

Transcription

"The ladies home guard"

Tell Mr Weddell I saw John Munkland today

Petersburg June 5th:

Mr: Bernard

Know how to appreciate letters recieved when from Home I will not delay answering your letter, delivered by Mr Edwards on yesterday. I judge from your writing that "standing guard" had given you the "blues". For I never saw you so cast down. You wrote in just the style of a man who had been "kicked," But I knew no such misfortune had befallen you. Who could discard a lover when he has gone to defend his country! I could only think you had been meditating too deeply on the evil consequences that might accrue to you and your country in the impending conflict. As to you I dont think the Lincolnites will have a chance to shoot at you, so if you don't die of Yellow Fever you may expect to return home safe. Joking aside, if—or rather when you return home you will find that we ladies will appreciate you much more highly—must stop, being interrupted by three beaux. You see we can "make a raise" even in war times. ———

Those of you who come back, and I hope that may be all, will be more of men I think than you would have been in ten years of the usual life of young men. And while you are learning life's realities on the battle field, we, or rather some of us are learning to fill the situation as man's "help-meet" more fully than we would ever have learnt it unless after many years of trouble. We find out the true merits of you our "lords and masters." We will make better friends, better wives and better sisters when all of this is passed, and our Southern Confederacy fully established. You think it would be supposing the President and Cabinet of the U. S. to be the veriest fools who ever lived, to think they did not intend to subdue and hold in subjugation the people of the South, if possible, I think differently. It is know that the head of authority is undoubtedly a blockhead. But some of the Cabinet are smart men. And they will prove it when they decided it will not be profitable to have to subdue so "blood thirsty" (as they term us) a people as the Southerners. The Congressmen will shew them that each state has not a gold mine, at the command of the president. I guess you hear enough on that subject from the soldiers.

Mollie says it is a mistake she has no intention a marrying now, that she wishes to wait until some of the Petersburg boys come back and catch one of them. She sends regards. Mattie sends love. Says present her regard to her friends. Thought I said the ladies had improved, I think



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they need the gentlemen here to keep them from spending all of their spare time in gossiping. Some of the ladies, my honored self among the numbers, have been most unmercifully rated in reference to the Southern Soldiers passing through our City. I confess some of the ladies have been imprudent, but none have as I know done one tenth as bad as they are said to have done. I understand that of all of the ladies I have credit for being the leader in the highly improper things that have been done. Those that follow my lead are Miss Jennie Rowlett and Miss Bettie Foster neither of which ladies have I ever spoke to at the Depots, or any occasion when soldiers are about, I even hear that I am in the habit of kissing the soldiers. There was a most beautifully arranged tale circulated around some time since. There was some foundation for it, but so beautifully embellished that it was equal to any of Mrs: Southworth's romantic love tale. The facts as I heard them were, as follows, Miss Pattie Cowles was at the Depot to see the South Carolina Soldiers and gave her bouquet to one of them and after wards sent him her card, asking his in return, which when she received she Kiss and clasped to her heart. After he had taken breakfast he came up to her. he took her hand in his and asked her to go in to the parlor with him alone, which she did and remained there an hour and a half, came out and went down town with him in a hack. The gentleman (?) who told this says he was witness to all except what passed in the parlor. How he could have witness any thing of the sort, I don't know, but of course I would not pretend to doubt his word. As I remember the events, I sent my bouquet by a married gentleman when he was standing over two hundred yards from me. The gentleman who delivered it did not, at my request, tell him from whom it came. He after-wards sent me his card and ~~said~~ sent word he would be pleased to have mine which at the solicitation of several friends I sent. When the gentleman, whose name is Pringle, came up from breakfast he came up to where I was standing with a lady friend and one of our ministers and began conversation with all three of us, and staid with us in the same spot until they were called into line preparatory to going to the other depot. The rest of the stories told are of the same nature. I heard yesterday that the Misses Bransford & myself met some of the Ala. soldiers on the street and afterwards wrote them a letter which they answered. The soldiers were those I wrote you of in my last. The letter we wrote was a note requesting them to accept a basket of provisions we had fixed for them and carried to the Depot. Their letter was a note stating how much they enjoyed the basket when they reached their quarters at the Richmond Fair grounds and had nothing else to eat. It may surprise you that I write these to you probably uninteresting details. But I did not know that the Gentleman who interests



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himself so much in my affairs, might be able to keep from writing to some of his friends in Norfolk or even get there himself. And as my character for prudence is not very good, I thought it would be best to let you whom I know to be a friend of mine have all the points so as to be able to defend me if the reports should reach your quarters. The ladies home guard was so completely corrupted from what I thought to have it, that I have quietly dropped it. It seems that the gentlemen have talked about it an outrageous manner, for one told his wife that if the Young ladies knew how the gentlemen talked about them they would be ashamed of the "ladies home guard."

I have not seen your friend Dr Boyd for some time. He is still in the city though. No man in citizen's dress dares to visit ladies now. The "Cockade Cadets" turned out this evening in full uniform for the first time. It look ridiculous to see John Boisseau and several others about his standing, in short jackets. I think it would be advisable for me to close for you will never gitt through. Ma requests to be remembered to you, I fear Bro Henry will not be able to go to join you soon. Bro Willie & John Ken will be here as soon as possible. Present my regards to all my friends. We think of you all very often.

My true & sincere regards to our friend.

In much love Your friend

P B COWLES

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