

Nashville Tenn. July 22

Dear folks at home,

I wrote to you immediately ~~arriving~~ ^{arriving} here which I hope you have already received. I almost dread to attempt to give you even a faint idea of the terrible occurrences of last week. I will not give a description of events as they occurred save as I had connection with them personally. I will send a printed statement as soon as printed. You can have no idea of the awful misfortune that has fallen upon us. A noble body of men has been most basely surrendered, and the splendid name we have so long borne is utterly ruined. And at this moment, while this city is threatened with attack at any moment, 1200 well drilled & strong men are shaming in their inability to assist in protecting so important a point. ^{and} must stand idly by, listening to the roar of cannon & rattle of musketry and perhaps see the old flag again torn from the Capitol of Tennessee. Our position ^{is} by no means without danger, at this moment. In case of attack we should be between two fires and also are near the Penitentiary where certain gentlemen of Nashville are continuing their theological studies, and the release of whom will be early attempted.

I had found myself under pleasanter circumstances
just the Sat. eve before the surrender than I had ever
been ^{in the army}. My services and ability now fully acknowledged
virtually adjutant, and with a splendid horse fully
comparisons fed & tended without expense to myself
in my charge & use during the absence of Adj. Blakeley
in Minnesota, in recruiting service.

I was aroused ^{from my sleep} on the morning of the 13th by the distant
dull - irregular & rapid discharge of fire arms,
springing to my elbow at the same instant with my
fellows we listened - became satisfied that something
was wrong & sprang up; & dressed quickly - laid
a wager of Ice Cream on the chance for a fight - I for it -
and rushed out to assist in alarming the camp, which
was by this time in great excitement. I was cool & placed
put on my dirty shirt that I might exchange for a clean
one on returning. A few days later regretting the philosophy
(Our Colonel was traded. but in no degree to alarm
us. While the companies were forming, a vidette rode in
at full gallop, with the information that the town was
full of rebels & the 9th Mich. ^{being out to pursue} were sent rapidly
into line. Now see the account forwarded with this,
and consider your boy as quietly watching the progress
of events in his place in rear of the left wing
ready at a moment to discharge his duties as aid
in carrying commands to the left.

After moving to our 2nd Position I provided
myself with a comfortable lunch of blackberries

from a clump of bushes at some little distance
Here we find the first blunder. Our force should
have forced its way to town thro. the woods between the
pikes to the assistance of the 9th. It would have been
hotly disputed, but successful as I firmly believe
this would have the corner abandoned our camp which
Sherman ^{in his stupidity} permitted to be destroyed within 300
yards of our line - when too - one company would have
effectually protected it. A junction formed. The
prestige of the first success on our side and the
advantage of numbers augmented & position would have
ensured the safety of the men - tho at a loss of stores
camp &c. &c. but nothing of the kind. We remained
in a most hazardous position for ourselves all that fire was
engaged in skirmishing & firing ^{at} the heads of the rebels
in the wood with our artillery. The line fronted on the
pikes presenting to the woods (in which the 3^d Geo. was
drawn up awaiting a favorable moment to attack) our
unprotected left flank. and had the little foolish
charge been made with 500 instead of 25 our line would
have been swept on both sides down its whole length
and the battery ^{2 guns} ^{left} as the surely captured (perhaps much worse)

A little after noon we moved back as indicated - and
had a strong position. had we taken it in the morning
our situation & safety would have been perfect
our camp protected. and so far all right.

The flag of truce came & was received. Another terrible
blunder - Had Sester replied "The Minnesota 3^d does ^{not} _{it}

received such a flag until after a fight" The answer
alone would have disheartened the 2000 that might have been
brought against us. The one hour gains would have
barricaded our enclosure - the grounds about the House -
with orchard & shade trees & rails - & logs from the
negro quarters and have made the position impregnable.
We could have held it easily so long as ammunition & food
lasted. Had Lester acted upon the suggestion of his
prisoners he would have obtained from the trains a
great sufficiency. Lester accompanied the flag
to town to consult. We learn that he was told by Col.

Duffield, then wounded & a prisoner, to hold out if possible.
Lester only wished to know the rules in cases of surrender! -
He came back, called a Council of war of his Captains
and after considerable discussion was ^{by most of hands} ~~arrived~~ ^{to fight}.

The command - & these Captains now not satisfied & asked
a vote by ballot. Well you know that the vote stood 5 to 3
for our Regt. Capt. Stewart of the Battery voting aye.

The feeling was very high at that time, impossible to describe.
All saw a few brave officers wished to hold out.

The answer was returned, a few officers rode in. we
were permitted to go, after stacking arms, to our camp take
what we wished of private property and fall in to move
off as prisoners. surrendered without a fight!

I rode my horse, Our reception by the rebels was
courteous & kind - they were as much astonished as we
our selves. We moved without halt thro town & directly
for McMinnville. We marched 13 miles to Ridgeville
& camped. My horse had had nothing since the night previous &
got nothing this night - nor indeed the men - I lay down
in my overcoat beside a fence with a canteen for a pillow
but slept profoundly - Next day Monday we marched 32
miles, with only a little piece of corn bread in the morning
and again getting nothing that night.

I was fortunate in buying a good supper and lay down
 in a blanket & our coat under the starry canopy, well
 & comfortable in body but so sad in mind. Next
 day we were paroled - simply signing a paper "not to
 bear arms or give information of the movements of the Brigades"
 and at 4. a.m. we fell into line 1200. Strong fine men
 and moved for Nashville. Of these 610 were of our
 Regt. 380 of the 9th 150th Cavalry 70th 1st Ky. Battery
 &c. We marched back to McMinnville 3 miles and
 waited two or three hours for the citizens to furnish some
 corn "pone" & meat. and then marched some 7, or 8, miles
 and lay down to rest by the road. I put on an
 our coat I had found and lay down under a tree
 and slept as sweetly as ever I did under the roof
 of my home. Next-day the poor weary footsore boys
 dropped on. Some fresh & strong, others not able to
 walk half a miles without rest, and so the column stretched
 out for 20 miles along the road. I walked as gamy
 as ever. had saved a biscuit for breakfast in my
 pocket & got a dinner & supper - rested all the
 afternoon - and at dusk marched on alone, but
 passing hundreds along the road & in houses. I marched
 to Rudyville. & crawled in to a comfortable corn crib
 & found a nice place with my dress coat for a coverlid
 & a corn cob for a pillow - I had thrown away my
 our coat in the morning, that was too heavy to carry

The pattering rain awoke me next morn so I lay
quiet till 8 o'clock and then got out, went into a house
remained quite a while & then hired a covered ^{buggy} to carry two
of us in to town, arriving in good trim about noon -
was immediately invited to the house of a "seesh" & enjoyed
his kind hospitality till next morn when at 4 we started
for Nashville, marching half way we got aboard a return
train that had taken troops under Genl. Nelson to reoccupy
the town and so got safe to town about 4.15 P.M.
weary & dirty & hungry.

Now of the treatment we received - Really as
surprising as any part of this whole business.

Men and Officers treated as like gentlemen. Kindly
generously. dividing their scanty piece of bread & meat
with us. willing to let a sick & worn out "fank" ride -
and, while compelled to force us much farther than
we ought to go - doing it in a kind gentlemanly sympathetic
manner. Their uniform if it might be called such is
gray, coarse home made stuff, durable & dirty. Armed
with revolvers & shot guns & occasional sabres which they
do not know how to ^{use} ~~use~~ ^{tolerably} mounted on lean &
tough horses. The physique of the men is good compares
favorably with ours. they are excellent riders & can live
in the saddle, as for instance, they rode 50 miles
to attack us and then some of them returned that whole
distance, stopping but to feed a half hour & eat a bite.
They subsist on the people. I assure you there is
nothing back on the part of the inhabitants in furnishing

them so far as possible and their wants can be communicated
in advance. The County is poor, & had been drained
by their advance - poor picking fell to our lot for
that reason. Their officers are fine men, dress & live
& labor among their men & can scarcely be distinguished
from them. In point of education I should judge them
to be well

Dr. learn tomorrow (Monday 24)
morning at 2 P.M. via R.R. to Louisville for
Jefferson Barracks St Louis,
all well. County in great distress
from threatened by strong reinforced, safe
gordly
Will



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