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Camp 17<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infy  
near Hokesville Va.  
March 21<sup>st</sup> 1864.

Dear Sarah,

I left Washington  
on Tuesday morning at 9<sup>h</sup>  
and arrived at Colletts Sta.  
about 2 O'clock. There I  
got a horse and rode to  
the Camp of the 17<sup>th</sup> Infy,  
where I found every thing  
very much as I anticipated  
before I left home

Think if every where was  
a God forsaken place, this  
must be the one, being  
right in the wilderness as  
we are and no troop (except  
patrols) stationed within  
four miles of us

Think if I was ever  
inclined to be humorous I  
have reason to be now.

Think dear Sarah, I  
was treated so kindly at  
Lynn, which adds much  
perhaps to the gloomings of  
the place.

Had you given me a  
blanket, and made me  
sleep upon the floor, I  
would not have felt the  
change so severely. But  
shall soon get accustomed  
to the soft side of a fair  
board. Although it seemed  
as if it had grown harder  
during my sojourn.

The first night in camp  
I caught a severe cold  
which has given me a slight  
touch of the Rheumatism but  
it will not last long.

I am inclined to  
think I do get the blues  
(Don't think it is any thing  
more) and I think they  
were brought on by going  
Lynn, for I can hardly  
keep from thinking how  
pleasantly time passed,  
and in comparing it  
with Camp life in a  
gloomy place like this.  
It's no wonder that I have  
the Rheumatism.

I have your picture  
open before me, and I  
tell you my dear Sarah,  
Although I cannot speak  
yet I like great pleasure  
in looking at it.  
It is I comfort to know  
I have at least one friend  
outside of family connections  
who is true & reliable.

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One to whom I can entrust  
my hearts fondest wishes,  
and feel that they <sup>are</sup> as safe  
as with myself

Yes dear Sarah, I have  
no reason to regret coming  
home, except it be that  
I seemingly lost about  
two weeks of my life,  
which I shall charge  
to your account, for it  
does not seem as if I was  
at home more than a week  
whereas it was three, and  
three weeks of enjoyment  
passed off so quickly that  
it seems quite as much  
like a dream as it does  
like a reality.

I have often asked myself  
the question, and now I  
ask you. Cannot we be  
as happy through life?

Now I will tell you  
what we are doing in camp.  
The whole Regiment was  
turned out today to police  
and arrange the camp.

We have been felling trees  
and building an Abatis  
all around the camp  
for our protection.

Also cutting away the  
brush &c. trying to make  
it look a little more  
cheerful. I think we  
have made quite an  
improvement in one day,  
but we have only begun  
what will result in a very  
satisfactory manner if  
no unforeseen event take  
place. It will probably  
be a week before the camp  
will be completed, as  
we want to see it

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We are all looking forward  
anxiously to see how this  
Army of the Potomac is  
to be reorganized, and to  
learn what is to be done  
with the 17<sup>th</sup>. Probably we  
shall know by the 1<sup>st</sup> of May.

Remember me to all your  
friends and write soon

Affectionately  
Your Obedt  
James.

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