

A SOLDIER'S LETTER AND A WOMAN'S ANSWER.

HOSPITAL, June —.

I WRITE with a great deal of pain, dear girl;  
I've not been able before since the fight,  
And my brain is still so much in a whirl,  
That I can tell you but little to-night.  
I'm wounded— don't start— 'tis not very bad,  
Or, at least, it might be worse; so I said,  
When I thought of you, "I'm sure she'll be glad  
To know that I'm only wounded — not dead."

I've lost my left arm, — there, now you know all!  
A Minie ball shattered it, and I fell;  
The last that I heard was our captain's call,  
Until — the rest is too painful to tell.  
I've had throughout the most excellent care,  
And am doing finely, the surgeon says;  
So well, indeed, that the prospect is fair  
For a homeward trip before many days.

But I've something else, dear Mary, to say,  
And I'd say it if it cost me my life;  
I've thought of it well, — there's no other way, —  
You're released from your promise to be my wife;  
You'll think me foolish, at first; then you'll think  
Of the loose, armless coat-sleeve at my side;  
And your proud and sensitive heart will shrink  
From the thought of being a cripple's bride.

'Tis a bitter struggle to give you up,  
For I've loved you more than ever of late;  
But down to its dregs I've drained the cup,  
And I'm calm, though my heart is desolate.  
I'm coming home, and, of course, we must meet;  
My darling, this once, one boon I implore —  
Let us still be friends — for that will be sweet,  
Since now, alas! we can be nothing more.

SWEET HOME, June —.

My Robert, how brave and noble you are!  
Too brave and too noble I know for me;  
But you've too little faith in me, by far,  
If you believe I want to be free.  
I'm not released from my promise, — no, no!  
'Twas never so sacred to me before;  
If you could but know how I've longed to go  
And watch by your side, you'd doubt me no more.

I read your name in the terrible list,  
But the tears froze back that sprang to my eye;  
And a fearful pain that I could not resist  
Crushed my heart till I only longed to die.  
The blessed tears by and by came again,  
And I felt, as you in your letter said,  
A feeling of gladness 'mid all my pain,  
That Robert was only wounded, not dead.

O, darling! to think you have suffered so,  
And I all these long weary miles away;  
You've needed me very often, I know,  
While I could do nothing but hope and pray.  
But hardest of all is the bitter thought  
That you have been suffering so much for me;  
Poor Robert! your manly letter has brought  
A strange mixture of joy and misery.

But you're coming home to my arms and heart;  
You're right — I AM proud and sensitive, too;  
But I'm only so when we are apart,  
And now I shall only be proud of you!  
You're coming home to be happy and rest,  
And I wait the moment of blissful calm,  
When I shall be held to a soldier's breast  
By a patriot-hero's one strong arm!

After the surrender of Fort Donelson, the late Mr. Hibben, chaplain of the Fourth regiment of Illinois cavalry, watched by the dying bed of a young man who "so keenly felt himself a stranger in a strange land, that in the delirium of his sickness, he sighed for his home, and called in piteous prayer for his mother, saying ever and anon through the weary night, 'Mother, why don't you hurry, and come?'" The chaplain upon returning to his tent, gave expression to his full heart in the following lines:

Oh, mother, come; I fain would lay  
My aching head upon thy breast;  
No longer let thy footsteps stray  
To give me rest.

There's burning on my fevered brow;  
With agony my soul is wild;  
No other hand can soothe me now:  
Oh, save thy child!

Thy angel presence must be near;  
Thy loving face I almost see;  
The accents of thy voice I hear:  
Oh, come to me!

I strain my eyes, but see thee not;  
There rumbles on my listening ear  
The echo of that awful thought,  
*Thou art not here!*

What means that sickly taper there,  
Glimmering through this dismal gloom,  
And seeming like a demon's tear  
To light my tomb?

Why do those soldier-comrades lie  
So sick and sad in this dark room?  
My lucid intervals reply,  
Thou'rt far from home!

The dearest spot of all below,  
With thee my dying memories dwell;  
This orph'nage of thy love is woe:  
Sweet home, farewell!

The darkness thickens round my sight,  
My heartstrings break in agony:  
O God, shine forth in heavenly light,  
I die! I die!

Poem sent with  
letter, perhaps cut  
from a newspaper

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Battle field of Antietam  
Valley Maryland Sept 30<sup>th</sup> 1862.

My dear Mother

I take this opportunity  
to sit down and write you a few lines  
to let you know that I am not in  
very good health. I have got a terrible  
Diarrhoea. But I hope that this letter  
will find you and all the rest  
of the family all well. I am at  
the hospital yet. All the wounded  
have been sent on that we are staying  
here awaiting for orders. They are fighting  
again to day Tuesday down by Harper  
Ferry. I expect there will be another  
big battle before a great while. Our  
letters are at the regiment and I  
expect I will get a big heap of them.  
If you send a box to me direct  
it to Lucien W. Hubbard Co. A.  
14<sup>th</sup> Regt. Con. Vol. Washington D. C.

or elsewhere. ~~It~~ put "in haste" on it  
and send it by Adams Express  
and then I will get it. I think.  
Give my love to the girls and to  
Charley. Tell Charles to be a good  
boy and mind his mother and he  
will never be sorry for it. Give my  
best respects to Effie lets her I will  
write to her as soon as I possibly  
can. I shall have the chance my  
letter to a close know. Give my  
love to Father I have wrote to him  
once. I have no more time to write  
so good bye Good Bless you.

From your dear Son

Lucien W. Hubbard

P.S.

I send you these few lines of  
purity to you and I want to  
have you keep them for my  
sake.

L. W. H.

A. B.

(You can give that one  
As we pass along to Geo. and  
that one "Beyond the vale of tears"  
to Josephine, Did the girls receive  
them letters I sent to them. And  
rebel postage stamps.

L. W. H.

Battlefield of Antietam Valley, Maryland

September 30, 1862

My dear Mother,

I take this opportunity to sit down and write you a few lines to let you know that I am not in very good health. I have got a terrible diarrhea but I hope that this letter will find you and all the rest of the family well. I am at the hospital yet. All the wounded have been sent on but we are staying here waiting for orders. They are fighting again today—Tuesday—down by Harper's Ferry. I expect there will be another big battle before a great while.

Our letters are at the regiment and I expect I will get a big heap of them. If you send a box to me, direct it to Lucien W. Hubbard, Co. A, 14th Regt. Conn. Vol., Washington D. C. or elsewhere. Put "In haste" on it and send it by Adams Express and then I will get it, I think.

Give my love to the girls and to Charley. Tell Charley to be a good boy and mind his mother and he will never be sorry for it. Give my best respects to Effie. Tell her I will write her as soon as I possibly can. I shall have to draw my letter to a close now. Give my love to Father. I have wrote to him once. I have no more time now so goodbye. God bless you.

From your dear son, — Lucien W. Hubbard

P. S. I send you these lines of poetry to you and I want to have you keep them for my sake. — L. W. H.

# Bio of Lucien Hubbard

Born on July 9, 1848, in Fairfield County, Connecticut, USA. At 14 years of age, Lucien enlisted in July 1862, where the drummer in the 14th Connecticut began a momentous, 21-month journey.

On October 14, 1863, during the Battle of Bristoe Station in Virginia, Lucien was captured by Confederate Cavalry. Lucien was sent to the notorious Belle Isle prison camp on the James River in Richmond, Virginia.

The bitter cold, the dampness, the scarcity of food, and medical care took their toll. Tragically, on April 16, 1864, Lucien Hubbard lost his battle to the rain diseases around him. He was just 15 years old when he breathed his last on Virginian soil 574 miles from home.