

MS92_9_6_02

Camp Wickliffe, Sunday Morning, Jan 26th 1862

My dear cousin Mattie,

According to promise I hereby write unto you, though I do not feel in the best humor for it, since I have just come off of duty, having been Officer of the Guard for the twenty four hours, and during that time did not dare take off my sword or close my eyes. Last night was very cold, and to sit out at the Guard House all night without and sleep is calculated to make a fellow feel somewhat stupid in the morning afterward. I arrived in Louisville safely Tuesday evening after leaving you and expected to have taken the cars for camp on the next morning train at 7 o'clock, but the careless Porter missed connexion at my room, consequently I did not yet awake in time, and was compelled to remain in the City for another day, much to my dissatisfaction.

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I was somewhat fearful of being put in arrest for being behind time, but nothing of the kind, our Colonel knowing the severity of our General did not report me absence without leave, so I escaped at last. But I tell you I thought wednesday a very long day, to pass away the time, I imposed upon myself the duty of visiting the Hospitals for the sick soldiers, of which there are quite a number in the City and containing some two thousand sick. I must indeed admit an agreeable surprise upon visiting these (receptials?) for the afflicted. In almost every instance, I found there places under the last regulations, the sick all provided with nice little beds or cots, good mattresses, pillows, and plenty of bed clothes. But what was best of all, evry Hospital was under the careful attention of the Union Women of the City, God bless them, they are doing a noble work, in thus ministering to the wants and alleviating the sufferings of our sick soldiery, our patriotic young men who have been so unfortunate as to fall under disease.

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Some of these good women are in the Hospitals all the time, bringing and preparing suitable food, giving medicine, doing all that human power can do, for the comfort of the suffering. I could not see but that the patients were doing as well in Louisville as they would, were they at their homes, many of them for better. I arrived here Thursday evening, found affairs about as when I left, except that the health of the Regiment is fast improving. We have large numbers still sick, and many dangerously sick, but the general health is much better than two weeks ago. There have been but two cases of Small Pox, and one of these proved fatal last night, a very fine and promising young man that died with it, the other one, belonging to our Company is almost well, will soon be able for duty. The Colonel says I have now been home and returned well, so he intends keeping me on duty all the time, encouraging!

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I found your letter here and all right when I came, received one from Abby last evening, says she has recovered from the shock received at Dayton. Have you heard from the Colonel yet, and one thousand acres and house? Now my dear cousin I will must say, I felt just about as blue that morning after I left Dayton as a boy could well feel, and un till I got into Camp and on duty again. It gives me great pleasure to review the pleasant hours of the time I was in the civilized world. This is certainly a changeful and changing world. Last night while sitting out under the star-lit heaven, and suffering with cold, I could not but contrast my position then, with what it was just one week before, telling my friends of some of our trials and sufferings. I (read?) when one contrasts day with day, time with time and place with place, he becomes astonished at himself. But dear Cousin, I have but little to write this time, it has been so short a time since I saw you, I can yet hear your merry laugh, as when we were in the cars. I do not feel in a (gazing?) mood to day, so will have to suspend. My love to all, write immediately and tell me all the news of last and more. I am your affectionate Cousin.

WM McKinney

(side note)

Write me (Mineveras?) Morris Post Office Address. I have forgotten it.