

Richard Baxter Foster Letters to his Wife

[All indentions are meant to reflect those found in the original letter.]

Texas En route to Ft McIntosh

October 17, 1865

My Dearest,

If I can find time to drop you a little line while on the road I suppose it will be more interesting to you than to give a description afterwards. So having camped a little earlier than usual tonight & not having any thing else to do at this moment (I do not know how soon I may have) I have sate down to write to you if I get a chance.

We have been ~~a little~~ 4 days on the road from Ringgold Barracks and have made a little over 50 miles I suppose we have about 75 miles further to go. Our first day was from Ringgold Barracks to Roma 14 miles I wrote to you from there: the next day ~~from~~ to Ranche Saleneno 15 miles: next to Ranche El Sopena 15 miles to day 8 miles to a Ranche name unknown. We found the road rough. The ground is hard & dry – not bad marching for the men but hilly, uneven,[_] & bad for [_]. One wagon broke yesterday – another today

We have a train of 33 wagons 4 ambulances & Colonel Barrett's [spring] wagon. The men are standing the march first [rate] they do not carry their knapsacks & are all getting along

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finely. The road is getting worse and we will be likely to be at least 6 days longer on the road.

Col Barrett is along but is not in immediate command of the Regiment, that [_] on Capt Parsons who submits, tho not willingly to all Barrett's caprices & tyrannies. The latter gentleman is putting on more style than a genuine brigadier general would do if he had good sense. He rides his horse usually with 3 mounted underlies trotting after him. He has a spring wagon along to ride in if he desires to, and although the spring wagon ~~has a~~ would furnish a good place to sleep he must have a tent besides & his cot. Most of the officers (tho better men than Barrett but not so high in rank) have neither tent nor wagon to sleep in. Considering that Barrett is first going to Ft McIntosh to return again immediately all this [_] & fuss in a man who was never in but one battle & lost that by most miserable incompetency – is disgusting. Col Barrett released Lt Gott from arrest after one day. His putting him in arrest at all was an outrage of the most shameful character. Barrett has had a pique against Gott for a year and a half & the first day they were out of the reach of an immediate appeal he went out of his way to show his authority of power

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by putting him in arrest without cause.

Barrett is [] up a heavy account with the officers of this regiment that he will be called upon some day to settle in a way that will make his flesh quiver in every nerve. He does not profess any higher standard of ~~character~~ [there is a word written above character that starts with a c] than reputation & his true character as a heartless tyrant & selfish [] will be exposed where he most cares for reputation. [] on [conclusive] proof.

He has not a friend in the regiment one or two officers will curry favor with him while he has favors to give but they despise him & the rest hate him.

If he should die at any [] so far from being a tear shed there would be a universal feeling of joy—tho it might not be expressed—throughout the regiment. I do not hesitate to say [] and conscientiously that I am sorry he didn't die last year when he was sick.

This letter will go by his hands to Ringgold Barracks. I believe him to be just mean enough to open it & look to see if I say anything about him. If he does I hope he will get the full benefit of my opinion of him & perhaps learn something of the sentiment of the regiment towards him. I don't [] him

There has been a little shower since we camped tonight & there are signs of more rain. We start to [] at 8 o'clock. We find no particular difference

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in the country. Our road is all the way through the chaparral A Ranch is usually found on the bank of the river about [] in 5 miles on the average. I judge that the people live by their cattle, which having a very [] [] get totally fat but not to compare with cattle running [] in [] Nebraska. The cattle here are larger [] & finer than the Texas cattle that come north that I suppose [] in the northern part of Texas.

We make some purchases of milk eggs & c at [] ranches but usually they have very little to sell except cattle & horses, & the ponies are not [cheap] enough to pay for [] All the [] in this chaparral are Mexicans not a person has [] [] in all these ranches who could speak our language. The [] they [] full. Where we ~~cap~~ camped last night I had 12 boys at one time about the size of Leb and Dick teaching me Maheecanno Mexican. I had a high time with them. Some of them had no shirt on only a pair of pants all of them bareheaded & barefooted. They are as bright as new silver dollars, but their future has no promise.

The negotiation of this country is peculiar. I see little here that grows anywhere else that ever I was. [] great characteristic of every shrub and plant is [] I have written a [] little & must go to bed Goodnight

Baxter