

Baton Rouge May 8th, 64

Dear Elizabeth

When you read my last you will hardly expect to see another dated at this place but such is the uncertainty of military affairs we can judge nothing of tomorrow by the transactions of today. Once during the past week we have had every thing packed ready to move at a moments notice but the order was countermanded and we are yet in camp.

Last Mon. morning we rec'd orders to move at ____ P.M. with two days cooked rations and a little before sundown we were on the road, towards Clinton a small town occupied by the rebs 30 miles from here. We marched 15 miles and halted at 12 oclock were on the road again at 3 oclock. Our force consisted of four Regts. of Inft. two sections of Art. and 500 Cav. our Regt acting as reserve. Skirmishing commenced by the advanced at sunrise the enemy constantly falling back. We were brought up and put in the advance at 9 oclock and crawled almost on double quick until noon when we reached the Comitte river where the rebs had taken position on the opposite side and disputed our passage of the bridge, here we lost the Col of the 4th Wis. Cav. and a Corpl from our Regt both killed besides several wounded. We captured two prisoners and learned that their loss was 50 killed and wounded. The Col. c'md'g the expedition had completed the object of the reconorsence and decided to withdraw. We marched 15 miles and bivwacked for the night. Having marched 25 miles and skirmished 7 hours with the enemy we began to think it to be the object to ascertain whether we had forgotten how to travel or not. The next morning we reached camp at 9 o'clock having marched 10 miles. The boys had nearly all got tender footed and it was rather amusing to see the number of cripples about the camp for the next two days. The 120th ____ have become the victims of Texan barbarity. One week ago today they went aboard the steamer

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bound for Red River and Mon. P.M. they steaming quietly up the River about 50 miles from the mouth when all at once they were fired upon by Art. and small arms from the bank, they of course could make but slight resistance from their old transport and soon hoisted the white flag but the rebels cried No quarters and continued to fire on the almost helpless boys. The boat was brought to the opposite shore as soon as possible and 150 escaped out of nearly 600 the rest being either killed or captured and to be taken by those barbarians is nearly equivalent to death. The prisoners were all stripped of their uniform and blankets and will many of them at least die from exposure. These are the kind of men, or beasts is a more appropriate name, we are fighting and such are the beings which have so many friends at the north.

The weather is very warm here during the day and if the temperature continues to increase 3 months I afraid we shall be obliged to hunt pretty smart for shade. I have just returned from church heard a very good sermon by one of our army chaplains from Ecclesiastes? 8th, 8th. It seems like home to go church and hear a good sermon on the sabbath but I have heard very few such in the past two years.

Capt. Benham arrived from N.O. this morning and informed us that there is a probability of our remaining here awhile yet. We of course dont object to staying if it suits the Gen. I nver liked the idea of being kept in garrison a great length of time but as we have seen something of the field and as we have only a few months longer to serve I have no objections to a comparatively quiet time during this summer.

We can however hardly expect to remain here all summer. We get no news of late from the north but all are looking anxiously for good news from Gen. Grant as in him lies our only hope of the war coming to a close very soon. It is thought by some that if he is successful the war will terminate within the present year. Much as I wish such might be the

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case I dont expect it. The weather being uncomfortably warm in our tent, myself and chum took " N. P. Willis' travels in Italy" went down to the capitol square seated ourselves in the shade and passed the warmest part of the day reading. The square is very beautiful there being plenty of shade and grassy lawns. There are also some very pretty flowers but there are strict orders against plucking them. I however thought I would risk the consequences of breaking orders this time, and picked a velvet-rose from a bush close to the capitol on the south side which I will send you.

If you have not seen the state house you have at least seen something which grew very close to it. If I could had my choice to day very likely I should set beneath trees of more northern growth and passed the time in conversation instead of reading But as the minister told us to day we have not the right to do as we choose unless we choose to do right but I dont think it would be wrong consequently there must be some other reason for not being there. I have written to you once since receiving yours stating your people were sick and hoping this may find you all enjoying good health.

I am yours truly

Leonard