

Executive Mansion,

Washington, Oct 26, 1863.

Dear James M. Guthrie.

Although what I am now to say ~~is~~  
is to be, in form, a reprimand, it is not intended to add  
a pang to what you have already suffered upon the sub-  
jects to which it relates. You have too much of life yet  
before you, and have shown too much of promise as an  
officer, for your future to be lightly surrendered.  
You were convicted of two offences. One of them,  
not of great enormity, and yet great, to be assur-  
ed, I feel sure you are in no danger of repeat-  
ing. The other you are not <sup>well armed</sup> so ~~sure~~ against. The ad-  
vice of a father to his son "Beware of entrance  
to a quarrel, but being in, ~~be~~ bear it that the  
~~opponent~~ <sup>opponent</sup> may have of thee" is good, and yet  
not the best. Quarrel not at all. No man resolves  
to make the most of himself, can spare time  
for personal contention. Still less can he afford  
to take all the consequences, including the vitiation  
of his temper, and the loss of self-control.

Yield larger things to which you can show no  
more than equal right, and yield lesser ones, though  
clearly your own. Better give your path to a dog, than  
be bitten by him in contesting for the right. Even  
killing the dog would not cure the bite.

In the mood indicated deal henceforth with  
your fellow men, and especially with your better  
officers, and even the unpleasant events you  
are passing from will not have been profitable  
to you.