

Transcription

"The ladies of Petersburg"

Petersburg May 27th:

Mr Bernard—Indeed you must excuse my not having answered your letter before this. I have had so many calls in other directions that I have not been able to write any letters for the past week, so you will have to forgive this offense knowing you are not the only one so slighted. It may astonish you, as it does some of the ladies, that I have any thing to do now the soldiers have all gone away. We manage to spend occasionally a very pleasant hour notwithstanding all of our friends have gone. We don't claim as a friend a man who will not go to serve his country. Mattie Bransford & I spent last evening with some of the Alabama Soldiers quartered at the "Fair Grounds." Mattie I think lost her heart with one. They are certainly very pleasant gentlemen. The highest praise I can possibly bestow, and it is deserving, it they are almost equal to your company; "Our Riflemen." We hear news from all points this morning, whether good or bad I cannot decide. We can expect, we can hope for nothing else, so we must not call it bad. But it is not pleasant to us to know that our friends (I consider every man who fights for Virginia my friend.) are engaged in a contest against those low contemptible ruffians from the North. We expect Jeff. Davis to day. Unless delayed in S.C. he will be here certainly. The gentlemen we saw last evening were to have been his escort to Virginia, but he was called to Pensacola and they went on. ~~to Virginia~~. There is a great stir down town we can here it even here, And a short while ago to Courthouse bell rung, I guess he has already come. Mattie and I have not enough patriotism to go out this warm weather at this time of day even to see the President. I suppose you must be doing some execution as so many Soldiers have gone down in the last two days to Norfolk. We cannot trust the reports we hear so do not know anything of your movements in the last two days. I was very glad to hear Gen. Grogan has been superceeded by Col Huger. I trust you will not now have another such march as you had to Sewell's Point, and not be able to "shoot a live Yankee" when you get there. The ladies of Petersburg have made an attempt to raise a company to learn the drill and practice shooting, but one the gentlemen who are left here, or rather who would not go away, considering it a reflection on their abilities, have told so many tales and talk about us so outrageously that I am afraid we will have to give it up. It makes me mad to hear these young men that have very little if any thing to keep them here staying doing nothing But lounging around walking & talking with the ladies. Your friend Dr Boyd and myself quarrell when ever we meet, because he is so desirous of having an office. I believe he has at last

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determined to go & join your company. Bro Henry will go down as soon as he can. He is quite unwell, and being so restless & uneasy about being detained here keeps him I think from getting well. I believe Mother is willing for him to be sick to keep him with her. You said you wish to hear through me from your friends. I believe they are all well. Mattie B. sends her best love. Says she very often thinks & speaks of you among her friends who have gone to the "wars." She says present her Compliments to any enquiring friends. I was interrupted by a call from the Alabama soldiers. Mother laughed at us about our visitors being dress in roundabouts. Their uniform is home made. And made in a manner best suited to work. The[y] have been stationed for some time at Fort Morgan. Mr Norby Page an old acquaintance of yours was among the number who called this morning. He ask affectionately of you. Mattie says she insist on getting the terrier for you trusting you will still need him after you come from the wars, Unless before then you determine to take a wife instead.

Mother desires to be remembered to you. Present my Kindest regards to all friends. It would be an almost endless task to attempt to particularise. My compliments to your Captain. It is expected this evening that Your regiment will probably be ordered to N. C. at some inlet there to prevent the landing of Federal troops. I think I had rather you all should fight on Virginia soil, and if necessary die on it.

It will give me pleasure to hear from you soon again. I will try in my reply to be less stupid than in this. I really feel terribly blue to day, but that is only a polite term expressing a feeling of stupidity. With kindest regards, I am

Your friend

PATTIE B. COWLES.

My regards to our mutual friend. Thought it would be very pleasant to hear directly from him, still I think it best that he did not write in your lettrs.

P. B. C.

Citation: Pattie B. Cowles to George S. Bernard, May 27, 1861, George S. Bernard Papers, 1861, Acc. 31760, Library of Virginia.