. I would like to be there for a fall practice, yet. I cant leave here unless the war declines—I still think *Jim* is right in thinking the war will close by *midwinter*. He said Vicksburg would fall in about 3 months. . . .

The only thing troubles me is to determine the *best* place to locate—I dont feel like the drudgery I must undergo at Delphi to get anything ahead yet, I expect it best for a year or so anyway. How is the health there? Is Thomas doing much? Is the Homoeopathist doing much? We have 133 sick now—2 men died last week—750 in Army Corps (the 4 Divisions) We all lay together—11 Surgeons—including Corps Director—We was all together Sunday & There is a Photographer just starting on the hill—& we propose all sitting in group—& if we do Il buy a copy & send you. Dr. Rulison is a funny fellow—Il tell you of him when I get home—he is all vanity—& fanatically opposed to Spiritualism—No fairness about him—yet a good hearted man. unmarried—a professed musician. Well, I am comfortably situated—has been very cool for several days buy now is very hot again.

Our Regt. Brigade & Division went up to Warrenton some days since—crossed the river to search for the enemy & found Stewarts Cavalry had a fight—& our Brigade Commander Col. Davis was killed—We lost a good many— dont Know the particulars yet—I will not close my letter till morning & may learn something more. This will give our Chapman command of the Brigade Davis was a Regular, a Mississippian by Birth—a proud tyranical devil—& had the ill will of his whole Command. & Il bet was Killed by our own Men. We have our Division Infantry over the River—& behind rifle pits—below Fredricksburg—Hooker is trying to watch *Lee* & is on the sharp look out to Keep him from getting away from him tho I fear he will have to fight him again soon—on one side the river or the other If Hooker can succeed in keeping Lees & 50 or 60000 troops quiet & idle here this summer—that is enough for him—all he need do—the fighting & ending the Rebellion must be done in the West.

I got 2 rolls Spiritual[ist] Papers & the Journal last Saturday. Enclosed find Rulisons Photograph See *vanity* sticking out. Have had no

answer yet from Robert. Dont believe it prudence to try to be transferred. Of course my Salary is not increased comeing here—There is only *one* Salary for a Surgeon in the whole Army—whereever he is or whatever he may do. The poorest or the best—get all the same—& no difference in rank—no promotion. Tell *Allie* a Gentleman gave me a beautiful gilt-edged morrocco bound volume of *Tom Moore* with engravings I will keep nice & clean for her Library.—I hope she is learning music & also reading the Redback Histories. (There [are] seven more sick men one wounded just come—I must stop & see to them) will close tomorrow. The 11 [June] 6 o'clk A M & before *Breakfast*. Our Brigade of Cavalry had a severe fight & Davis was killed. They brought his Body here yesterday & forwarded it to Philadelphia. About 60 Killed & wounded—& we had to return from superior numbers. We have a rumor that Vicksburg is ours—hope its true—Their downfall begins now. General rejoicing among our Brigade that Davis was Killed he was such a *Tyrant*. A *West Point* Man & a Southerner—proud spirited—he led the 8th N York Cavly in a charge & was 20 feet ahead of his men when his body was pierced by balls. *Chapman* will now Command the Brigade—entirely too young & conciety. I wish I could take breakfast with you this morning. I hav my horse & mule here. I wish Larry had "*Mulie*" she is a fine animal. I wrote Dr. Blanchard a letter yesterday—Il write Father Gwin in a day or so I got Delphi Journal yesterday evening. Are you ever influenced now—have you gvien up your Circles [Spiritualist]. Joel ought to write to "Lucy of [about] the Davenport Boys to get Geo W Julien to defend them in Richmond [Indiana] this Court—he lives in that County—is a Spiritualist—& one of best Speakers in the State. Well I close & write in 4 or 5 days again God bless you all—Tell Fanny & Jinny to write to me Larry & Ally might write—they ought to practice once a week—

Goodby my dear ones

Beck

[Dr. Beck to Mrs. Beck]

Hd Quats 1st Cavly Brigade
1st Divis Friday eve
Sept 4th 1863

Dearest. It is a week yesterday since I wrote you—I failed to get your letter last Sunday & so put off writing till next day—as I had got Joel's letter on Sunday written the Sunday before—I looked for yours the next day—but the next day we were ordered off suddenly & quickly—& the whole Brigade moved down to Falmouth—Killpatricks Division who occupies that end of the line—had to run away down the *neck* along the river—Our fellows let the Rebs board them in the night & take 2 gun Boats from them—& then a brigade crossed & menaced our left—so Killpats whole Divis. sent them back Kiting & we done his picketing in his Absence—& he got back yesterday morng & relieved us—& we started back to our proper position ,2 miles from Catlette station. Our mails did not follow us nor the daily papers—& on my arrival I

found your good long letter of the 23. I have so rejoiced to find Walter better—if you will always be calm & not become excited & trust to Our Spirit friends ,they will direct you—in the treatment of our little one. I found annother thing on my return to—My big horse—2 Squadrons of our Men were left behind & the Boys—hunted 'round for my horses and found George 5 mls from here in the 82 Ills a man claiming him—They made him dismount suddenly—but have not found Genny yet—I hope & think I will yet—she was such a noble animal—she can pace faster than Frank can run. Things and country look very desolate down at Fredericksburg. The Town & river bottom is full of soldiers—(Rebels) of course. We exchanged papers with them & talked over some[things] .They very much wish, the war would stop. So do we—& I hope to get home this winter—I want to bad enough—& will or you must come to me. I wish you would get me ready—until my next letter arrives to send me by Express—a pair of stout large canton flannel drawers 2 pairs stout woolen socks—& one heavy flannel or knit undershirt. I have one undershirt—but my drawers & socks are worn out They can be put in stout paper & directions pasted on—be sure & have Drawers long in leg & large around the waist—& the shirt large—I have over shirts. You might—get Walters & Allys picture together—She holding him—& put in the package—Put in a pair of Buckskin Gloves lined—Il not have my furs sent—hoping to be home for them

Im tired & covered with dust & Il close for the mail—& write again in 3 days—I wish I could fulfill your dream—I would God bless you all my darlings

E W H BECK

Surg'n in the

1st Brigade 1st Cav. Div.

P.S. Dan's Journal of August the 26 just came. I fancy I see the children ready for *the show tomorrow*. I get the Herald. When you write again send me 50 cts worth postage stamps.

[Dr. Beck to Mrs. Beck]

Hd Qtrs

1st Brigade

1st Divis Cav'

Sunday Nov the 22 1863

Dearest

I am back from Division, to Brigade Hd. Qtrs. The Staff here is so much smaller & have so few visitors compard with the other, that I am quite lonesome a longing for home—or active duty—fighting—anything to Kill time—for I long for winter to set at rest any Anticipated movement. Last letter, I supposed we would move ere this—to Day, our Com-misary & Quartermaster is filling his waggons with 10 days forage & rations—& all concur that this means *move*—& forward too—The Enemy is in gunshot across the River Rapidan—their Caval'y is on our Right—

across Robinsons River, & our Divis will have to fight the first or second day. Just as soon as bad weather sets in & we seem to settle down in position I shall apply for 25 days leave—or if we move back to where you could be made Comfortable, I will send for you. We have had 24 hours Rain—but today it is pleasant—tho now 4 o'clk P.M.—it is growing quite cool—& *Dick* is just building a log & rail fire in front of my tent. I have nothing good to read—got the Herald of Progress last eveing—but some how they seem flat of late—In fact, how strange that the early pioneers of Spiritualism with Davis have all drifted off & disavow their early faith—how is Fishbaugh—&c—I wish our time was out—the war over & I quietly seated in some flourishing place in practice. I only hope Congress will Raise the wages of Officers of the Army this winter. It ought to be everything is so high—my salary will but little more than keep you all decently & snugly—& things I want you to have—if it takes every dime. I enclose a list of *Music* a Young *Leut* who is quite a performer—& keeps posted—gave me with one or two added in pencil by Dr. Hard—& you can get them thro Frank Burns at just the same price I can buy them for—so get some or all & learn them. I will finish after the mail comes.

6 o'clk P.M. The mail has come—but no letter—how bad I feel—orders have come to move forward to-morrow morning—so we will have no mail for several days—perhaps a week. I wish you could write promptly once a week—& if on Sunday—See it in the office same evenig—& back it in as large letters or writing as you Can make—Joel's letters Comes in 5 days, yours 7 & 8 & I Can only account for it by his being so quickly (because large & plain) read & the Small writing by the quick careless *Clerk* at Indianapolis or Washington *misread* & neglected.

God bless you all
Goodbye for the Present

E. W. H. Beck

Il write again when opportunity offers.

[Dr. Beck to Mrs. Beck]

Haxall Landing
James River
Evening May the 17 1864

Dearest.

I wrote you a hurried & disconnected scribble in pencil the 15 the moment we landed on this River at Malvern Hill—Next morning we Came 4 miles down the river & Camped, & have been resting since—tho to day the men all drew 100 rounds Ammunition—5 days rations & 3 days forage & began moveing at noon—to return to our Army, via Kent C. H. but just as we got under headway an order Came to our Corps Commander Gen'l Sheridan—from Gen'l Butler to stop—go into Camp again—& here we are again—waiting every hours development. Yesterday Morning we were wakened by heavy Cannonading & musketry—Beauregard Came out & met Butler & they had a hard fight for 5 or 6

hours & the *Rebs* wniped Butler back—Butler has so many new troops & negrows—& they Cant fight old Troops—the *Rebs* fight live devels.

So I conjecture, Butler is scared & may tomorrow order us over the river here—on to the south side—& help him out—We seen the papers of the 13 & 14 & Everything looks encourageingly from *Grant*—tho. I fear unless he gets strong reinforcements, he cant drive *Lee* over both the North & South Anna Rivers—both have high bluffs. What a terrible life this is—& heavans—how I wish this may be a successful Campaign & break *Lees* Army to pieces—I want to get home—I think of you hourly & long for the quiet & love for my own little home—it is Heaven compared with this—so much of this—hard work—hard living—blood & suffering to look upon—I stay to do my duty untill my time is out or circumstances give opportunity & I quit & let some one else try it.—We lost about 1000 Killed wounded & missing in this trip—& horses played out—So terrible to see evry time a poor horse would give out by sheer exhaustion—out with a pistol & shoot him—break up the saddle & walk on—A mile above here is a magnificent Mansion & gardens. & the day we came in—we caught a party of 25 Ladies the Elite of Richmond City that Came down the James on a pleasure Excursion—& we wont let them go back. Gen'l Lee's Daughter is among them—Oh but I would like to hear from you—no word for 4 weeks—how long—God grant this terrible time may pass soon & we may all meet again. . . . Give my love to all I can only write when opportunity offers. Continue to write Sundays.

God bless you my dear ones

E W. Beck

P.S. Cant get my letter off from here & we move this P M 9 o'clk—will wait further opportunity.

I have no pen & Ink with me

[Dr. Beck to Mrs. Beck]

White House Landing
Pamunky River Va
Sunday May the 22 1864

Dearest.

The enclosed letter of the 17—written on James River I failed to get mailed—We have been traveling 'round thro Kent & Hanover Countys distroying bridges & R Roads & *robbing* the poor people untill my heart is sick at the distruction of property & distress of the people—My Division have had no fighting since our Meadow Brigade fight a terrible one when we Killed their *Chief* Gen'l Stewart & also Gen'l Gordon. The 1st Division fought yesterday a couple of hours—We Can whip their Ca'l'y —& they Cant spare Infantry to follow us—We come here for rations & forage—get 5 days—then poke round in the rear of Lee's Army to pounce upon prisoners in Case Grant whips *Lee*—which he Cant do untill he gets more Men—I believe Grant has had the worst of the battle. This is the farm Gen'l Washington Married *Mrs.* Custis at— the *farm* is

now owned by Gen'l *Lee's Son FitzHugh Lee*. What a lovely place it has been—now Covered with graves of 2 years ago [Peninsular Campaign] I am quite well—tho my Ankle still troubles me some—I am heartily tired of this dirty life—This nice Sunday morning I am thinking of my little ones dressing up & wish I was with you—hope the time is not far distant now. This is a hard trip—more than 2000 horses & 1600 men have droped Killed wounded & prisoners since we started—yet we have done the enemy incalculable injury—We heard cannonading yesterday on James River—hope Butler has done better now—he was scandously whiped by half his numbers last Monday—I will write evry opportunity.

Yours E W H Beck

Oh—after I had sealed & wrote as I felt so blue & closed my letter —& started to the mail bag—I met *Mun* who had overlooked—& handed me your last Sundays letter—O I feel a hundred per cent better—so glad it came—We all feel a little blue—for we start tomorrow & expect a terrible fight—& our old Chief *Johny Bufford* got sick Friday & went to the City—& we are Generaled by a young drinking fellow by the name of *Merrett*—in whom we have no Confidence. We always feel safe with *Bufford*.

You are mistaken for once in your impressions—We had no fighting Since 8th—but have been laying cosy & snug our Hd Qts at least since the 10. This month I hope will be the last of the season—as it will to many a poor fellow—certain. Am glad *Robt* had a good reception .

. . . I hope *Robt* will get a new command now.

My *time* is up in 3 years from receiving my Commission tho, if the Regt was sent home, I Can be sent with it by personal application—no doubt of this—for I am on Detached Duty—that was Commisioned for a special Regt. The Govt Can Keep me in 2 months after the time of th Regt expires yet they would not do it. I look for *Allys* letter & pictures with anviety—Just *heard* of my Carpet bags—so Il get your picture again when I get to Washington. . . . Sgt. *Berry* is right—he ought to be a major—at least a Capt & Can be one by trying.

Goodbye my Dearest ones God Bless you all.

B—

Have no anxiety Il take care of myself.

[Dr. Beck to Mrs. Beck]

Hd Qtrs

2nd Brigade

3rd Divis Cav

Sunday July 3 1864

We have just returned yesterday Evening to this Camp near *City Point*—from the most terrible *Raid on record*—I have no time now to do anything more than say thank God I am safe from it—& I have no language to Express the horrors & labors of these 11 days. We went

out 7500 strong lost 2000 men & 3000 horses. Killed wounded & missing. We went swimmingly & distroyed their railroads nearly to the North Carolina line but on our return they met us at evry point on the Petersburg & Weldon Ro[a]d—with Cav—Infantry & Arty—We lost all our wagons all our Cannon (14) all our prisoners—previously Captured—1000 of the Negrows—Coming with us—Men women & children shot down without mercy. We traveled 4 days & nights without *one hours sleep* & had but one *meal* victuals in each 24 hours—in 8 days in the 11—& 2 in the other 3 days—they cut us in 2 partys—& Genl Kants got in first—broken up—& partys Came in piecemeal & we (my Brigde) lost one half the numbers—& are still comeing in—traveling at nights & living on the wheat & berys in fields—I am vry much exhausted—& have a little Diarrhoea Will be well however—in a few days—I lost my Med[ical] wagon Drove all my Ambulances (140 wonded) in a line left a Doctor & 10 men with unhitched our horses & left all the poor fellows by the Roadside—Our Hd Qtrs wagons were abandoned & I lost my Carpet Sack—with all my shirts—socks Handkerchifs one fine pr pants—papers &c &c &c My Amputating Case & a fine beautifull litty rifle worth 50 dollars I had captured & intended taking home for Larry.

I can never give you an adaaquate idea of this raid untill soon I hope as I pillow my head on your dear bosom I can tell you all. The Rebs fired into & with Saber Cut & slashed the poor Contrabands—women & children Killing most inhumanly—& such shrieks was terrible. At a Small river with one bridge over hundreds jumped in & half never got out horse & rider Sinking together—2 of my Doctors were Captured—I fear one wonded—I believe Candidly I had Spirit help—for I was Calm & cool & acted for self safety & also done my duty—O God what blood & horror—I am sick of such inhuman scenes—& long for the day to come that I can quit—I would not go on annother such a raid fo 2000 dollars—cash & pray we may not be sent again while my time lasts. I got your letter yesterday of the 19

[Dr. Beck to Mrs. Beck]

Head Qtrs 2d Brgde
3d Divis Cav
Monday morning May 30 [1864]
at the crossing of the
Pamunkey River near
Hanover town-Hannover Co Va

Dear One.

We reached this point yesterday eve[n]ing & lay here to day untill *all* the Army trains cross the *river*. Our Infantry are all over traveling toward Richmond on 2 parelel roads. & we have 2 pontoon Bridges over the river—just below the Junction of the two *Annas*. The 1st & 2d Division Cav' are in advance—& fought Saturday loosing 5 or 600 men but driving the enemy. Then goes the Infantry—then my Division & *one Brigade Negrows* (Gen'l Ferars) are in the rear—guaarding the trains & driving up Stragglers. How admirably Grant has managed the trip—

I can only make it plain to you by showing you the *Map* & the points from whence our supplies are *shipped*. In my last letter written the day we completed our circuit, (raid) & got back to our wagons—our Army pushed forward—(we bringing up the rear)—crossed the North *Anna* & found Lee so strongly intrenched on the North bank of the *South Anna* in a curve of the river thus (see army map section [not preserved]) & Grant seen at once he could not dislodge him—so he set a few brigades his Cavalry to demonstrating an attack—& after dark with-drew his main force & shot round Lees *right flank* a bold strike for Richmond—at day light Lee had to pull out troops to Keep Grant from getting in his rear—so this morning the Columns side by side are *running* for Richmond. 8 or 10 miles apart—& Head of Grants column within 10 miles of Richmond— but Lee had this advantage—that he had no obstructions— & Beauregard RR 10 miles out of Richmond to help him in—& Beauregard's troops destroyed the Bridges & made bad the roads to check Grant. So Lee has perhaps half his Army 40 or 50,000 men in the fortifications & on the Richmond side of the Chickahomany Creek, & Swamp & we by noon to day will be at Bottoms bridge 7 miles this side Richmond—on Chickahomany— At this moment we have heavy Cannonading in front—they retarding & we driving. Our trains to day all start for the White house on this river for supplies—steamers run up there—So the Army will again be on the peninsula—& if we are detained any length of time I dread the sickness that must ensue—for it is low swampy country. But I hope Grant may get Lee into Richmond & then circumvent it as at Vicksburg & made him Capitulate—that would end the war, but I fear Lee is too Smart—but will give up Richmond—move on to Lynchburg & into North Carolina &c—Oh what an exciting & terrible time to the poor people of this country—600 prisoners passed here last evening. One among them was a woman in male attire—belong to Artillery. We have so many villains in our Army that rob & steal & commit outrages take *Jewelry* from Ladys fingers—destroy everything in the house—& take last mouthfull of eatables on the premises even tho a half a dozen crying children stand by—Just imagine the Citizens of Richmond this morning—I suppose they are removing every thing ere this—but all the Citizens cannot go & how many anxious hearts—how many homes made desolate—these are terrible times—the people of the North know nothing of it—Il venture the people of the South wish to day they had not began the war—Judgement—Judgement—

I only hope, this Campaigne may wind it up.—I am tired—& heart sick at the misery & horrors of War. I want home—I want to be quietly immured in the bosom of my dear little family—& if possible 3 months more will bring it around—I dread too to go home on one account—the settlements to get out of debt—& dread of staying or leaving Delphi—I find I lack courage—but I must look for another place My present idea is unless changed by Circumstances—if I Can I will get home & practice September & October—then hunt another town—then go to New York a couple months to refresh certain studies—& in the Spring move to a new place To day or tomorrow our Ration train will be up & bring us a mail & I hope to get a letter

from Ally—how is she getting along, is she contented? . . .
 . . . We have such a poor miserable Boyish Division General to command us, that we are Kaped back in the rear & looked upon as being *out in the cold*. . . .

Cannonading increasing in front—day hot, sultry, & dusty—Our Hed Qtrs is in a cedar grove to day—every body with Coats off setting round writing home for to morrow we are promised a mail shall start for the White House [Landing] & you may get this in about 10 days. Do not give yourself unnecessary anxiety—Keep in good spirits—hope to be with you ere many months.

God bless you all—I will write as often as possible.

E W H Beck

[Dr. Beck to Mrs. Beck]

Head Quart
 3d Inda Cavalry
 Giesboro Point
 August 3 1864

Dear Ma.

At last I am with the Regt. & we are in Camp at Giesboro Point or Camp Stoneman some call it—I left Petersburg Sunday morning at 10 A M Got to Washington 7 o'clk next morning. Larry was expecting me & was setting out in front of the house on the curb stone just going to take a street Car down to 6th street wharf—but when he saw me he jumped & run into my arms. He has enjoyed himself first rate—& there is not a building or place of interest he has not been too—& he knows every street & locality in the City better than I do. This morning We Came to Camp—& this minute he is lying on our blankets by my side in my tent while I write. He is quite well. What day we will start home, I cannot tell—Nothing is Known of the intentions of the Authorities. We think we will be sent off about the 15th tho' something depends upon the demonstration of the *Rebs* that still hang about the uper Potomac.

I heard the explosion & fight in front of Petersburg last Saturday—but it was a failure—We lost about 3500 men & Accomplished nothing—the Army feels quite blue over it. Bad managemt about this City & traitors, are ruining our Cause. The Soldiers are getting tired. I shall attempt to remain a day behind the Regt. & then Stop at Lewistown one day to have Larry See the place & people. & Mother has written me She would be there. She wants to go home with me. She wanted to Come here & go by N York but I must go straight to Indianapolis to be mustered out & paid off.

She will not stop at Indianapolis but go on straight to Lafayette—At least I will have her do so I want you & the little Girls to meet me there. I will telegraph you the day I reach there—& you be ready & come on next train—for we will be several days being paid off. I ex-

¹ Larry, Ally, Fanny, Ginny, Walter—mentioned at various times in the letters of Dr. Beck were his children.

pect I shall have to pay my own fare & Larrys from Lewistown, but I prefer it—to riding in a crowd of such Customers as these fellows. They wanted me to remain very bad on Gen'l Chapmans staff—but I'll try home now.

I have nothing of interest to write. I got your letter of the 24th ult'. Larry wrote you last week. He is a close observer & this trip wil do him good—he talks little, but thinks—& I believe will make a good thinker—He certainly is a good Boy. *Mrs & Mr* Howard think him an exception of a Boy.

You need write no more—unless some accident occurs Telegraph to *Howards*. 373 7th street.

God bless you Ma

E W H Beck