

Camp, Advance Va, near Ch. Bridge Sept. 6.

My dear Sir - I meant to have answered your first letter but have devoted what little time I could spare, to Julia - I wrote Julia a short letter Friday, telling her how we were over this side. The papers are not allowed to give any account of the movement that amounts to much. We do not draw over 30 minutes notice of any expedition. Everything is strictly military now. No tents are allowed, but all things are kept in moving & fighting order. We occupy a very strong position. You would be surprised to see our works. We have cleared enough for one N. Eng. force & built fortifications large enough for an army of thousands. Washington will not be left to the uncertain issue of a battle. The Rebels evidently made a blunder first in not occupying these heights, & second in not attempting to dislodge us here this. This place was protected for our view by a heavy growth & they could have planted a battery that would inevitably have driven us for Ch. bridge & all we could have done would have been to destroy the bridge & retreat. Then the great battle would have been in the very suburbs of Washington & perhaps in its streets. What the result of that battle would have been no one can tell, for victory is never sure to any army. All would have been at stake & honor in our division of the army. therefore we shall be the reserve until Smith is superseded by a ranking Genl. Genl. Smith is a "hard case" to be under yet he treats me so well, I cant but like him, altho I cant till when my head will come off. for he imposes rather important duties on me some times & if an officer fails even through ignorance, down he comes. Ignorance is no excuse with him. An officer that violates a command even in doing well he will punish. I have already committed, what he would call offences, enough to hang a whole regt. had he known them. I suspect he will advance on to Leesville to night. It is but a surmise. I think the God will