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Letter, 186[2] January 10, Oscar D. Ladley to Mother and Sisters [Catherine, Mary, and Alice Ladley]

Oscar D. Ladley

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Camp John M.^c Leary,

Jan'y. 10th. 1861.

Dear Mother & Sisters,

I received your letter this morning, but I don't see much news in it, I heard from E.P. Capron and he said Belmont was very sick, how is he is there as much sickness as ever? There are about fifteen or sixteen in the hospital here mostly bad colds. That story that Mary wrote is a very good one, but I had seen it in one of the papers, some of our boys get baptized every day all most, (in mud though) which is about six inches deep, you wanted me to tell you a camp story I don't know whether I can do it or not, my brain is not as imaginative as N.M. Reeds, you said he could sit and tell stories all evening, I can't and that is the difference. Well to proceed, last Sunday night a Sergeant belonging to Morgans Company went over to Redding, I suppose to get a drink, he called for the Landlord of a Dutch Tavern who got up and went to the door and seeing who it was pushed him out, locked the door, went back got a revolver and sword, then opened the door struck the Sergeant with the sword, the Sgt. then grappled with the Dutchman and would have used him up, had not the Dutchman placed his pistol against his breast and fired, the old man dropped dead in his tracks, and was kicked out into the street.

The Sergeant was an old man about sixty years of age, and had served all through the Mexican war, was a good soldier well liked by all his ~~com~~^mrades, the soldiers all went over the next night and would have hanged him up to his own sign post if they could have found him. They have caught him and he is now in jail in Cincinnati, and I hope he will hang.

Our first Lieut. took us out on dress parade the other evening, he forgot what command to give to keep us from running over the Quartermasters tent, and about half the company ran plumb into it, some of them tried climb over it. There were several officers close by and our boys commenced laughing fit to kill. The same evening when we had halted he wanted to bring us to a "front face". the order is "Company front!" When they undouble their files and come to a front face, the order he gave was, "front face with out doubling front"! He was so bored that he has not showed himself for several days. I dont know as you will see the point, but to a person of any military knowledge it would be rather ridiculous. He is the one who wants me to instruct him, and says he will pay me well for it, but from what I can learn of him, his money would be better than his word, and a "bird in hand is worth his worth two in the bush". That is my motto in future, I hardly know what to write there is nothing of interest here to write about.

The other Sunday I was detailed to take
a squad of men and arrest three fellows
who had insulted some ladies down in town,
I found them; at first they rather showed
fight, but when they seen four bright bayonets
come down to a charge, they thought the best thing
they could do would be to go along quietly, and
as they did. Bayonets are very good to bring men
to their senses. Well I must close, if you
can make any thing out of this letter
you will do very well

I am as ever Yours

O. D. Ladley.

P.S. Write soon, give me all the news.
Give my Respects to all - Friends.
Y. S. Boy are all well.