

[illegible]

My Dear Sandy,

You grumble so much at my short letters that I must try this afternoon to give you a long one, & if it proves to be so long as to be tiresome you have your self to blame. I began this letter now, not yet having determined what I shall write about, but as I proceed the plan will develop itself, as the novel writers say. In the first place I will have to remark on the extraordinary health we in common with the rest of the Army are enjoying. In the midst of hard work with spade & sponge staff, night marches & night labor, hot weather & short grub we are ~~in~~ actually in better condition now than when we were at Vicksburg through the winter, - not a man from the Company in the hospital on account of sickness, and we are a fair sample of the whole of Sherman's Army. Everybody remarks on the ruddy cheeks & clear complexions of the men, their hearty appetites & jovial humor, & everyone seems to feel as if with such an Army, such leaders & such a Cause we must be successful. (31st) was interrupted yesterday by orders to move, harnessed & hitched up, & left the woods in which we had stayed for 2 days, to proceed a half mile to the rear & go into park to rest a while & let other Batteries that have not been engaged yet go to the front in their turn. So we are now enjoying ourselves in the cool shade of our tarpaulins, our horses tied to the Picket Rope as in the old Garrison times, & every body busy at washing 2 weeks dirt out of their shirts, mending the Campaign tents in our Huntsville-drawn breeches, & reading, writing, & cooking of choice dishes by the Epicureans.

Our coming to the Rear, though, did not add much to our security,
for the Johnnies have got a good thing on this part of the Line with
their big Guns. They have been shelling the woods in this vicinity
regularly since the battle of the 28th from their forts in town, &
~~on~~ as a group of us were standing talking in the park last even-
ing, a hundred lbs Parrott percussion shell came along shrieking like
mad, struck close to the 1st Caisson, ricocheted, broke one of the wheels of
the Caisson, & exploded between the Ammunition chests, blowing up one
of them, & breaking another so that the tow on top of the powder inside
took fire, but which we speedily extinguished with a bucket of water
from a cook fire luckily near. There were 40 men within as many feet
at the time of the explosion & several of us were within half that distance
2 men being so close that the powder burnt their whiskers & yet no one
was seriously hurt, one or two being knocked down by splinters & some
by the concussion. But the same thing might happen 20 times without so
many narrow escapes. The splinters of the Ammunition chest, and of the Maschet,
which was also stove all to flinders, flew all ~~over~~ around us, one of the
men with ^{me} I was talking getting a rap with a small fragment that
knocked him flat, & some of the harness on racks near by, was blown
50 yards. One of our Mule drivers, close by the Caisson at the time of
the terrific explosion was struck on the head by a splinter, & the concussion
so crazed him that he got up & ran over two miles, so fast that three of our
fellows who started after him thinking he was "clean murdered," had the
greatest difficulty in catching him. He says this morning that all he
wants now, is to fight a Duel with the man on the Rebel Gun who pulled
the lanyard that fired it. Our Mule Drivers are unlucky - the only
man we had wounded on the 22^d was the driver on the Battery wagon.
So you see there is no much safety at the Gun in these days of long.

range Artillery as anywhere in the Rear. He may laugh about that accident yesterday, but it is a mercy that the whole camp was not filled with killed & wounded men. Genl. Leggett, on seeing the place this morning said that we were a lucky set of men & that it was "better to be born lucky than rich" & so our fellows begin to think, for we have had most wonderful escapes as you know.

I had a splendid view day before yesterday of the famous city of Atlanta with all its forts & defences, from the top of a tree into which I climbed with a Field Glass slung to me & by whose aid I could see the groups of Rebel women standing on the parapets of the big fort a mile & a half distant, looking out towards where the crack of our skirmishers rifles proclaimed the advancing Yankees. Atlanta is a beautiful city, being spread over a large extent of rolling ground, the smaller houses being completely hidden by the shade trees that grow all through the streets.

The City is directly East of where I am now writing & is very nearly surrounded by our troops, the wings of the army being only about 2 miles apart. I think it is Sherman's plan to completely surround it & begin a regular siege. When I had the view of it, the gangs of impressed negroes were busy throwing up a rude rifle pit to connect the forts, so that it seems the last flank movement of the Army of the Tennessee was a surprise to old Gen. Brown & the rest of them.

I see in the accounts of our fight on the 22^d published in the Louisville papers the most glaring mistakes in regard to the different Corps engaged & for fear you do not understand how Sherman's Army is organized, I will tell you.

Sherman's Grand Army is composed of three troops of three Departments of the Military Division of the Mississippi, ^{each} commanded by the Departmental Commanders & all independent of each other, acting under the supreme command of Genl. Sherman. These Armies are - The Army of the Cumberland, Genl. Thomas; The Army of the Ohio, Genl. Schofield; & our own Army of the Tennessee, before the 22^d under McPherson, then for awhile under Genl. Logan, & now commanded by Maj. Genl. Howard, one of the best men in

Uncle Sam's Army. Now, each of these Armies is composed of Army Corps - the Army of the Cumberland of three - the 4th Corps, of Howard, (I do not know who commands it now) the 14th Corps - (Palmer) & the 20th Corps (Hooker).

The Army of the Ohio has only one Corps here - the 23^d - & Schofield commands it in person. The Army of the Tennessee has three Corps, ~~the~~ the 15th (Genl. Logan) 16th (Genl. Dodge), & the 17th (Genl. Blair).

Each of the Army Corps is composed of 2, 3, or 4 Divisions, & the Divisions are subdivided into Brigades, composed of three or four Regts each.

The two Divisions of our Corps that are present (3^d & 4th) are commanded now by Genls. Leggett & Giles M. Smith respectively, since our Genl. Gresham was wounded on the 20th. Now you understand how Sherman's Army is composed, better than two thirds of the Army Correspondents here.

2 P. M. } Your letter of the 24th is come to hand & I am greatly delighted with it, you need stirring up once in a while to move you from your usual monotonous style, (you see I speak plainly, as becomes a friend.

I think you must, or should, appreciate this present epistle, for it has cost me already, about 6 dollars. I will explain. I went out into the shade in the woods to write, took out my pocket book to get a steel pen, laid it on the ground beside me till I would want to return the pen, went to writing, got interested, as I always do, was called off presently by the Capt. to inspect the Ammunition Chests, put away the writing materials & came off, leaving the pocket book, containing 4 of the dollars.

Father sent me, (I had paid a debt with the other one in the morning) my Gold pen, & a pencil. Of course, when I missed it soon after, and went to look for it it was gone, some of the men having picked it up. I am not without hopes of having it returned, but if it is lost it will be a good lesson to me. You need not trouble sending any more for it is said we are to be paid soon. Now, as to yourself, I approve of your intention to enlist for but 2 years, as that will let you out when we come home, but as to your preference for the Infantry, I must tell you it is wrong, as I know from experience, and as every foot soldier in this Army will tell you. There is no branch of the Service that will compare with the Artillery for desirableness, or for opportunity to render disting. wished services, & it will be a life-long regret to you if you join any other. If I had room I would give you the reasons. However, have patience till we go home & spend our furlough with us, for before that you cannot get into the Company on account of the fact that we have now 165 men & are only entitled to 156. When the four veterans