the simple truth when I say my wound was slight, and I do feel mortified sometimes to think that I allowed myself to be persuaded to leave the field, this is even so, but I also know of some who were no worse hurt than myself who are absent yet from the Regiment; but I dont wish to be classed with that stripe, and hundreds left without being hurt, at all but few from our Regt. one of those came back to the Regt. a few days ago and his comrades, carried him all through the Brigade on a rail, my heart is with you wherever I go. I live in hope of seeing you again, but if I fall it is in discharge of a sacred duty all patriotic Americans owe to the best Government on Earth. many better, far better men have already fallen, men too, whose lives were worth to the World what a thousand such as mine would ~~not be~~, the thought of the downfall of this noble Goverment, that the time honored Stars & Stripes, that have waved triumphantly over land & Sea for nearly 87 years is now about to be forever trailed in the dust, is enough to nerve a man to desperation, Oh! My Country, I sometimes almost think it must be "victory or death" It is with deep feelings of regret that we hear daily by the mails of our enemies at home who

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dearly I know. The last letter he received from her was full of love and but a short time afterward he received a letter from one of his friends stated eloped with him that his in-teacher to Michigan where they were married poor fellow I pitied him he hated it the worst kind he hardly seems like the same fellow, do you recollect the evening Jim Bartholomew tried to keep you out Buggy riding so late, to prevent you from going to church so I could not go home with you that pleased me very much indeed, O how I wish I could surprise you some Sunday evening I think perhaps I could think of a few things to say, It may be possible that Sigonier may come in my course home if I ever live to get there and if such should be the case I intend to hold you to your bargain, see if I don't you must drive away those gloomy forebodings about my being killed &c. it is only occasionally I am in a very severe battle, and your form is always with me, like a guardian Angel. There has been but little snow here this winter the weather is warm like spring now I am writing in the tent to night without any fire and it is comfortable, it is about 10 o'clock and I must soon come to a close, I would dearly write all night if I was were not so sleepy it is a pleasure to write when I have anything to write to you, it is reported that we are [illegible] large reinforcements, 30,000 it is said came yesterday and 30,000 more coming, I cant vouch for its truth with my special regards I remain yours affectionately Sam

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2-9-1863

PRICKETT

Readyville Tenn.

Dearest Matilda February 9th 1863

Yours of February 1 1863 came to hand this evening and found me well. I was glad to hear from you and that you were well! Hold on! I did not mean to say that I delayed writing because I thought you had taken offense at my jokes, you know I didn't but because I was expecting everyday to receive a letter from you and I thought I would wait till I received it before writing to you and I did not know but that you had taken offense at something in my jesting, was the cause of your delay. Now for goodness sake don't you make it any worse than it is this is all I shall say at present and as for your scolding I don't care if you only send me such a scolding every day. You ask me why I did not come home after the battle, and seem to think because I did not that I care nothing for the loved one at home, now if I thought you were in earnest I should feel very much grieved but I know you must be "in fun" when you say that! While I would be willing to give anything in the world almost to see you, I could not have it said that I was a deserter for all the world and I could not have felt that I was anything else if I had even tried to come home on pretense of my wound, I told you #2 the simple truth when I say my wound was slight, and I do feel mortified sometimes to think that I allowed myself to be persuaded to leave the field, this is ever so, but I also know of some who were no worse hurt than myself who are absent yet from the regiment but I dont wish to be classed with that stripe, and hundreds left without being hurt at all but few from our Regt. one of those came back to the Regt a few days ago and his comrades carried him all through the Brigade on a rail My heart is with you wherever I go, I live in hope of seeing you again, but if I fall

it is in discharge of a sacred duty. all patriotic Americans owe to the best government on Earth the world what a thousand such as man would not be the thought of the downfall of this noble government that the time honored Stars & Stripes that have waved triumphantly over land & sea for 87 years is now about to be forever trailed in the dust, is enough to inerve a man to desperation. Oh my country. I sometimes almost think it must be a victory or death. It is with deep feelings of regret that we hear daily by the mails of [illegible] power to serve the traitors of the South base and cowardly villains. my language is too feeble to express my contempt for those fellows we fear an outbreak there everything seems tending that ways but vengeance, terrible vengeance will be meted out to them if they dare thus desecrate the fair fame of Indiana nobly have [illegible] Regiments who have stood by the old flag for 18 months would leap with joy at an opportunity to return to their own native State to rid her of those dastardly villains who are trying to poison what remains of loyalty & patriotism. There I know that life is uncertain and death stares us in the face on every battlefield but I can view it with more calmness than you could imagine though I have a desire to live as I believe is natural I know the danger to which to which I should be exposed before I enlisted but I should be miserable if I thought I should never again behold that face that [illegible] me incessantly ever since I came from away. I wont know how I should feel if you should serve me as Sergeant in our company was served by his

2-19-1863

"Lady love." She has been keeping up a correspondence with him since the war commenced and he believed her to be true and he loved her dearly I know. The last letter he received from her was full of love and but a short time afterward he received a letter from one of his friends at home informing him that his intended had eloped with their school teacher to Michigan where they were married. poor fellow I pitied him. he hated it the worst kind he hardly seems like the same fellow do you recollect the evening Jim Bartholomew tried to keep you out buggy riding so late to prevent you from going to church so I could not go home with you. that pleased me very much indeed. I know I wish I could surprise you some Sunday evening. I think perhaps I could think of a few things to say. It may be possible that Sizemies (?) may come in my course home if I ever live to get them and if such should be the case I intend to hold you to you bargain. See if I don't you must drive away those gloomy forebodings about my being killed as it is only occasionally I am in a very severe battle and your form is always with me like a guardian Angel. There has been but little snow here this winter the weather is warm like spring now. I am writing in the tent tonight without any fire and it is comfortable. it is about 10 o'clock and I must soon come to a close, I would gladly write all night if I was were not so _____. It is a pleasure to write when I have anything to write to you. it is reported that we are receiving large reinforcements. 30,000 it is said came yesterday and 30,000 more coming. I cant vouch for its truth.

With my special regards I remain yours affectionatly

Thos

I always thought she was too cross, I was afraid of her. At anyrate, I think I could enjoy myself a great deal better now myself, if I could live those day over again, do you recollect that I pointed over to Bartholomew's and showed you Bill, and asked you when you & him were going to marry and you called him your uncle and wondered if y' thought you would marry him, Oi, you need not think I took any offense at what you wrote about that engagement, it was me who wrote the nonsense, not you, I will tell you frankly Matilda I fel as though I was doing injustice to you, by asking you to wait for my return, I am in the service of my country, and I feel as though it is my duty to serve her as long as there is such danger threatning her even though it be 5 years yet, and I live so long, I can't forsake the "Stars & Stripes" in this hour of peril, And again, I may fall in battle, now you may in consequence of an engagement with me, refuse the offer of some other person whom you would accept if it were otherwise, Thus you may lose a precious choice, do you understand me? I don't want you to misconstrue these words, nor think that I do not love you with my whole heart, for I think too much of myself to have it said that I trifled with the affections of any young lady, but if you are willing to take the chances of my getting through this war safe, with your consent I pledge you my Sacred honor as a Gentleman

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me to defray expenses, that we will be husband & wife at such time as we may agree upon after we have seen each other again, this may be a novel way you may thought if you please or [illegible] not [illegible] offered but it remains now for you to say, yes: or no: and I to abide the consequences, these sentiments come from my heart, I am really glad if your Grand mother does not oppose our correspondence, I did really hear that she made those remarks to you and I expected as much, but I claim to be honest in [illegible]

I had rather bear the contempt of all mankind than profess to be what I am not, and I believe you will justify me in this resolution, I know that my belief is very unpopular to all outwart appearances, but there are more men in the world who believe as I do than any person is aware of, I have been astonished myself when talking with men whom I thought believed differently to find in reality their views corresponded very nearly with mine, but popularity is the aim of too many, at the sacrifice of honesty, I don't regret my past life, don't think I could better it much if I had it to live over again, and if there is a Heaven hereafter I believe I will go there

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I always thought she was too crass. I was afraid of her, at any rate I think I could enjoy myself a great deal better now myself if I could live those days over again. do you recollect that I pointed over to Bartholomew's and showed you Bill and asked you when you & him were going to marry and you called him you Uncle. and wondered if I thought you would marry him. O. you need not think I took any offense at what you wrote about that engagement. it was me who wrote the nonsense, not you. I will tell you frankly, Matilda. I feel as though I was doing injustice to you by asking you to wait for my to return. I am in the service of my country and I feel as though it is my duty to serve her as long as there is such danger threatening her even though it be 5 years yet and I live so long, I cant forsake the "Stars & Stripes" in this hour of peril. and again, I may fall in battle, now you may in consequence of an engagement with me, refuse the offer of some other person whom you would accept if it were otherwise, thus you may lose a precious choice, do you understand me? I don't want you to misconstrue these words, nor think that I do not love you with my whole heart, for I think too much of myself to have it said that I trifled with the affections of any young lady, but if you are willing to take the chances of my getting through this war safe, with your consent, I pledge you my sacred honor as a gentleman

2-14-1863

which I prize as dearly as my life. that if I get home safe, and my circumstances are such, as to enable me to defray expenses, that we will be husband & wife at such time as we may agree upon after ~~[illegible]~~ come from my heart, I am really glad if you Grandmother does not oppose our correspondence I did really hear that she made those remarks to you and I expected as much but I claim to be honest in my opinion and really believe what I profess. can I help it? I had rather bear the contempt of all mankind than profess to be what I am not, and I believe you will justify me in this ~~[illegible]~~ in the world who believe as I do than any person is aware of. I have been astonished myself when talking with men whom I thought believed differently – to find in reality their views corresponded very nearly with mine, but popularity is the aim of too many at the sacrifice of honesty. I don't regret my past life. don't believe I will go there.

Now for something else! You say John Thompson is considered as being inclined to favor the Secesh and Jake writes the same. I talked with John before the Murfreesboro fight. I found out that he was a Buell man. but I did not ascertain his views on the Presidents Proclamation. I gave him my opinion of Gen. Buell. in plain terms, I am sorry he is so prejudiced. John never was too good a fueind to Abraham Lincoln. I know he was a Seward man from the first and I suppose if Seward would say we ~~should~~ should acknowledge the independence of the Southern Confederacy John would endorse the sentiment. I am thankful that I am not so selfish. I am fighting for no single individual but for the benefit of mankind in general and I do think if the rebels are successful in gaining their independence our System of Government is ruined for ever. And it is no time now to let party prejudice interfere while defending a Government sacred as this should be to every American. I heartily endorse every sentiment set forth in the Presidents Proclamation and also in the act of Congress to confiscate all rebel property. I believe it to be the only sure means means to terminate this unnatural war. I have no sympathy whatever for those contemptible cowardly wretches at home who are plotting daily to secure the independence of a Southern confederacy, if there is a spark of humanity existing in my Beason it don't extend to those scoundrels for I feel as if I should take a fiendish delight in hunting them down as if they were wild beasts what do you think now about McClellan taking command of the "Army of the Potomac". I believe he will yet. I would not be afraid to bet all I have in the world. that if Bruce had had the command at Murfreesboro we would have been the worst whipped army that has been since this war commenced. But I believe we would have been in Nashville yet if he had been in command. It is nonsense for any man to talk that way I tell you if Buell had his way about it we would not have been in time to save Grants army at Shiloh last spring but Gen Nelson was foremost in urging him on from Spring Hill where we laid 10 days waiting for the pioneers to ~~but~~ build a bridge across Duck River nelson told him he ought to be pushing on. he wanted to

know how we were to cross the river, Nelson told him if he would give him leave to go on he would show him. Buell finally consented Nelson took the lead and we ploughed into the river and waded across as the world knows, so much for the immortal Buell, give me Rosecrans a thousand times first, I must close hoping you will answer I remain yours affectionately.

Thomas.

My difficulty in the company is reduced down considerably. I have more friends than I thought I had, there is one old Bach as cross as a Bear. he got to abusing me the other day - to my back — but I heard him. I was considerably mad. I told him if I ever heard another word of abuse escape his lips I would thrash him as sure as he lived since then he has been perfectly quiet. I had a good notion to do it then but he had not spunk enough to fight he is a ~~Bad~~ Butternut if there ever was one. The boys all said I did just right You wished to know if I had mittens. I had a pair but I never wore them and they are lost, but we have not cold weather enough to use mitten