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Richard Baxter Foster Letter to his wife May 28 1864

Richard Baxter Foster

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May 28 1864

May Hudson got off

Orvin poor boy was still very sick, suf-
fering a great deal and did not
think he would ever get well. I am
sorry for his sufferings. I hope he will
recover perfect health and live a long
and useful life. but I hope above all
that he will be prepared for life or death
for joy or sorrow. that his peace is
made with God and that life or death
as God pleases will be alike welcome.
Words are feeble to express the yearning
of soul that I have to be with you in
the hour of trouble, of sickness, pain & suf-
fering. perhaps death. though I cannot
help but hope that Orvin will live &
be a better man both in body &
soul for his sickness I assure you
that my thoughts are with you con-

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These other fellows don't get in the
The Medical Department. I don't know
about it. I don't know. I don't know
how to act with women. I don't know
with me. I don't know. I don't know

stantly I want to see those two babies
Kettie and Guard more than you can
think. You can kiss them every day for
me. That is you and Phron. I don't
suppose you see Phron every day but
I infer that she has been down ^{a good deal} while
Orvin has been sick

I am having as good a time as a soldier
away from home. wife and children could
have. I have to work hard to be sure but I
do not count that any disadvantage
I undoubtedly enjoy myself the better
for that. But my work itself is pleasant
my associations are all pleasant. I feel that
I am doing good. I am not suffering
any hardship except separation from
my family, and last though I know
it will not be least in your estimation
my health is perfectly good. I was
never better. I have a good appetite sleep
well. bathe every day in the same glorious
old river that receives the waters of Salt
Creek and think and dream of home.
I get later news today from the North.
It seems that a week ago to day today
Grant made a new movement. The papers
do not state its nature. It was too soon
to do more than to say that the army
was moving. I can only form a con-
jecture as to its course. And my con-
jecture is that like the first move May
4th & like the second May 7 it is in-
tended to turn Lee's left flank or force
him to take a new position to fight.

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of them need a manager & that is what what
& though we have fully good officers some
he is selected by every officer in the Regt
in Col Sherman's Regiment. Notwithstanding this
Grant goes ahead. 100,000 men may die

but he is going to Richmond. I am glad
of it. It will cost less that way than
any other. It will be a big fight. It has
already been a big fight. but it wont cost
any more in battle than a dozen small
battles scattered through a year or two &
if it ends the war this year will save
a great many lives that would be lost by
sickness. I suppose you know enough about
war to know that it is an almost universal
rule that more men are lost by sickness
than by battle. There is generally much
more sickness than is necessary through
men not knowing how to take care of them-
selves. For instance the 1st Ind. Art. now
in this Fort with us is a veteran Regiment
returned from its furlough since we were here
and one third of its present members are new-
recruits. that third furnish 83 percent of the
sick in the Regiment.

I infer that Grant's fighting with Lee in Vir-
ginia up to the last date that I have
heard has been about even. with the moral
advantage on our side for we are ad-
vancing every time we change front.
But Sherman in Georgia seems to meet
with more decided success than Grant.
He has actually whipped Johnson twice
and compelled him to fall back. Without
detracting at all from the great merits
of Grant I believe Sherman is the best fighting
general we have got. He will move an army
faster & with less transportation than any

*such things as we exist in - his Regt are allowed
taking the Southern States, but no
present look. There is a much more
element of the 36th was a / mounting. And the
~~other~~ other. He has developed the same
quality in this respect that the politicians
were so much afraid of in Fremont.*

In this department I suppose we shall only try
to stand on the defensive until the present
struggle is decided in Va. & Ga. Then if we
are successful there an army of 50,000
or perhaps 100,000 can come down & sweep
the country from the river to
Mexico like a whirlwind. I hope to go that
trip yet.

I saw a letter today from the 36th U.S. Inf
(Col'd) formerly 8th Ark. Arty of which Mr.
Gayles of Sidney was Colonel. It seems
that Gayles has resigned. I guess because
he was afraid to go before the board the Regt
having been first organized without officers
being examined on Genl Thomas calling
all the doubtful cases before the board.

The state of that Regt is not as good as
ours. Several officers keep wenches & one who
has a wife & grown daughters at home has not
sent home a dollar in a year while he
keeps a woman with him dressed in silks.
I don't suppose such things are common in
the army but they sometimes occur. Our Lt
Col commanding the Regt is a boy as it were
only 23 years old and he has been round
the world a good deal and rather a wild
boy. You would not suppose that he would
control officers under him inclined to wildness
so well as a Minister of Models age
& acknowledged ability, would you? If you
would not you would be mistaken. The first