

On the road to Alexandria, May 9<sup>th</sup> 1863

Dear Father,

Your letters of Mar 5<sup>th</sup> & Apl. 3d came safely to hand on the 22d Apl. I was very glad to hear from home as 9 mails had been received by our regiment & there had been no letters for either Harry or I. I was in New Orleans at the time of receiving them, but owing to my making preparations to return to the reg't. was unable to answer them then & since then we have been moving, so I could not get a chance to write. I left New Orleans on the 25<sup>th</sup> & took the cars for Brashear City where I arrived that afternoon. Here we heard that our regiment was on its way back to the city driving cattle & horses. Next day we saw our Major [Chas. A. Burt] (he is now in command) & he said my company had been sent back with three other companies to guard a baggage train, so that day in company with Capt. [Robert McD.] Hart I started off to rejoin my company.

We went on board a small steamer called the Kepper & about 4 o'clock P.M. off she went. We traveled very slowly for the boat is a slow one and after innumerable twistings & turnings through bayous, lakes & rivers we reached Barre's Landing Apl. 30<sup>th</sup> where our companies were. Here we disembarked & proceeded to join our commands. We dined that day with Col. [Henry W.] Birge, who commands our brigade. We lay here for three or four days & I was kept pretty busy with my company.

On the morning of the 5<sup>th</sup> we started off to join the rest of the army which was on the road to Alexandria in advance of us two days. That afternoon we marched 17 miles. Next day we marched 22 miles & we were all pretty well used up by such rapid marching. The next day, as the men were all so tired, we were only marched 18 miles which is pretty good going, but we did not have to march as fast as the day before. Yesterday (the 8<sup>th</sup>) we were marched 18 miles again & the troops were so used up that Gen'l. [Guvier] Grover allowed us today to recover our strength. My feet are all blistered up & I suffered the most excruciating torture in walking. It was extremely warm & the dust covers the roads to the depth of six inches, so you can image how pleasant it was.

The country is one of the most beautiful I ever traveled through. Imagine a vast field covering two or three hundred acres of ground planted with corn about a foot high. In the background dense woods & the nigger shanties all in order standing in rows with the planters house surrounded by trees standing in their rear. Such is nearly every mile of ground we passed over. Some of these corn fields cover over a mile square. In one place we passed the corn was over six feet high & looked splendid. There is but very little cotton or sugar cane planted owing to Jeff. Davis' message to the planters to plant corn for the wants of the people. They talk about starving out the rebels. Why! It is a thing utterly impossible. They have corn & beef in abundance. Our regiment drove in over 10,000 head of cattle & say there is still over 100,000 head still running over the country. Where ever we go it is the same. The corn cribs are full & the cattle still running over the country. Sugar & molasses they have thousands of barrels of. We have captured something over 5,000 bales of prime cotton, which is being sent to New Orleans as fast as possible.

Our regiment is terribly reduced in numbers. In the late battle we lost 107 men killed & wounded including 8 officers. We do not number over 300 men for duty & I do not think we have even as many as that.

I am sorry to hear by late accounts that Edward [Leslie Molineux] is not doing as well as he was, but think he will be home before this letter reaches you as Col. Birge said he had sent him a leave of absence.

In your last letter 3d Apl. you tell me to send home all the money I can. That I intend to do as soon as I can get any but owing to a recent order issued by the War Department, I cannot draw any pay until I am remustered as a Lieutenant. I was obliged while in New Orleans (owing to this order) to borrow twenty five dollars from Edward [Leslie Molineux] to buy some clothes. This amount you will please deduct from any amounts I may send you, as I do not wish to cost you a cent more than I can avoid. When I get my money I will be able to get along without troubling anybody & I hope to be able soon to remit some.

Harry [Tiemann] is doing very well & I believe his boils are all gone.

I will try to write at every opportunity. Direct your letters as prescribed in my last for without this there is no surety of my getting them.

With love to all

I remain

Your affectionate son

Frank

For safety I will hereafter put your directions inside each letter.

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