

Letter 11

Camp 1st NY Dragoons
Mitchels Station Va Jan 17th 1864

Dear Cousin Sallie

I received your very welcome letter last week, which would have been answered before had I not been so busy. Since my last letter I have been building me a mansion or rather a Soldiers home. You perhaps are aware that we build much more rappidly in the Army than in Civel life. There it takes one nearly, a year. Now Villiages spring up allmost in a night. I will give you a list of discription of my "Hotel de Culbertson". First it is twelve by fifteen feet, covered with tenting. The ends are finished up up with Small Cedar poles & in rustic style, the end fronting the Street. I have the door and by the Side of the latter a six light window. Above that another nine light window placed in diamond work of poles. On the right hand side and near the centre I have a splendid fireplace. In the opposite corner from the door I have my Bunk. Now I believe I have given you a description of my aboad. In short I have the best & most Stylish qrs in Camp, H'd Qrs not accepted. Please excuse my vainty, for Soldiers will depart from Regulations Some times.

One week ago tonight, at 7 PM we left our camp with three Squadrons under Com of Major Scott enrount for Sperryville, distant from Camp twenty five miles for the purpose of Captureing Some Guerillas. The night was quite cold & severe and both men & horses Suffered conciderable. During the whole night, i was not out of the Saddle over half an hour. At four in the morning we halted for a short time, Sending out parties in different direction to serch houses. I took eight men and went some two miles through fields & woods to surround a house & Capture any Soldier who might by there. After entering the house I discovered a sabre & belt standing in one corner. In an other were two guns, one loaded & capped. After looking around in several rooms, in one of which, I found a pair of Officers pants. In another room the old man was very anxious to not enter as he said I would disturb his family, & declared there were no persons in except his family but I felt quite sure of a bird(?) in that room. After entering the room and examining every thing except the bed which contained his family as he said, I though it looked full____(?) to contain more. On examining, I found next to the straw tick, and under the feather tick, clothes, & dear family, a 1st Lieut of the Sixth Va Cav. I could not help but laugh when I found him. After giving him time to dress we went to the barn where I found his horse & equipments which were appropriated. In all we got Six fully equipped one Lieut, One Capt and four privates. After comeing back to the road we Started for Sperryville arriveing there at day break. Sperryville is a Small Town at the foot of the BlueRidge and on the Road leading to New Market in the Shenandoah. After resting our horses we started for Camp which we reached at three P.M. Nix day pretty well worn out. The Citizens were completely Surprised at our arrival in the Town So quiet was it done. I rec'd a Letter from Brother Ed & Libbie tonight. Libbie had been quite unwell since Hollidays with cold, but was better when he wrote. I allso rec'd one from Tillie tonight. They were all well at home. She gave me a discription of her bravery during the late fire

in Geneseo. She assisted Mrs Kelsey in Saveing her Husbands book & papers & claimed considerable credit. I suppose you are now having a right good visit with Uncle & Aunt as I learned they had started for your home. I should have been very glad to have visited you during the Fair, & allso met Uncle & Aunt. Well I hope this war wont last much longer & perhaps I may visit you if I am spared to return home. I wish you might visit me & see how comfortable I am at present, but Soldiering is uncertain business & may be obliged to leave them at any moment. You spoke of Reenlistments. Our Reg't has not been in Service long enough to allow us to reenlist. If it had I think we would. My letter is much longer than I intended writing when I began. I must close & write Libbie tonight. My love to all, Uncle Dick & Aunt included, with much love I am, ever your
Cousin Sam