

Heights near Gettysburg,  
July 4th, 1863.

Dear Mother:

I am all right again, after another serious - the most serious, - of our riots. You will have heard all about the battle here and I will only write this scrawl to say that I did not get even a scratch of any kind in clothes or elsewhere. We have suffered greatly, but are victorious, and no mistake this time. They are flogged in great style and Meade is on the top of the heap of glory. It was all done by this army without reinforcements, not a man in the fight but those who came from the banks of the Rappahannock.

Our brigade lost a little more than half and out of 80 officers we lost 36, 8 killed and 28 wounded. The 11th had 3 officers killed and 6 wounded, and the regiment very badly slaughtered. Our brigade now has between 400 and 500 men left; the Divn. suffered very greatly, but not in the degree that our brigade did. But it was a "glorious victory" as little Peterkin's sons told, tho' the dead are mighty thick about us. Russell and Head are all right.

The 11th had killed Capt. Barré of Cambridge, Lts. Kenaston and Rochford. Wounded Lieuts. Elder, Harback, Pettee, Barber, Neally and Capt. Goodhue - the latter slightly. I wish I could tell you, or could learn myself from other parts of the field, if all that we know are safe.

I will say good bye now, as the "mail closes" (the officer who will try to send this is about to leave me). Lee is whipped; he will hardly recross the Potomac, this is the last of him, I think, hope and pray.

Love to everybody and believe me, most affly. yrs.  
John.

and white and feeble and emaciated as hardly to be recognized, as if they had been wasting away by disease for months. I only went inside one house and was shocked out of that by the pools of blood on the floors, and the rags.

Well, isn't this enough for one battle! I told you before how this small brigade suffered I believe - it has lost about one-half. We are now (some "missing" having turned up) a little over 500 strong, isn't that rather ridiculous for a "brigade".

Next day we were quiesant, except a little artillery, but not enough of that to celebrate the 4th; however, we had had our celebration the day before. There was "feeling the enemy" and cavalry advancing, and much burying of the dead, and also it rained in torrents and I suppose chilled the life out of many a poor wounded soldier on the field in front, as it did at the hospitals in the rear.

July 12th, 1863.

A chance to send, and my regular day has come round, so I will scribble an end to this.

Briefly, we left the heights of Gettysburg on Sunday just a week ago, and since then have been marching, marching, marching - Genl. Meade's specialty, - until at last here we are before Hagerstown and Williamsport. Much of the newspaper talk is very foolish - the enemy are by no means flying so rapidly, but are withdrawing, having failed to accomplish the great design with which they came north. They still outnumber us, and we are only the Army of the Potomac, greatly reduced by expirations of service and depletion on the battlefield. Lee cannot cross for a day or two perhaps, but meantime he is very strong here, and intrenched, and I have no idea that he could be dislodged by assault. He has ferries across

Camp on the roadside,  
July 6th, 1863.

Dear Mother:

I will begin this now, tho' I may not have time to finish out the page, but I will peg away at it at odd intervals to have it ready by the next regular mail day. I sent a small scrawl in place of a letter, last Sunday (that is, yesterday), but I hope you will be satisfied with that, as it told the main news of importance, that is, that my valuable existence had not been extinguished in the great fight near Gettysburg.

Now, I will try and tell you of our marchings and doings since my last real letter, which was written from the neighborhood of Frederick City. I wrote, and mailed the letter on Sunday; that evening came a gigantic mail, the accumulations of several weeks standing, and lots of the welcomest kind of letters, from you, Fisher, and almost everybody else, including one from Pell written from somewhere way north in Washington Territory, full of mountains and trees and forests and good spirits. He seems to like it very much now.

But I meant to tell of myself and doings here more particularly. We had orders next morning for a march, but we had a great deal of dreary waiting to do in a nasty drizzle and penetrating foggy mist, long after the starting hour, finally getting out on to the road about noon, and then waiting again for another hour or two. I suppose the army thronging towards Frederick blocked the way, finally they marched us round the city circling us to the south, and then to the east of it; to our great disgust, having brought out our bands to make a display in passing thro'. We rather expected to see the flags (both kinds) and the females and the welcomings of Frederick.

But we had to swallow it, - not Frederick - and

trudge on. The weather cleared and grew warm, and we pulled out well in the afternoon. A beautiful region, the valley of the Monocacy, - all golden grain and fruit orchards and snug farms and green mountains, and the Monocacy river; it is really charming. I think we only made 12 miles that day, camping at twilight in a clover field and ready for a big pull next day.

Reveille at 2, general at 3, assembly at 3:45, advance at 4 o'clock precisely, at which hour we were off on the road and beginning one of the hugest tramps we have made yet. It was good weather and a pretty good road and a superb region, tho' rather hilly for easy marching. We passed thro' the towns of Liberty (nobody up), Union Bridge, Johnsville, Uniontown, Frizzleburg, and Union Mills, in the latter seeing faces of welcome if not of beauty. A miraculous country for cherries, such huge trees along the fence rows, with great black and red fruit, sad demoralizers of our army, the men getting very tired and finding it indispensable to rest under those particular trees, tho' they were brisk enough in passing others.

July 8th.

I have a few moments again; but I find I shall have to cut short about the marchings, tho' they took us through very beautiful regions. I will skip the cherry trees, and merely say that that day's march was very great, nearly thirty miles, and we camped at night near the Pennsylvania line, at a spot where the reb. cavalry had been that morning.

We marched at 7 next day for Hanover Penn., ten miles north and we thought that was to be all for the day. However, we had hardly made a camp among the big barns of the somewhat alarmed

state, before we were ordered off again. We turned straight west for Gettysburg this time, and pegged on and on long after dark. It was between ten and eleven when we halted and bivouacked, and at four we were again stumping along the road. It became pretty evident that Meade was addicted to heavy marching, and was not going to let opportunity slip by by any unnecessary delay.

July 9th, '63.

So daylight found us marching on, and in an hour or two later we went into line of battle, and then I knew a battle was on hand, and I began to think that Meade had done the first part well, that is, he had thrown his troops forward with great rapidity, as witness our marchings. There was a great deal of changing and shifting positions, feeling woods with skirmishers, &c., but much quiet sitting on the ground also; the little skirmish fire pattered from time to time all day, with now and then a bark from a big gun; then, in the middle of the afternoon, it got a little louder and steadier, till finally at 4 o'clock it rose to the full uproar of a battle and troops were hastened to certain points. We, among the rest, fell in in our turn and moved out to the left and front, getting under shell-fire first as we climbed a rocky wooded hill. On the top the rocks became craggy and piled up roughly, and the iron was striking them and Genl. Longstreet was charging them with his columns of grey. He wanted to take this conical hill by a sudden dash, as it would give him full sweep of our left, and make us break back our line in the middle with the left in a very awkward position.

Down the hill we went and the lead ploughed us a little, across a morass, up a small rocky slope, where we rested for an hour or so, murder quite brisk all the while. Then came certain lines and regiments out of the woods in our front, falling back and

firing, halting and facing about now and then. We relieved a portion of this line, pushing into the woods and covering their withdrawal and opening a heavy fire into the woods beyond. Gracious! what specimens of ghostliness they had left in there! I must say I felt rather higher up among the bullets, being on a horse, than was pleasant, - I thought they hummed a trifle thicker up there than they do lower down, and I began to wish that some of them might hit the animal and let me down - I would have sold the horse cheap at that time I think. He frisked and capered and jumped once or twice as if shot, once so decidedly that I got off and looked for his wound, but he was unfortunately whole, so I reluctantly remounted. That perverse beast escaped wholly uninjured.

While our line was flashing fire, came an order to retire. I looked back and saw that our small brigade was all alone in there - on going to the edge of the wood to the rear, there was a rebel line on the left with their colors propped against a rock, and their men crouching behind the ridge and firing on our flanks, that is, their line at right angles to ours and near enough to count the buttons on their coats; and on the right another line of grey, advancing, with their red battle-flag (a very handsome flag too) and skirmishers to the front loading and firing rapidly, and apparently unconscious of us in their rear. I will mark it down - the lines showing the directions of the fire of each and the dotted line the edge of the woods in which we were, so you will see why the rebs on our right did not see us .

*Sketch*

The order had been delayed and it was very difficult to communicate

it, in the noise and excitement and deafening crash of musketry, the cries, &c. &c. but at last it was duly known and the line faced about and marched back. As we came out those on the right first saw us apparently, for they withdrew skirmishers and crouched down or started back suddenly, while those from the rocks on the left opened a cross fire very galling - those on the right added their line-fire also and we had them all, as well as our legitimate opponents in the direct rear.

As we came out of the woods, we stepped among our own dead, now, poor fellows, lying with their white faces looking into the blue sky - passed a little open hill, then down into a swamp, across and up the great rocky hill.

Here the brass pieces were thundering and blowing powder and smoke and wadding and swift hot breath into our faces as we came up, and a line of infantry was standing silent, which, when we cleared its front, opened magnificently and down the hill they went, and back fell the enemy from the ground which he never retook again. But between the dead, and the rocks and the mirey slough and the enemy's fire, when we ascended the face of the hill, it was in broken order and confusion. On the top we halted and formed again, and it was after dark and the fighting was over for the day, when we marched our sadly thinned ranks and took up another position.

This was along the top and crest of the same rocky hill I spoke of before - the large one in rear where we had done our fighting. The rebels who had bothered us on the left, still held their rocky ridge, and indeed held it all next day, no effort being made to dislodge them - and from this point their sharpshooters annoyed our gunners on the hill exceedingly.

But in front of them was our ground and some way into

the woods in which we had fought was our picket line. So when Capt. Russell waked me that night and asked me to go down with him to see the wounded and pick out our friends if we could, I went with him. We went down on to the marsh and to the rocky ground beyond, and went about turning over dead soldiers and peering into their white faces by thr bright moonlight, looking for Kenaston and Rochford of the 11th whom we had heard were killed.

The wounded were in the hands of the ambulance and stretcher men who were busy enough. All we found to do for them was to order that a groaning man, who begged very pityfully, be taken up and carried off by the ambulance party - they having made some demur about his not belonging to their corps, but they were very well satisfied when we told them not to discriminate for the future. We could not find Lieuts. Kenaston and Rochford - in fact we did not look long, it was too sad and horrid a piece of business.

On this same morass a 10th Infty. man was looking for his friend, - he got very near the rebel line on the left and seeing two of them approaching, he picked up a gun, ordered them to halt, throw down their arms and to march in. He brought them up the hill and turned them over to me, with a soldier's salute; they were from the 9th Georgia, and I sent them to the rear.

Another sentinel brought in (the same night) a rebel officer, with his horse, and turned him over to me also - a slim man, with a black moustache, and chin-tuft, and long black hair, a grey cap and butternut brown coat, looking very like a second-rate bar-keeper. He came accidentally within hail of the pickets and they ordered him in. I sent him back to the provost guard.

Next day our line was not engaged, tho' the artillery

was brisk enough and they were expecting a renewal of the attempt to carry that point, all day.

It raged in the centre and on the extreme left, and by and by they got very tired of assailing our positions and as they were brought up were very shaky and fell to pieces at a few shells. We could see finely from our position (except the nasty sharpshooters, whose accuracy of practice was a source of constant annoyance and kept us well crouching among the rocks all the time) and I am very sorry that I happened to miss seeing the grand advance made upon our right centre where three lines came marching on in splendid style, officers prancing about and skirmishers to the front, steadily advancing without firing, our artillery roaring at them and doing terrible execution, at last our infantry line receiving the shock and giving way at first. Then soon began however to pump it into them so well with musketry and case shot combined that the three rebel lines wavered, then broke and ran. I was in time to see the fields all covered with them running back in scattered groups, and singly, and of these our lines and the cavalry were swallowing great numbers.

After this, they advanced again several times, but it was no use, for there was no back-bone left, they faltered and fled very soon, and for hours you could not look towards the north-west without seeing numbers of them flying, all over the fields. They passed across the whole front and I saw officers collecting them in our own front and getting them into line and column, but our guns tossed a few large bits of iron at them that sent them scattering, out of sight.

Our spirits rose and we cheered and jeered, and were not even quenched by the renewed efforts of the plaguy sharpshooters

who did some damage to our enthusiasts.

But all of this fight you may read in the papers, and a great deal more also, which did not occur. On this day, too, I visited some of our hospitals, to see our poor chaps. I went to bid good bye to Capt. Barré - of our regiment, but he was unconscious, and died in half an hour after I saw him. Poor fellow - we liked him so much - he sang beautifully. He came from Cambridge, lived near the Rev. John Ware (next house I believe) leaves a wife and one or two children. He woke up before he died and sang, "I wish I were a child again, just for to-night" - and the warriors and wounded men about on the grass cried like babies. He had his leg and arm shattered and two balls lodged near the spine. Several of our officers have lost legs.

Kenaston and Rochford were found and buried with Barré - also with General Weed, Col. O'Rorke, Lt. Fisher, Lt. Hazlett, and others. I saw Kenaston on the piazza of a house, - a large handsome fellow - his eyes open and his expression very stern. Also General Weed (we knew him, he commanded a battery once in this Divn. and was plain Captain) who looked like marble, not like death - the silver stars of his shoulder-straps setting his face in a frame, - he was a typical soldier.

Altogether, the hospitals made me very sick - the wounded all over the grass and gardens and orchards of the houses round about, and the rain wetting them to the skin, some dying, some dead, leaning against trees or sprawling anyhow, - legs and arms and operating tables, - great neglect (from the great pressure of the numbers to be attended to), many dying from simple want of attention, while waiting their turn, - rebels mixed with the numbers also; great hearty fellows, as I knew them the day before, now so palid and sunken