

J.B. Stevens Letters

August 3, 1903

says, "we", that is the command build two bridges over these streams." One of the nights passed pleasantly. of the other I have no recollection. Just as we were going to our sleeping quarters, the entire battery procured by armsfuls [sic] of cotton taken from an old gin house situated on the other side of the road and some distance up the creek. This we put in out tent and spreading our blankets over this surface made a very comfortable and clean bed. This was the only night during the service on the field, I remember of having slept on a cotton bed, although I have burned hundreds of bales of this product while on the march or on the raid.

Tuesday the 30th of December we crossed Stuarts' Creek by a very commodious bridge and came on the ground made illustrious and known to us as the Battlefield of Stone [sic] River. Sometimes called by the Rebels as the battle of Murfreesboro.

Yours very resp.

J. B. Stevens

S. C. Stevens Letters

Chicago Board of Trade

After battle

After all these fighting days were over, and we had completed the burying of the dead orders came to "hitch up". We moved out to the road taking the pike toward Murfreesboro. Crossed the Stone River to its south side, by a temporary bridge. The waters at this point of crossing of this crooked stream ran nearly due east. We came into, a short distance, from the bridge, a camping place, a little way off the pike eastward.

This was a very pleasing spot on a gentle rising ground where at one time had been a fine forest of oak trees many of these oaks and some elm trees still standing. On the edge of this woods was a small clearing into which, Stokes moved the Battery, in the afternoon, of Tuesday, the 6th, a cool blustering winter's day.

This location was known as the old John Bell farm, or place. One can remember the Bell and Everett; Douglas and Johnson; Breckinridge and Lane, ticket which was in the field when Lincoln and Hardin were elected in 1860.

Our wagons loaded with provisions and our tents came back safely from the rear.

The old Sibley's we pitched facing to the north; the same ones we received and opened for the first time, at Camp Douglas; from which protection we had derived no comfort, from the rain and winter's storms, since leaving Overalls' creek before the commencement of the fight. We, the rank and file, did not expect nor, do I believe, the captain knew beforehand that we should remain in this location and occupy this ground, or that we were assigned this post for our permanent winter quarters.

For many days after the battle my ears ring constantly with the sound of the guns. Whether the concussion in the massing of so many heavy guns in Friday's engagement, or sleeping on the ground or from general exposure and hardships of many campaigns, I cannot tell but I never have gained my hearing since.

We soon fell into the regular ways of camp life again; after having so many broken days and sleepless nights and the excitements on the field.

Up to the time of our arrival in Nashville we had been an unattached Battery. On Stokes' suggestion he had obtained a permission at Bowling Green, to move the organization to the front.

This movement I have already described.

At Nashville we were attached to, and served in, the Pioneer Brigade. Commanded during the Stone [sic] River campaign, by Colonel St. Clair Morton. He was a graduate from West Point and an engineer. A fine looking fellow: clear complexion; long silken auburn hair; tall and graceful in person, every inch a gentleman. It was a pleasure to see him, accompanied by his staff, ride up to and dismount at our headquarters, as was his custom, after we settled in this camp. I shall not have a better place to note the following items of St. Clair Morton. He was made a brigadier general at this battle, and was killed in an assault on Petersburg, Va. the following year. Under his direction it is probable, the mud fort on the south side of the river near the bridge and other fortifications in the vicinity of our camp were executed by his Brigade, during the winter and spring months.

About the first thing in this camp we talked of among ourselves, around our campfires of an evening, were of course the battle; for it was our first engagement; The prospects The future; and Lincoln's Proclamation. To my mind, I at the time thought it was premature in its operation.

As soon as the nigger was given the musket and assigned to duty in the field, at that moment it was the same as putting a ballot into his hand.

And where we, as a nation, made the mistake, not Lincoln, in freeing the nigger, but in our allowing him to become an equal in fighting the United States Battles of the Civil War.

When the issue was made: he was as a free man, sure to come to the front.

If he fought our battles, whether he fought bravely or not then the access to the ballot box was in his sight, and his especial privilege.

Very soon after the Emancipation Proclamation our camp was filled with niggers of every description. The most intelligent and apt ones were selected, and, one assigned for camp duty to each gun squad. They were known by the number of guns they were attached to or employed upon. Our darkey [sic] was the youngest and blackest of the crowd. He said his name was Joe. So we called him by that name and he became very proud of the position of belonging to Number One gun; outranking the other niggers in doing the duties on the right. He came to Chicago after the war.

These darkeys [sic] at night congregated around the wagons, and the forge, and taking out the tail board of one of the wagons, would use this as a platform to dance upon.

The best dancer at first was selected who would snig [sic] and pat his part and dance at the same time, while the others of the crowd, would in the absence of any musical instruments to play upon, be ready to join in on the chorus. These each in turn would sing in a crossing sound and dance and pat "High daddy in the morning" and other coon songs, long after we soldiers by "taps" were asleep, or sent to our quarters for the night.

This scene by the light of the campfires was enacted, and this crooning sound kept up, night after night.

They made, in their way, the camp more lively, and also helped and relieved us a good deal, in the hard and dirty work of policing the grounds.

On our arrival at this camp and months afterward, hundreds of turkey buzzards, sailed in the air, in every direction around, and over, the battle field, to prey upon the dead horses and mules left on the field, and possibly on the bodies of soldiers, washed out of their burial places, by the heavy winters [sic] rain, Or possibly, on the remains of someone left wounded on the field, who at the time had crawled away out of range perhaps, of the guns, under cover in some thicket of cedars, and there died from wounds, exposure to the wet, and hunger, and in the search for such bodies, were not found, nor given a decent burial by the searching parties. This may account for the large item of 102 missing, in the official record of our losses; not saying anything about the enemies [sic] losses, under this heading which must have been large, by the abandonment of their wounded in their movements of their right and left flanks, and, on the evacuation of the field on the disastrous Friday night.

There were many people other than military who visited our camp during the winter. About the first arrivals from Chicago was old Mr. Aiken, who then lived at the about this

time there were other arrivals. Among them were Dwight L. Moody, Mrs. Livermore. P. F. Jacobs and others of the U.S. Sanitary Commission, who brought down from Chicago, hospital supplies, for the sick and wounded.

I met outside the camp only brother Moody. He was walking alone in the direction toward the town. He asked me particularly about the battle, the winter's rain and if I was a Christian. I told him the environment of the soldier was not conducive to good conduct. And that toward our enemy we could not carry out that Christian spirit, in the field and fight, of the words---, "to love our enemies and "do good to those that hate us, and despitefully use us."

He left me with a kind admonition, for which, I was very grateful in after years.

I could not but compare the Elder Aikens and the Son's greeting in my own mind on this occasion at the time of a meeting and a parting between my Father and myself on the morning of leaving Chicago, for the uncertainties of the front four months ago.

There are differences in life: in person, and in families. I am mindful, as a son, I received an inheritance from my Father, and perhaps old age. Although on my Mother's ancestors side, they were a long lived race.

In, and for, this inheritance, I will therefore attribute where it belongs: Those powers of endurance; strength of body; and that subtle influence of the mind over force, which conquers matter: These sterling qualities, so admirably fitted to the soldier. A generous gift from Sylvanus H. Stevens my Father, a degenerate son of his worthy ancestors.

I shall not have occasion to write of this subject, but once again.

Mr. Aiken was the guest of the Captain, a great portion of the time while in camp. Toward both Father and Son, he, the Captain was very attentive and kind, a little out of the unusual, with Stokes.

And although Mr. Aiken was often the companion of the other officers of the Battery, he frequently took his meals with our squad.

A box of provisions came to some of the boys, from time to time, sent by those at home. It was the habit and custom of these fortunate ones to contribute of their stores, while they lasted, to the others not having friends at home, who were members of ones squad, or to their friends visiting us. With these home dainties, and choice cut of steak, fried potatoes, and onions with which we heaped Mr. Aiken's plate, he very graciously, [sic] received and wondered at the bill of fare of the private soldier in camp.

I will continue and follow a four items of interest in regard to Hector H. Aiken. Some of them are of record, as a matter of history. He was good natured, a jolly companion, a fair singer, and player on any musical instrument.

Thick set, strong body, and a healthy organization.

From the Battery he was discharged to accept a position of Captain of a company in the 29th, U. S. Colored Troops.

This regiment went into camp for recruiting purposes and the general drill, at Quincy, Ills [sic]. On one of my furloughs to Chicago, I visited Quincy, and by chance, met Aiken at that place.

He invited me to walk out with him toward the east end of the city, where his regiment had established their camp of instruction, on those open prairie grounds every foot of which, I was so familiar.

It was a remembrance [sic]—over these white clover hills and here the wood near by, and the creek beyond, coming from the old abandoned railway embankment, to pass over, led the way toward the Moores' and Shermans' houses "on the hill" from there looking, to the north-east-ward, a view of our old house on the farm, presented itself.

I had when the opportunity was given me, played here many a day when I could be spared from my work.

At this time we as a family lived at the "Institute." O. Kendalls's [sic] Bakery was located there in those days. O.K. by the aid of the "Students" labor, and his grasping economy, worked up his dough, at a profitable venture, and moved to Chicago, at an early date. Here he established the O. Kendall and Jones establishment on the corner of Washington and Dearborn Streets. At the period of my visit on this furlough the soldiers in camp were eating their hard bread. I remarked to Mr. Kendall on whom I called, on this occasion, that his hard bread was the poorest article issued, as a regular diet, to the common soldier, their defending the country to his advantage; than any other hand on market.

He said he could not understand why when I told him, the fact, that the Cincinnati hard-bread was the better of the two. I also had later on in life walked over these snowy hills morning and evening often during the winter term, attending public and a private school and boarded at Major Haltons'.

He was now serving his country in the capacity of Captain in an Infantry Company, located at that time on the unhealthy marshes of the lower Mississippi Valley.

Captain Aiken mustered his men, and put them through a brisk course of manual training, and military exercises, for my benefit. He said among many other things we talked about, that his men were devoted, affectionate, and appreciative followers, in the manner with he handled them.

We shook hands together there on the edge of this wood, overlooking all these scenes where clustered the school day, and other memories, later on in life. One for strangeness and suddenness at the time, came to my mind before we parted.

I had joined a local cadet company, on the express understanding, from Martin Holmes, the Captain, that I should be made Ensign of the command. In the company, I had drilled and marched over these same grounds, where I stood with Aiken and his troop.

There was a fourth of July celebration, by boat, to Hannibal Mo. I attended in the capacity of Ensign as I was promised. It was a pleasant trip, and I had borne the flag in triumph, at the head of the company.

On the discharge from the ranks of the Quincy Company on that celebrated occasion, I started on my walk home three miles away.

In walking along the old unused railway cut and at that time near the city limits and near this spot thinking of the pleasures of the day, suddenly, I was accosted by a low fellow. I did not know, nor, his name, who apparently was on the edge of the elevated and deep cut waiting for me, to come along and began, at once, to abuse me and call me names, on my presuming to be a soldier, and to serve so badly, as an Ensign of the Quincy Guards. And said beside, that my person was unattractive and my uniform did not become me.

Mother made these garments, and I thought at the time how much she had economized and worked so hard, to give me the days outing. Cutting out and making the pants and sewing on the braid for the stripes; Beside making the coat which was cut by Bert the Tailor, on Main St. was a hard and intricate piece of work to complete. I started on a brisk walk to the end of the old railway cut, and gained the embankment, and turned to where my evil spirit should be located, in my mind wondering, what I should do to him, I was such a little fellow, but he was no where to be seen, he had vanished as quickly as he had appeared, and the interview was closed in person, but not in mind.

I never drilled or marched with the Company, from that time on. My career, as a fourth of July soldier ended here.

Mother removed the braid on the coat, and took off the stripes attached to the pants, and I put on these useful garments, and wore them out in the companionship of the cows, the horses, and the various uses of the plow the harrow and the cultivator, in the process, of raising corn to feed pigs.

It was often a question and a wonder to Mother, why I never more associated with the guards, and gave up the life and pleasures of the holiday soldier. If she had asked me the reason after this adventure, I never could have told her.

This was my last interview with Captain Aiken. He was mortally wounded on the field in the battle front of Petersbrug, Va. where many a brave fellow officer fell that day. By the help of a bayonet he dragged himself, by a hand over hand movement, to a cover out of range of the enemies [sic] guns. Here he lay one night in the bushes, and accidentally found by a scouting party, on our side, and taken to the hospital the next. His leg was amputated, but from loss of blood and exposure on the field, he died on the 23rd day of

July, 1864. With all his trust in the faithfulness of his men, they left him where he fell, to die of wounds, received on that tragic battle ground.

An item in history is here recorded, of an unprecedented loss in this regiment of any engagement during the War, and the other colored regiments participating in this days [sic] fight lost all their officers, either were among the list of the killed, or the wounded.

On the field after the battle, Aikens' Board of Trade Battery badge, was picked up by a Confederate soldier.

After many years, this soldier wrote a letter and addressed it, to any member of the Battery—In reply to his letter, was one made by Oleatt. To whom this soldier wrote enclosing the badge, saying it was no use to him, and that he was glad to return it, to those to whom it belonged.

It was Oleatts' painful duty to return the token to Mrs. Aiken. Mr. Aiken having died in the meanwhile. Oleatt, said afterward, that, in all his experience in the field, or in battle, never was an incident in his life, so distressing as this interview with the Aiken family.

The winter weather found us in our tents not very well prepared, or protected for our winter quarters. The days were often wet, and the nights cold and snowy.

Doing guard duty it was especially unpleasant.

The rain would pour down incessantly, for the two hours, one was obliged to walk their beat in the mind. Then on the succeeding [sic] "relief", the storm had ceased, the wind crept around into the north; it was cold and boisterous on toward the morning hours, till reville [sic] sounded, and the camp fires were lighted again, and the grounds put on a more cheerful appearance.

When the sun shone of bright days, we rolled the sides of the tent, to let the air and sun light in. Several months had elapsed, during which time, we slept on the ground, with such protection as our rubber blankets, and corn husks afforded.

How, we floored the ground of the tent, with planed boards, setting these on permanent sills, made us a very substantial improvement, to our former way of sleeping and living.

We received our first batch of recruits from Chicago, at this camp, and they were assigned to each gun squad for duty immediately.

In looking them over, on their arrival, I could not but feel sorry for them; coming to us a crack and famous organization; they, without experience and everything to learn; especially, the disappointments [sic] and the crushing out of their life, all the better feelings of the man.

Some of these recruits made just as good soldiers, as the first enlistments, Others did not, and were very soon discharged, "for the good of the service".

During the winter we did not drill or keep up, to any great extent our camp instructions, such as one had practiced and perfected ourselves in, at Camp Douglas, and at Bowling Green; Standing our regular guard and performing the soldiers [sic] daily duty. Foraging parties were sent out regularly and we foraged a good deal for the horses, as well as for ourselves. Among other articles of food we made corn that winter, a staple article of dish.

We brought in on the forage details, from the surrounding country, the pure white Tennessee variety, This was perfectly dry and well cured. Of these ears the finest selections we shelled by hand. Each gun squad made up a volunteer detail to shell, and bag, so much. This was given to the quarter-master sergeant of the Battery who carried it to mill by wagon. There it was ground by our soldiers, under a regular detail from the Infantry brigades. After several days had passed the goods were returned to us, excellent white corn meal. This was a decided change in our diet, from all hard-bread and bacon.

With our mush-we also had fried mush, in the morning for breakfast. Always having large ration of brown sugar, this melted made a very desirable syrup. The fried mush, and the melted sugar together with side meat, potatoes often, and onions sometimes, with our good coffee, completed the fare quite above the regular order of the private soldier.

It was a noticeable fact, that few officers in the Army in the field fared better, or as well as the city bred boys in the battery, who were infinite in resource by the variety of food products for table uses of which they availed themselves while invading the enemies [sic] country. Most of us notwithstanding [sic] the hardships of the service and the inclemency of tent life, in winter-quarters, and in consequence of this rest, after the battle, with some luxuries from Chicago, and our generous living, by taking the best care of ourselves possible, we became very healthy, some of us getting quite stout.

I could not at the time button the first two upper buttons of my pants, and it was difficult for me to get into my jacket, when called out for guard duty, or dress parade. These articles were very large for me, on leaving Chicago, for the front. In consequence of this increase in girth most of us stouter fellows came into the ranks in our undress blouses.

We watered the horses twice daily, at the head waters of Stone River, a half a mile away on a level road from camp.

Our squad always had the advance. In going down morning and evening. we started out of camp at a walk, in regular formation, but as we approached the river bank the rear postilions would break for the front, and pass us on a trot or gallop, breaking to the right, or left, of the column, as each driver pleased. My off horse I always bridled, in leading down to the water. He had when suddenly startled, a bad habit of kicking at the other horses, in making these trips. I could hold him up, and pull him by the bridle rein, in case the boys pressed too closely: then he would exert himself with all his strength in spite of my efforts. Many of the drivers knew of this dangerous habit, and in passing to

water, in the advance, avoided my team, and a collision. One cold blustering morning Dodd, mounted in company with others, dashed by with their teams. My led horse started suddenly, struck out and hit Dodd in passing, a vicious [sic] stroke on the leg, that I could not avoid or prevent. He laid up from the effects of this kick;--went to the hospital in Murfreesboro, and from the result of this wound never recovered.

This animal frequently attempted to kick at me, when tied at the picket rope, during the feeding, and cleaning time. On one occasion he struck me, on the right leg, above the knee, from the effects of which I was quite lame for a long time. With the vigorous use of my whip, applied to his person at once, I overcame his desire or propensity to kick at me after this chastisement, but he was ever alert and high spirited alway. My attention was never diverted from him, when within reach of his heels. In my opinion it was this vicious [sic] habit, induced the owner to sell him into the army. He was too fine an animal for the service, as an artillery horse.

Often in this camp, and a wonder to the boys, during the winter and toward spring, Captain Stokes would not be seen by us for days at a time. Covering this period the command was turned over to the other officers. Generally to the "Officer of the day", who gave the direction to all bugle calls, by commencing with revile and the roll call in the morning, and ending with "taps" at night.

A word about bugle calls. As word of command is heard, in a cavalry corps, but, these various calls in camp, on the march, or in the fight.

In a battery formation, there are two buglers. They are enlisted men, taken from the ranks, having some knowledge of music, who are detailed to this duty, and position and practice, till they are sufficiently adept, and have the experience to give the calls with precision. They are exempt from all other duties, except in the care of their horses. We never had but one bugler in our battery, who completed his studies. He was a good one, and could be called a regular bugler. The second one detailed for this duty, never could learn the calls, or fulfil his part, and after repeated failures, was returned to the ranks in disgrace.

All word of command by officer in camp: movements on the drill ground: or during the march, and on the field of battle, are repeated by the bugler by note on the bugle. These various "calls" are learned by the officers and privates, if they have an ear for music, and by the horses and mules in time.

All the details of, conducting a Cavalry Corps, in the field, may begin at the Generals' headquarters, where the notes are given full and strong, from Division Headquarters, and are repeated from Brigade Regimental, or Battery headquarters.

The Generals' "call" gives the information to all his commanders, that the entire camp is to be aroused. And, followed by "Boots and Saddles Call" the entire Division is to mount, and move at once, no matter how long the Corps has been lying in camp, or, what the move the General may contemplate.

I had an idea then, and am of the opinion now, while in camp, and previous to the time, that the Captain on the battle field, I have already intimated, took too many nips from his canteen of whiskey, carried on his person. Either from a fear of death, or the fear of a show to his men, of cowardice on his part, on the field, under fire from the enemies [sic]guns. Or, to keep his nerve and courage up to the fighting point, drank heavily, and this habit of drink after the fight, he frequently kept up. In this way I have accounted for his moods and absence, in other words he was drunk.

With only our every day duties to perform, we all in the battery had a good deal of leisure on our hands.

Now that discipline was a little relaxed, we visited each others tents at night, when off duty and became better acquainted.

Each individual wrote home a great many letters, to friends, wives, or sweethearts. At that time the following advertisement appeared in the Chicago Tribune.

“Members of the Chicago Board of Trade Battery”, giving their names, fictitious of course in camp at Murfreesboro, Tenn [sic], would like to correspond with a like number of young ladies, to make the life, of the soldier away from home, and the duties of the “camp more cheerful and interesting.”

In writing the commencement of a letter, one always dated the communication 1862, whether of that year, or of a later period.

All other dates such as the month, week, or day, no one could ever tell, without a good deal of inquiry. Days, weeks, or months, were alike to us soldiers. Time had seemed to stop, or given a halt, at the year of our enlistment, or, perhaps just begun, and why not, at the beginning of one of the birth-day years of a New and United Nation.

A few events and dates by the way of comparison, may be noticed on the re-foundation of this Mighty republic, in the Worlds [sic] history.

The shadow of the dregrees [sic] on the sun-dial of Ahaz turned backward B.C. 713

Julius Ceasar [sic] proclaimed as Perpetual Dictator of the Roman Empire B.C. 48

Mahomet, the Hegira: when that Prophet skipped out from Mecca to Medina and did not stand on the order of his going A.D. 622. And England named and known as Great Britain, was united with Scotland A.D. 1707.

There were several good singers in the battery.

Four were especially adapted in voice: these would sing in parts or, would sing a solo, and play the accompaniment on the banjo, and the others join in the chorus.

At the gatherings of an crossing around our campfires often times all the members would join in on the choruses of the well known popular songs.

Such as these, were the general favorites: "The Battle Cry of Freedom" "When Jonnie Comes Marching Home" "Who will care for Mother now" "John Brown's body", "Dixie" "Come where my love lies bleeding" and "June at the Gate", were frequently sung at the different tents, on pleasant nights at one sitting. While Packard at all times would willingly give the audience one or more of his lovesick [sic] songs: "Lorena" and "Annie of the Vale", were his favorites. His voice was peculiarly adapted to these airs, and in person could act in part. Or, Ed Tannel would be prevailed upon to give us one of his many Irish tunes. One of them was "Down by those dark arches that's nigh the railway: A very noisy piece and given in his rich Irish brogue, sometimes imitated by the other singers, when Fennel was not around.

All these meetings and gatherings were very pleasantly passed in these hours of song, to pave the coming mountainous ways and the long forced marches; an aid to the biting hunger, and the many hardships; to continue and to endure with a soldier's hardness to the end of the three years.

Often during these rainy wintry days we had many pleasant ones.

Perhaps the rains would continue uninterrupted several days at a time and with the cold the ground be frozen and the camp equipage covered with ice and snow; suddenly the weather would clear up, the bright sun come out, the south wind spring up—a charm pervade the air, so peculiar to the South.

On the nights of such days as these, toward Spring, and after the protracted moods of Stokes, he invited, a command, the best of the company of singers, not on duty, to sing to him before his tent, Similar idea of King Saul's when the evil Spirit of the Lord was upon him, that he caused the ruddy stripling David to sing and play on the harp, to drive away the spirit of evil. Maybe the King looked too often on the rosy wine, while the Captain gazed on Wilson whiskey—that's all.

When there was singing in our quarters a crowd was always [sic] attracted to enjoy the songs, and to join in on the choruses, but no one save possibly, the officers and the musicians met to sing or enjoy the music at the Captains [sic] head-quarter tent.

As the spring days approached the camp took on a more lively appearance.

Changed the picket lines for the horses to either side of the guns. Half the artillery horses on the one side and half on the other side. The harnesses were put on racks securely held in place by stakes, driven in the ground, and poles strung along continuously, so that in the arrangement the harness was behind each team, The harnesses and equipments were frequently oiled.

Having lain in the wet without protection during the rainy season had become dry and hard and considerably crusty,—same with our boots. And if there was any oil left over after the oiling of the harnesses the remainder was used in polishing up the foot wear of the postillions.

This was a frequent practice, The leather absorbed very much oil and this appropriation, of a personal nature, prohibited, on account of the jealousy of the canoneers [sic], though no penalty in our case was ever enforced in its use.

There is a place in the Regulations named for the assignment of the blacking and the blacking brush, but the United States does not provide either nor for oil to save the leather of the postilions [sic] boots.

Situated on the left of the Battery, grew one of the largest trees in the vicinity of the camp. Left here as a silent sentinel after all the younger growth had been felled by the early choppers, and later by foraging wood parties, from camps near by. There was not a limb to aid one in climbing for at least forty feet from the ground.

On one of these spring-like days, I have mentioned, when the ground from the melting snows was wet and spongy, and the air was soft and balmy, I noticed or was attracted in some way by one of the boys, to Seth Ford, sitting at his ease, at the topmost branch of the tree, and calling to the guard below. How he had attained this position without arousing the camp was the wonder.

The Captain was out of camp at the time, and on his return from a walk as he crossed the line of the guard, he saw Ford up the tree.

What word passed between the Captain and the undisciplinarian [sic], I do not know; the Sergeant of the guard never would tell, but the result was, that Ford came down out of the top of the tree, was put under arrest, and marched of [sic] to the guard-house, and sentenced to do guard duty and "carry the rail."

The penalty is extreme. A good stout, long rail is obtained, and placed across the offenders [sic] shoulders, and fastened securely to his person; the arms are then outstretched and the hands are strongly tied with cords beneath the rail, The victim of the Captains [sic] displeasure is then, in this position with arms stretched on either side of his body, bound to the rail, made to walk his beat, in the front of the guns, the regular guard duty, two hours.

Then at the end of four hours off, the treatment is renewed two hours more, or, as long as the Captains [sic] orders continue, if the offender does not completely secumb [sic], or die before that time.

The agony of, this continued walk, the extended arms, and the cutting of the cords, at the wrists, amounts to such increasing torture, in little while, to a positive paralysis of the extremities extending to the entire body. This punishment is similar, to the one practiced on board of ships of the Navy; and the vessels of the old merchantmen, where the victim is seized up, by the orders of the Captain, and made a spread eagle of, preparatory to a flogging with "cat", by the Captain in person, and the hands of the expert on shipboard.

After the infliction of the penalty of this kind, for the innocent gayety of ascending a tree in camp, by private Ford, there was a horror and disgust of the act and severity of the punishment, perpetrated by the Captain, and apparent in the minds of every private in the camp.

If we resisted as a whole, or protested individually [sic], against such brutal treatment, it was insubordination, and the same penalty, or a worse form of punishment, would be meted out to us, an entire command, or in such individual case at Stokes' pleasure and, own served will.

There were no more songs. The surroundings were indeed gloomy. Everything in our line of daily routine of camp duties was done mechanically.

The thought was often expressed: "That it is a long lane which has no turning".

"And, every dog has his day, and mine will come by and by."

Not a hint of the affair to Ford, or the subject ever spoken of between ourselves, or alluded to by some one of the boys, or, if any one [sic] was inclined to talk about the transaction, he was stopped, or turned the subject into some other channel. There was a delicacy in this mode of suffering, surpassing [sic] a soldiers [sic] roughness, not to mention among the other camp happenings the exhibit, of Ford walking his beat "carry the rail". And I thought over the situation with all our other increasing hardships of this one mans [sic] tyranny, and brutal treatment to continue, for two and a half years longer.

From that time onward, I began to study some means of quitting [sic] this servile service, and resolved, as an American Citizen, born of free white Parents of the North, not to submit to this manner of punishment, for I was liable in case of a mishap to me, to protect against such treatment; with my ideas of independence, before my brother; and, the entire camp, and in consequence he, and I, be disgraced.

About this time after our horses had been removed, from the old to the new picket lines, alongside, on either side of the guns: swing to the heavy rains, and the constant use of the leather halter straps, they had become hard and shrunken, and very difficult to fasten, a tie, to the rope lines, that would hold securely, so that many of the horses, during the day, would unloosen their straps by constant friction. Once the animal was loose, he began to race up and down, and around, the entire camping ground, to the dismay of the corporal of the guard, and the chagrin of the sergeant, to whose section the horses belonged. And to the honor of the discharge of his duty; the officer of the day—if the Captain was in camp.

To such an extent, the unloosing of the halter straps, that astray animals had become of daily occurrence.

The names of the postilions to whom the horses belonged, as soon as the horse was loose, was called and by the corporal of the guard; and he was required to assist the

guard in catching the astray. And to many, a severe punishment had been given to each unfortunate.

One day I was called. Pach my horses were loose.

Fortunate for me, I was in camp, and responded quickly, but with all my efforts, and by help and aid of the guard it was a long time before I succeeded in returning them to the picket line. and not till a great extent of the soft earth, of the camp, was trodden over and the team, more lively, became better kept, than all the other artillery horses, had become completely exhausted in their wild capers in and out of camp. After I had hitched them up, and been shown by the stable sergeant a new tie, that would hold the leather halter straps to the picket rope, I went to my tent, and reported to our sergeant, that my horses had been astray, which information, was unnecessary, as all in camp knew of the event, and I told him, I was ready to receive my punishment.

I had made up my mind. I would willingly submit with the others to a reasonable chastisement, if in this matter it was a negligence, or fault of mine, but, I also thought, if the "rail treatment or any other harsh treatment, was to be meted out, to one, I would protest in the ranks. Captain, or no Captain—Brother, or no brother, Insubordination, or no insubordination.

The sergeant quickly made off to the Captains [sic] tent, to make known my offense. He returned shortly, and without giving me details, said he had no orders to give me from the Captain.

I was surprised and supposed my case would be disposed of at once, and thought then, by the sergeants [sic] appearance the matter would be held over me, for some future punishment.

I was not reprimanded at the time, nor, punished afterward, like the other offenders. The subject never mentioned subsequently.

As this camp episode turned out, there was no more punishments meted out to the unfortunate postilions, when their horses went astray, or ran amuck.

And I was glad that my horses broke loose, and enabled also to recover them without saying to themselves, and establish a new order of treatment to my fellows. It will always be a mystery to me how those two halter straps should have become untied at once, and both be unloosed at the same moment. My idea at the time of this incident, some one helped to see me get into trouble, or possibly to establish a precedent. I was gladdened if by this means, while I was an offender, as the matter turned out, there was no more of this unfair punishment given to us drivers.

As a help in my case to be relieved of this growing dislike of the Battery service. I had great hopes in the Stokes' letter of recommendation give me without solicitation, of which I have made mention in these notes.

It was given me after a long, exhaustive and successful report, I had made for him; writing up the accounts, after the battle; and, disposing of large amounts of worn battery equipage, and equipment having been duly accounted for, that convenient form of disposal in army circles;" lost in action"

This report gave him a clean and new record with the Department. Also enabled him to gain many favors, with establishing him in the Generals [sic] scheme of the Horse Artillery Company. But I heard nothing from this letter, which was in the hands of my friends.

I afterward tried other means, (which will be better than to anticipate) and place the record, as its own history will show in the place where it belongs.

To return to Ford, and follow such history. The boys as I have said by their natural delicacy, never among themselves, mentioned this punishment.

Ford, I think never recovered from this treatment, and to this day, if he is alive, possibly can be traced his helplessness in the [crossed out] in [crossed out] the world of light and sunshine of which he is deprived, to the effect of this attack on his entire nervous system. He was discharged with the rest of us soldiers, at the end of our enlistment, and emigrated to the West, where he eventually married, He became blind.

Came on here and with a hand organ, his wife, and two children, sang and played in the Streets of Chicago; these same old Army tunes we sung together while he played the banjo, before his festive escapade, when singing in the street his sign on his person, was "A member of the Chicago Board of Trade Battery,"

Smith Randolph, and others, interested themselves in his behalf, and he and his family were taken off the street. He is now cared for at Takoma Park near Washington D.C.

Yours,

S.C. Stevens

69 Dearborn Street
Chicago,

Sep [sic]. 17, 1903

E. B. Stevens

Southport N. Carolina

Bro,

I send you further notes on the war up nearly to the closing in for the night of the first days fight of Stone [sic] River.

You will find the subject more interesting if you like the details of a bloody battle rather than so much written of going into and out of camp, or the long marches to the south to engage the enemy on such historical fields as this and other fields presented to my mind. I am well and work hard. Hope you all in same condition. If of the latter item, or more of a success

Yours very Resp. S. C. Stevens

Undated Letter

We came onto the field unheralded on the afternoon of Tuesday the 30th and went into camp at the bend of the river, where from a westerly direction the stream turns abruptly north, right from this point of observation, a rare view in its silent course; a placid, smooth stream, in silent contrast to the fierce encounter so would mingle with its emerald flow on the coming morrow.

The bluff on the South side of Stone River, where our camp was located rose far above the water's edge. Toward the eastward the ground fell off, at no great distance from the camp, where, there was a convenient and commodious place to water the horses, and also attain water for our camp uses.

Here was a pretty spot. The entire camp was situated in a quiet and pleasant nook. Adjoining on the east and toward the south was larger timber or woods. A small second growth of young pine trees covered the ground.

The Captain in coming into "battery" for the night, placed the guns to face the rear, pointing their muzzles to the bluff across the river and down the stream in its path toward the north. Why, he placed the battery in this position instead of toward the front, was one of the many excentricities and devices of a superior officer. I as a private soldier at the time had no need to ask. This was the first of the many events or records of that battle-field [sic], now, to many closed on that blood field, as since forever. And to one the question of the days of fighting-from one movement to another on the field the unanswered query-why?

To the left of the guns, was a little depression in the ground. This spot was covered with a dense growth of young trees. Here the boys built a booth of boughs; had our suppers and sang songs till the order for "taps" was given. If the time chosen had not been on the eve of a big battle, and on the outlook of the field, the scene would have been gay and the view picturesque, or if the elements had not so quickly destroyed its beautiful surroundings. Not unlike the perishing of those beautiful lives, who marched out of

camp in glad hopes on that morning the last of the year of 1862, and to them the end of a soldiers' dream of victory and eventual peace to a distracted [sic] country.

the Orders came for us to lie near the gun that night. Gathering a lot of the pin boughs from the limbs of the young trees, I laid them on the ground, by the limber of the gun; over these we spread our blankets. Jewett was still my partner. These pines make the sweetest of beds and grow on nearly all the poor spots of earth throughout the south. Is easily obtained and we made frequent uses of this kind of a mattress to keep ourselves off the damp, or wet ground in our sleeping accommodations, whenever camping, without our regular camp equipage. We rested here with our heads near the front wheel of the gun, and our feet considerably lower on the sloping ground, We were not disturbed the entire night.

The call in the morning was made by L.H. over in his "section" by word of mouth and communicated to our squad. There was no bugle call. It was just beginning to get light in the eastern sky—almost dark while feeding the horses.

At "breakfast call" I heard the report from the front. "Only forty killed in the trenches or on the firing line last night"

"Only forty!"—I thought to myself on that morning. God; only forty; but then one of those forty, or more, might include me, the next night. Such thoughts will come to the bravest of soldiers on the expectancy of the hour.

I have made an accompanying outline of the battleground and designated each of our encampments by an X and numbered them 1. 2. 3. 4 and 5 and also the positions we occupied on the field with this mark. These four are the most important, there were other points we occupied not marked. Also you will note the location of the winter quarters after the battle. The outline is not correctly spaced but will give my recollection of the more salient points of the field, after so long an interval.

In this account I will describe the camping nights and the strange events of the days, as the presented themselves to the vision from a common soldiers standpoint of view.

Many intelligent people have written up the glories and success attained on the field of battle. Others have tried to describe a days fighting and have signally failed.

I would have a regular army officer detailed at head-quarters and there receive all the reports at the hand of the General Commanding, and have the historical records made up from all parts of the field while the engagement was on, and lasted.

This should be made an official record at the time, and used only in the matter of history. In no wise compromising the acts of, or a hindrance to, the Generals movements on the field or flanks. He should belong to the secret service department, and in any wise giving the enemy no information leading up to, their advantage or to their support. In moving out of the camp on Wednesday morning, we had to cross the railroad track, to gain a little eminence between the track and pike. The cannoneers, as

usual, were ordered to the front to fill in with fence rails and earth around the ties and rails to form an easy crossing for the guns and caissons. Before this, and the time taken up in getting the battery over this obstruction, there was the sound of heavy firing of guns and musketry, like one long continued roll of the discharge of fire-arms, which seemed to come from only a short distance from the cedars to the west. Some shot and shell reached us before our arrival at the railway track. The Captain in his eagerness to get into position gave our section orders to come into battery, which order we obeyed promptly, and the other sections came into their positions, taking their places to our right. Our gun in this formation occupied the left, There was no enemy in sight.

I do not know who gave the Captain orders to fire. Being in the front I should have had some knowledge, or have seen an officer giving the direction to the opening shot. I think now, as I did at the time, the order to "load", fire in rapid succession, was given by the Captain, for which he was responsible to his superior officer. Our gun was apparently sighted at, and discharged toward, the line of an imaginary foe, far down and in the direction of the cedars, from the point, from whence, same the sound of heavy guns and other arms, on our first move across the field for position--on the opening of this target practice, it was sad, as well as amusing. At the first valley from the guns, all the horses on the field, and along the lines, took up a sorry neighing among themselves. Then they reared and wheeled, plunged and shook the discipline out of all, and everything in the rear of the guns.

As each gun was discharged up would go their heads again, taking along in another plunge their riders, now dismounted, clutching them by the bit. The postillions hung on to their charges, dragged hither, and thither over the field. The sergeant detailed an extra man to help me hold my horses in cheek, It was a heavy struggle to quiet them and the cannoneers was not pleased with the order.

My team never could be quieted while in the engagement or later on, become accustomed to the discharge of guns of any kind.

The amusing part on the field was the appearance of a score of rabbits disturbed by the shots and driven out of the bushes; over the ground in every direction. The call to ones comrade was, here he goes there he goes. Quite contrary to all goof military discipline and also for the time being, absolutely out of the soldiers thoughts possibly he had a big flight on hand, or that this was on the field of battle. And another thought came to me at that time, and others have told me since, that before the first shot or shell from the enemies guns came within range, was this fact, Why, they are shooting at me, and as one remarked by way of reply, yes, camn it man they want to kill us. Heretofore we were brothers the same country and one people.

This is not a drill ground now. This is not a grand parade, or the Generals royal salute. Why, it is death and destruction to all who come within the range of these deadly guns.

We had fired several rounds when General Rosecrans rode up toward the battery, on our right, He was accompanied by his chief of Staff Gen. Gareshe, who was killed later

in the day; his head was blown off by a shot from the enemies guns while sitting on his horse at the Generals side.

We ceased firing at the Generals approach. He seemed flushed and excited when he returned the Captains' salute. Under his orders we moved across the pike and came to a halt in back did not open fire from this position; moved in a south west direction. Our guns had been firing almost due west.

Under the Generals supervision our orders were to occupy a commanding position overlooking the brow of a hill. On reaching this point we came into "battery", our gun in its true position on the right. The cannonading in the cedars had ceased and if we had had a line of battle at that time, all was quiet along the entire front. In passing on toward the advance to this new post assigned us; on our right, in the open ground in a slight depression of the land, lay a dead horse, a broken caisson, or a disabled gun carriage, and other evidences strewn along the ground, of a bad disaster, a general rout to the men on our side, in an engagement, by an unknown battery, located in this position before us, The fight could not have been in the morning, and there was no action in the morning in this direction at this time we were sighting the guns and engaged in firing into, and beyond the cedars.

The loss was previous to that hour, and our men were worsted, and the General probably was acquainted with this knowledge, of the field when he promptly placed us here to fight, and knew the enemy was then a close range.

The General accompanied by his chief of staff and escort, as soon as the battery had come into position descended in front of our guns waiving his hat for us to fire over his head. We opened at once. Whence the commanders excape was probably around to our right. If we had been firing from our first position as we did toward the sound of the guns in the cedars, we certainly should have killed our General. It was over this ground, in that part of the field, he and advanced after placing us in our position.

Possibly we did great havoc in the ranks of our men, during their mad retreat on the right wing of the army, forced back in an unfortunate surprise to our troops, by so fierce an attack of the enemy in the early morning hour. Whether this be true, or not, no one was cashiered [sic] and the matter never spoken of afterwards, only among ourselves-- It was very evident the enemy had exhausted themselves. Or our opening up at this juncture from our target practice position with such a brisk cannonading a halt was made in their further movements.

So that if it was a mistake on the zeal or partisanship of States, and made it possible for Rosecrans to reform his line of battle, from a Southeast firing line, to a south west direction, the position in which he placed us giving the direction to fire.

This was indeed good generalship, and if true was immediately taken advantage of by the General in person.

What did it signify if our men on the retreat were slaughtered in front of our guns, down in the cedars,--if the tide of battle was staid, and our General able to reform his lines and reinstate his reserves.

In coming into position under the direction of the General commanding, it was evident he knew to what point he was leading us. And, that he was familiar with the ground and knew in advance of this position. That it was a dangerous and important post, and the rallying point on the field.

It is a truthful fact, that during the time the Board of Trade Battery held this position on the field, that they also occupied a position of trust, which was not betrayed; and the true key to the battlefield of Stone River.

It was evident the enemies purpose, from the position they then occupied to shake our lines and endeavor to cover our line of retreat, by the pike, in our rear, toward Stuarts Creek and beat back our retreating troops with great slaughter, against the shores of the northwest bend of the Stone river, and coup up the Generals remaining forces to a possible surrender.

The events of the morning, if my premises, are correct to show, that-if, in the Generals mind the Captain blundered in the opening shots in the morning--He would place him in a position where if he succeeded, his (Rosecrans) lines were secure, or in the event if Stokes was killed and his battery annihilated, at this deadly post his blunder for which some one was responsible, would never be learned or discovered. In either event the opportunity offered a solution of the affairs on the field at this hour about nine o'clock Wednesday morning December 31st.

At the signal, the opening shot being given, the other guns opened in regular order, directing their fire in a south-westerly direction.

The maneuvers of each gun squad are executed alike,

At the order "Commence firing" all the men take their places beside the gun at attention. At the word "load" the man who thumbs the piece steps to the side of the gun, presses with his left thumb, encased in a thumb-stall, the mouth of the touchhole of the piece. The ramrod in the hands of the rammer, sponges out the gun by creating a vacuum kills the fire if by accident, any live substance was left in the gun in a previous discharge.

At the muzzle on the left of the piece a man receives the powder cartridge from the ammunition man. This is inserted into the mouth of the gun. The rammer sends it home. And the shot or shell received in the same manner also placed in the muzzle of the gun and rammed down into the powder charge. The man with the lanyard, during the movements of the others, makes ready his fuse to insert at the place, when the man who thumbed the piece removes his thumbs, Drawing his lanyard taut waits at the word, "fire" he gives the lanyard a strong pull, the fuse ignites the powder, and the gun is discharged.

Each man "Breaks off" from the right and the left, so the shock of the concussion in the discharge of the gun will not affect his person. Then the cannon recoils and the piece rolled into position by hand and sighted by the gunner and the practice goes on till the gun is silenced or disabled, or the cannoneers are killed or wounded or the command "cease firing" is given. At the opening of the fight all the battery became engaged. The enemy replied at once, with a shower of musketry; many Minnie bullets carried far over the field to the rear. We had encountered a true enemy, who had the range of our position, possibly occupied the ground on the front, when the unknown battery was silenced and defeated. The engagement became general.

After the command "Commence firing", then the sergeant of each gun, without distinction, handles his men and gun in his own way.

The firing was rapid and continuous and probably did great execution.

Then there came [sic] a lull and hostilities ceased. During the interval one of the enemy came into our line. When I saw him he was seated; seems to be weary, on a little hillock in front of our guns, near to the edge of the bushes to the left of our position at that time, to those with whom he talked, he said he was a rebel major. and disliked the service on the other side and had come over to us. Would gladly lay down his arms and be pleased to fight with us on our side, I could not leave my post, but I looked upon him, as a rebel spy--Never heard more of him, or saw him again. Maybe it was he, if he returned to the enemies lines, to his friends, to whom he gave us the name of the h--I fired battery, for by that name the battery was known long before this post was evacuated by us.

It was not long that the firing ceased, In the meantime reserves of Infantry were brought up, and formed in the rear, and to the left of our position, as a support, with instructions to lie down, with guns in position. They presented to one's view a long blue sinuous line, by placing them along the inequalities of the field. This part of the ground presented in the position to which they were assigned, very little protection to their entire line, from a raking fire from the enemies' guns, unless it was made possible, without exposure by hugging the earth.

The signal by bugle call was given to "commence firing" anew.

There was a rapid work with Schenkle shell, and percussion shot, and an incessant rear from our guns was kept up along their entire front.

The smoke became so dense, that one of the ammunition boys carrying up the cartridges from the rear to the front, came near the mouth of one of the guns, just as was being discharged. He was blown down the hill in front of the pieces and narrowly escaped being killed. I saw him as he came back through the lines in a dazed, blinded, burnt condition going toward the rear.

Sargt. Adams before this, was badly wounded in the foot by a cannonball from the enemies guns just as he was "breaking off" preparatory to the discharge of his gun. He

was taken to the right of our position behind the bushes, and trees which was such a grand protection to number One's men, and the horses attached to the other limbers. Afterward he was removed to some old house, in the rear where, so early in the morning, a hospital was already established for the relief and treatment of the wounded, of our men, and the 88th Illinois. When the cannon is loaded and discharged and after its recoil and before loading it is run up into position by hand. The cannoneers take their places at the word "load"; the piece is sighted and the action is kept up continuously.

By the carelessness of Sergt. [sic] Deane in the excitement, he took no notice of necessary recoil of his gun, and at each successive discharge of his ordinance the wheels of his gun carriage became embedded in the soft earth. As this practice continued, the wheels sunk deeper and deeper in the mud. The axle finally gave way and orders came to us postillions to "limber up" our gun.

To do this was to "mount", turn with the horses our limber, and ride to the front. Wheel again near the gun as possible, and then back the teams into position, where the cannoneers could fasten the trail of the gun to the limber. To accomplish this was to expose the horses, and their riders to a galling musketry fire, at the time, from the enemies guns. I came into full view in making the "wheel" in limbering up" from that bad, bold eminence [sic] on this occasion.

The order was obeyed and the feat accompanied in safety, to the horses and their riders, but to the chagrin of the Sergeant, who, with his men were left without a command.

Orders were given us, Maple Weeks, and myself, to take that gun well to the rear: we moved slowly as the gun would permit, in its disabled condition; taking the direction toward our camping place of the previous night, at the bend of the river. Passing the pike and cession [sic] by railroad track, by an old dirt road, we came to a sharp turn in the road. A shot, a shell from the enemies lines, some distance now from the front, came whistling over the field.

At the rear of our gun, as we passed the turn in the road the shell struck an old tough stump, at this point, and tore it in pieces.

Coulkin, who did not belong to our section, was skulking behind following our piece, unable to stand in his place, at his own gun. In a fit of cowardice took this opportunity to retire from the field.

The shell hurtled over his head and struck the stump, which we had just passed, at his feet. In looking back to see where the shot struck, I discovered Conklin, and shall never forget his dazed condition, at so near an escape. So it was on that field, as dangerous in the far rear, as the in near front--I did not see him again in proximity to number one gun that day, Evidently he thought it not safe to follow along that line, "well to the rear" given in our orders.

We turned toward the left in the direction of the road, after the bursting of the shell, to reach the Nashville pike.

On the battlefield in the rear are strange objects met, and funny articles seen.

To mention anything, I saw on this field would cover all goods, and articles of a civilized country, and all the equipment and munitions of the civil war.

Red caps. Blankets, piano-covers, tools of all sorts, cookery of any description, muskets half cocked, with ramrods, sticking out of their muzzles-Swords without scabbards, Sabre and cartridge box belts cut in swain. knapsacks with their contents strewn on the ground; calico overcoats, cotton cloth, Trapping of cavalry horses, and broken down artillery horses, Pack saddles--camp. kettles, and musical instruments, and every kind of article used in domestic life, and the soldier in the camp or on the drill ground, thrown away by the retreating soldier, and the army followers, in their mad haste to get away from the front.

Here are mules hitched to Army wagons and ammunition trains, Heres to ambulances, and gun carriages and their cassions. Broken down animals turned out to die, all fly blown, and covered with vermin, wagons driven over the rough roads containing wounded men, hanging to the sides, or lay dying at the bottom, Orderlies on horseback with their messages in their belts and staff officers on fleet horses galloping from front to rear. Musicians--non combatants, Niggers--and stragglers of every kind, on foot, or on horseback all moving to the rear, without order or any apparent destination, but all the while moving on.

These objects and scenes I saw or met in the movement to the rear. And I thought of the difficulties, and obstacles to overcome, by the General up at the front;--planning his new lines, and in bringing up his reserves, if he had any, to renew the ever increasing fight---In this stream we followed till reaching the pike toward Stuarts Creek.

There was no further obstruction in this direction, to hinder us in a free movement to the rear. In going or passing down the pike at a careful pace another solid shot, this time, came for over, and out of the woods, and struck a high rail fence, newly built, on the right of the road, in our advance; knocking down length after length of the rails, doing no other damage.

Soon after passing the spot where this last shot struck the fence, we turned off the pike, and came into the woods, at the end of the fields, which this new fence enclosed. Here in a depression, often found in the Southern woods, we drove the horses and halted in this secure place. Possibly secure, not exposed to chance shots of the enemy from which we had escaped in two instances, in the move to the rear. We probably started with the gun off the field, about eleven oclock. It was now possibly two. We sat down on the ground and had our lunch or dinner from the contents of our haversacks. Maple and Weeks were for unhitching the horses and camping in this place for the night.

They said it was a safe retreat, and the gun could not be used, and the horses worn out. I did not agree with them, I was resolved that it was our duty to let the Captain know, where the gun was located--I could not bear the inactivity of this position, while the others were up to the front endangering their lives. They took sides against me--Told me they would not go to the front, when the orders were to "take that gun well to the rear" Beside here, they said, we are safe and they should stay. The discussion was warm--I told them if they would take off their horses, I would have the gun back to the front, by my team alone, and they could go into camp here or go down by the river side, where there was easy access to the water, for the animals. Further could I obtain their consent to do this nor could I, or had the right to unhitch their horses, and I would ride up to the front and report, They would not do this, or would they agree to let me take one of my horses off from the gun, and ride to the front. Then I told them plainly I would go up the pike on foot, to the battery, if they would look after my horses, and would remain here in this place where we were then located, so I might find them on my return. With some show of reluctance to this proposition they finally agreed, for they saw I was positive in actions--I started off afoot leaving my horses very regretfully while looking back, in gaining the pike, for never had left my team, in the hands of others without a command, beside it was a long walk and the time then near four o'clock, and in winter days, only a short time before the dark, to gain our batteries position. If the tide of battle had changed affairs, since the mornings fight how would I find the command, or get through the lines in the dark, if challenged by the General, or sentries on duty. To a cavalry or artillery man to be unhorsed one does not feel just right, This was my condition in coming out of the woods where I gained the pike. Passing up the road beyond the place where the shot struck the rail fence after having walked about a mile, I noticed coming out of the woods, to my right, a familiar dressed horsemen in artillery uniform, and struck the pike going in my direction, Hastening up to him, I found the soldier to be, the blacksmith, Ed Fennell, mounted on his little black horse. He was glad to see me and to hear from the battery, and surprised to hear of the misfortunes of the day and that number One gun was lying over in the woods, close by, in a disabled condition with Maples and Weeks in attendance.

I told him of the situation, explaining the matter fully, and that I wanted his horse to take me up to the front, so I could report to the Captain. Fennel was a kind fellow and saw at once the position I was in, and after considerable more talk, he declined to give me the animal. For then, he said, he would have no horse, and did not know where he could find the Forge. I told him I would give him my team to use, till I returned, in exchange for his horse, and that it was only a short distance from this place to where the boys were located. He said he did not like to be made a postillion, Then I told him he should take word up to Sergeant Dane, at the front, and let the Captain know, where the gun could be found. He did not relish the idea of going to the front, so in the goodness of his heart he dismounted, and let me have his horse and all his accoutrements. On mounting I pointed over in the direction where he would find our gun.

And I started off in a fine gallop, congratulating myself on so fine a mount. and also gaining so decisive a victory, over these fellow, who did not dare to go to the front in fear of being shot.

I arrived at our old position, of the morning about sunset. Everything was quiet on the lines--I learned of the disasters in the killed and wounded of the battery boys, during the day, so soon after the retiring of our gun from the position on the right. I looked around for Captain Stokes, asked several where he was. Some one said he was down in the woods to the right, in our immediate front. I dismounted, and fastened the horse to the bushes, which protected us in the morning from the enemies fire.

I walked down, the hill under cover of the woods, and there to my surprise, I saw long lines of Infantry, five to seven men deep ranged along the sides of that hill, under cover of the woods to our front and right. I found the Captain--made my salute and told him where the gun could be found, and asked him if the orders were to bring up the gun to the front, He did not seem to me at the time, to intelligently understand, what I told him. Nor could he tell me my instructions in the situation. "Ges" was his reply at last, "bring up the gun." This was sufficient for me, having the Captains word, Again mounting Fennels horse, I rode briskly back to the location of the disabled gun. They had unhitched their horses and were going into camp for the night. I gave them the Captains orders--It was with difficulty, I could persuade them to "hitch up". I repeated to them the Captains order for us to bring the gun to the front. They were finally persuaded and very reluctantly made ready and we started on the return.

I was glad to see Fennel mount his horse and follow us. They never forgave me this authority over them, in my success up to the front.

We arrived safely at the battery long after dark.

Yours,

S. C. Stevens

69 Dearborn St.

Chicago Dec. 25 1903

E. B. Stevens

Southport No. C.

Dear Bro. I write to you on the assurance of your wife that you are cured and once more in all probability you are safe home again after your Washington hospital experiences.

I enclose you the "notes" finishing up our maiden battle experiences. I have other "items" noted down, which will be given if you care for them later on. In company with Russell last Sunday we visited Graceland and placed a pair of holly wreaths on the one year old grave of our brother S.H. I miss him very much. The year has gone quickly by and the family of the Stevens are being gathered in "one by one" Through the marriage relations of our Aunt Holton who now lies buried beside the Major at Quincy, we as boys have been in a great measure in life not in money but in opportunities the pensioners [sic] of her beauty at an early date.

Business for the year has been with us tolerably fair, and we are now saving up for the expense of a trip by rail and the river to the St. Louis Fair next year.

Tell your wife I am glad for the address of Georges widow, whether of use or not. Desire to obtain a 14 weir and Larminie [sic] encased postage stamp. Have the 10 ct which we purchased in Peterboro, [sic] Canada. \$900 and would pay an equal sum for the 1ct

The day is a typical northern, snowy blustering Christmas; thermometer at 18 degrees above and snow plows are running.

I learn by O.S. Lyford that Maria and husband have returned to El Paso, and that Rush is no better, also William Lyford is in Fort Worth Texas stopping with his son.

69 Dearborn Street
Chicago Feb. 25, 1904
E. B. Stevens
South Fork North Carolina

Dear Bro.

Your last letter after your arrival home from WASHINGTON HOSPITAL received – I have no later news.

Since that time I have tried to put in shape the enclosed papers of the Privates' notes but have been handicapped by the many [sic] complaints incident to old age and the northern winter months.

Have several more ideas, soon as I can place them in shape, if not unpleasant reading, will forward them to you. Hope this will find you in better condition than ourselves. Altho' [sic] I do not complain as long as the door of the little shop is kept open.

Yours,

S.B. Stevens

Privates' Notes

Leaving the gun in the hands of the Sergeant, and the horses in care of the guard, and thinking I had done enough that day, and tired out with my duties; now in company with Jewett, my partner, we bouth [sic] and [sic] found a quiet place to sleep. There was a small cleared space large enough to spread our blankets on the ground in the bushes to the right, and rear of the guns, a little below the brow of the hill from where the guns were still stationed. This position we had held all day as a battery, with the exception of the time that our gun had been to the river not withstanding the desperate efforts of the enemy all day and at all points to dislodge us.

From Jewett, I learned that near by, toward where our feet would be, at the edge of the bushes our two comrades lay, Wiley, who thumbed the piece, and Finney, at the time he was sponging the gun, both fell that day. One solid shot from the rebel guns killed both at the same moment. Here they were buried side by side, with their army blankets wrapped about them. It is a mournful fact that these comrades of ours, who were buried here were the first to establish this part of the field, the burying ground of the battlefield. I now understand, that this is a part of the ground selected by the Government, and occupied and known as the graveyard of the Battlefield of Stone [sic] River.

The bodies of our men were taken up, and buried in Rosehill according to the agreement of the Chicago Board of Trade, after the battery was mustered out of the service, and lasting peace had been declared throughout the country. Several disasters and changes to our men all along the line, secured soon after our gun was taken off the field in the morning. The cannoneers of our gun were detailed to replace those who were killed or disabled on the other guns. When the detail was made Jewett went forward and took Finney's place, withdrawing at the command "load" the ramrod still sticking in the mouth of the piece, where it had remained, when Finney was struck down—Jewett described his sensations and feelings in taking the place and position of the dead man, a model soldier, and the picture was not inviting nor pleasant.

To sum up at this hour—with our gun out of the fight, Adams, Stagg, Griffin, Bloom, Howard, Wiley-Finney, Camberg and Carver, killed or wounded, the possible success of holding the position longer seemed impossible. The enemy in the meantime had taken the advantage of the lull on our firing line; having at this hour advanced and strengthened their position by a full and fresh brigade of Infantry in our front. They marched on to the field on regular order with music and battle flag flying; spurred on with a Rebel yell, opened up and renewed their tactics of the morning. With our range of their front and the knowledge we had gained of the ground in the morning and the full view of the brigade in motion; our guns opened on their ranks with an appalling effect, and a deadly execution.

A constant and rapid fire was kept up, from this commanding position and our pieces swept again and again the rebel line of attack; This was about four o'clock in the

afternoon, when the rebels made their last final charge and fierce encounter of the day. They met with an overwhelming, sad and deadly repulse, and this closed the fight of the day.

And as subsequent events disclosed, in that sweeping tide of battle-the end of the fight on the right wing of the Army of the Cumberland, at Stone [sic] River.

It was our brother S.H. who made the suggestion although it was Robinsons' duty, and business to look after the interest of the first section; and the idea was acted on at once; to overhaul and by measurements of the old gun carriage axle left on the field; the one we passed in coming into position in the morning, would fit our gun. The blacksmith I had brought along, and the other artificers were put to work taking off our old broken and twisted axle-tree and replacing with the captured one to take its place.

This work was ascertained could be neatly and successfully completed [sic] by the artizans, [sic] with aid of such few tools as they had at hand.

By my persistence and boldness in moving the gun from the rear, to the front and S.H.s [sic] timely suggestion acted upon; it was made possible to place our gun in its old position, at the post of honor, late that night, ready for action in the morning.

There was on a certain time a little city; a great king came and fought against it, with big battering rams, and there was found a poor wise man in it, by his wisdom, who delevered [sic] the city. "Yet no man remembered that same poor man."

I had a bottle of brandy, given me by Mrs. S.H. which was in my pack saddle, and I remarked to Jewett, at this hour of retiring, having had no supper, we should drink the contents of the flask before lying down, as possibly we might not want it on the morrow.

The night was damp and cold, no campfires allowed.

We drank the brandy with out any apparent effect, and lay down-wrapped our blankets around us; our clothes, caps and boots intact.

Through the night we spooned, to keep ourselves warm, and wished for the morning, yet dreaded the approach of day.

At the early dawn the command was awakened, --with orders to get breakfast around a small show of camp fires, and as quickly as possible.

There was no new attack, like the early hams raid of, the previous morning on our forces. All was quiet along our line and the Rebels, where the contending forces are nearly matched, it was as though an unwritten law of the commanders, should be observed in the cessation of hostilities, while the rank and file could obtain necessary sleep, rest, and food for the struggle for success, either, by strategy, or by force of arms the coming day.

The vigilance of the guard about the guns was kept up continuously during the night, from fear of a sneak up, through the woods by a scouting party of the enemy, who knew

the exact location of the battery; either to spike the guns, or turn them all loaded upon our armament in the rear.

The morning hours were taken up in refilling the caissons from the supply ammunition barn ordered up, on the field, from the rear.

In the general overhauling of the condition of the contents of the limbers of the guns, and the replenishing of each caisson, especial attention was given to the explosive shell, and the time fuse. I noticed then, and remember now, the many bright colored flannel bags, in which the powder was encased—a very seductive looking little pellet, how gingerly they were handled.

We remained at this post and held this position with half the guns sighted to the southwest, and the other half to the south east, covering with our right the scene of the yesterday's disasters, and our left guarding the old cotton field. A dense growth of wood and bushes intervened between our extreme right and our left. This heavy timber was a field of many a sharp-shooter, and from this position up a tree came so many of the minnie [sic] bullets, which harassed us yesterday and today. From this hidden position they fired at intervals at their leisure and could not be dislodged.

Not knowing in which direction the enemies [sic] line of attack for the day would be made upon us; in the event of either position being menaced, we were prepared for action. The day—the first of the New Year was quiet along the enemies [sic] front, possibly they had during the night withdrawn their forces from their left flank. Only a small show of a fight far away toward our left, where there was a desultory firing kept up during the day by the enemies [sic] guns engaged in a mild duel, with the guns of some Ohio Battery on our side—We could observe from where we lay on the ground beside our guns—the effect of the shots on either side—there was little damage done.

A feint as it were to engage our attention in the front, and the sharp shooters [sic] outlook on our movements, to cover the maneuvers by the enemy preparatory, to some new design on our front or flanks. According to orders we retired from this strategic [sic] point, which we had held so long with such distinguished bravery, over other competitors, with a loss unprecedented in a battery in action, of three men killed and eight wounded. We fell back a little after dark very quietly, with as little noise as possible, to a point about half way from the firing line, and our former camp, at the bend in the river. Here we went into camp. Although the sun shone out brightly most of the day—The weather after dark was cold, damp, a drizzling rain set in, with a threatening storm for the night.

We were allowed small camp fires. Our suppers consisted of company stew or boiled fresh meat, without salt; this with hot coffee, and our hard bread made us a warm meal; not a very healthy diet. We were indebted to Emery the colored cook who followed our fortunes from Camp Douglas for the fresh meat. In coming with one of the forage wagons loaded with corn the day before, the fight, he succeeded in capturing and killing an animal, and threw it on one of the loaded wagons. This he accomplished almost by

his own effort and by this means gave us one good warm meal of which at that time, we stood in so much need. It is a truthful fact this was the only substantial meal, unsatisfactory as unsalted food can be to the digestive organs, we had had during [three letters crossed out] the four days constant duty on the battlefield.

The ground where we were located was wet and considerably [crossed out] cut cut up by the march of the troops, and heavy gun carriages during [three letters crossed out] the days of action, over this portion of the field—The location of my sleeping quarters assigned to Jewett and myself was beside the roadway, but pleasantly situated in front of the campfire. I went back toward our old camp, to obtain some of those famous pin [sic] boughs for our bed, but in the darkness could find none. So I turned toward, and down a small gully where I found as I afterwards learned, a plum tree, This fortunately had been cut partly in two at its base by a shell. Not having an axe, hatchet or knife, by considerable exertion in twisting I broke off the remaining portion of the trunk---I hauled the brush top, over the ground; up to the camping place, in front of the fire.

On my arrival I was made a subject of remark from my company, other than Jewett, from whom I had encouragement, to know, "what I had there?" I assured them this bush would make a very desirable bed, when it was prepared, to sleep on in the event of rain during the night, we lopped off some of the branches and on these bushes we spread our blankets, we slept high and comparatively dry—our rubber blanket covering us from the disagreeableness of the turning water and mud beneath us.

This was the third night on the field; the day's ending of the first of the New Year. I am sorry I have attempted to write every detail of the action of the field, as they presented themselves to my view, or their knowledge came to my mind at the time or later on. I would prefer to skip the events of this forenoon [sic] though to do so, I would not present the truthful account, I started out to write, taking the common soldiers [sic] standpoint of vision.

We moved out of our camping place in the morning and took up a position fronting the southeast, on a cleared space to our front—the edge of an open wood to our left, and the ground sloping to our rear. Here we were held in the early forenoon, a continuation of the feint of the previous day, by a severe bombardment from the enemies [sic] guns, till the Captain in his excited condition, without orders fired into, and wounded several of our men belonging to a battery, who were defending the position on our front. it was my opinion then, at this period of the day's fight, and now, that the Captain imbibed too much of the contents of the canteen, he carried at his side, and also, I am confirmed in my judgement when I met him in the wood down in front, and to the right of the Battery, in regard to my instructions about bringing up the gun from the rear; that he was also at that time considerably under the influence of brandy.

We ceased firing on orders by a messenger from the front, and withdrew to the left and rear of this position, where we remained in readiness to move at the word "march".

In the afternoon, the enemy had amassed their troops, and moved forward their fighting forces, a solid formation, along the southern, the bend, and the eastern heights of Stone River, covering our entire left flank.

The old fashioned sure way of fighting was our mode of warfare, with so long a line of communication to our rear to keep open. We had a distinct right, centre [sic] and left to protect.

With the rebels they simply recognized a right and left formation. By a simple maneuver on the field they easily shifted their line of battle, from left to right or right to left, or, executed a series of flanking attacks at ease.

Our movements were more sure and a safer progress in so stubborn a fight, as Stone River where, there were us reserves not engaged in the fight.

About four o'clock orders came to "mount" and to move by "column"; our route lay through the open woods on our left. We made this movement at a trot and then a gallop. After passing through the timber and brush we came into a large open field, with trees and bush along the banks of the river in our front

where, a General acts on the defensive, our positions chosen by the General were strong ones.

We were assigned and occupied a position on this imposing situation, on the field, on the right of fifty four [sic] guns, massed along the banks of the west side of the river.

A little to our right and toward the front of our guns was an old deserted house. Our forces, and the enemy were engaged before we came on to the field. We came into position quickly and began our usual rapid fire. All the guns along the battle front fired shot, shell, grape and canister, while the infantry who supported us on the right, opened up with a continuous musketry practice along their line.

These missels [sic] hurtled through the air; carried along the banks and over the Stone River, and into the solid ranks of the advancing rebels. Or, in many an artillery duel such a one, as we were engaged in, with the Washington Artillery Company of New Orleans, in our immediate front across the river.

The shot and shell from the enemies [sic] guns fell on its banks, or else, from the post I occupied went far over our heads to the rear. Plainly, the enemy did not have the range of our position, like the fight of Wednesday, for, in this hail of shot and shell balls and bullets none took effect in our Battery. My gun was again out of order. This time it was dangerously hot from the rapid fire, Sergeant Deane was ready to excel in this engagement, and his replies to the enemies [sic] guns were given without a slack hand, by the amount of ammunition he threw into their ranks, and the battery of the New Orleans Company.

He was distracted at the thought of the silence of his piece, and the means of obtaining water from the river in the enemies [sic] front, to cool his gun. He finally obtained a

bucketful for that purpose, at the old house to our front and right, The continuous firing ceased along our front, the attack was sustained and the enemy repulsed.

In the selection of this ground was the probable defeat of the attacking party, from the security of its position, and surroundings, and to this choice location was more than all else, and the amassing of so many guns made further advance by the enemy, an impossible feat, to march and to fight in the face of the mass of metal thrown into their ranks.

To the bravery of his artillerists, and position on the field is alone attributable the success of Stones [sic] Rivers [sic], Friday's battle. This last efforts of the Rebels lasted about forty minutes, at an estimated loss to them, in that brief time of two thousand men.

When the order was given to "cease firing", we also were ordered to "limber up". We left our companions in arms, and moved across the field in their rear, to the left, toward the bank of the river, to a point easy of access to the water front. We forded the stream at once. The water came to the edges of the cover of our limber, the ammunition chests of the guns and caissons. We gained the opposite shore in safety with our powder dry, at that hour it was toward night, threatening rain.

In the vicinity of this ford, Col. Joe Scott of the 19th Ills. Infantry was wounded, from the effect of the wounds he died after, I believe, coming back to Chicago.

We marched up the hill on the east shore of the river, and gained a position in advance of all other batteries-, occupying the ground where in the attack of the afternoon the New Orleans Company, planted their guns and threw shot and shell, point blank at us across the stream – In coming up the rivers [sic] bank, and at this part of the field, we came in contact with the dead, wounded, and dying soldiers of both sides.

The calls of the wounded were for water, and the groans of the dying were piteous—I could give them no assistance, nor leave my post of duty.

We retired from the post, greatly to our relief, without exchanging a shot, for there was no enemy in sight -- It was dark and began to rain, when we moved off the field, to the right, and wound along in our passage, under cover of the woods, following an old dirt road, on the sloping banks of the river in the direction of the ford. It was in these woods where many a fellow, friend or foe, in the darkness called to me, not to run over him, for he was wounded, and unable to move himself out of our track, I gave at their pleading cry, a wide sweep of the gun carriage, but in our onward tramp, I could not tell or make known to the other drivers, at the various appeals for help along the road, in our return to the rear.

I fear many were crushed who were already badly wounded and killed perhaps by our guns and heavy caissons, in passing stumps and stones, in the noise and darkness of that rainy night.

We recrossed the river at the ford, and took up a long drive, to the rear of all our former locations on the eventful battle ground.

For a camping place it was a safe retreat. The situation was in the ravine, the low ground, near where I had torn the plum tree from its stem, for my bedding the night before. This part of the field I remembered in passing to the rear, with the disabled gun was sparsely covered by a dismal growth of black timber and pine stumps, with ledges of rock cropping out toward the bank of the river. In coming into camp the night was dark, and the hour was late, and the rain which began in a drizzle, when we left our post on the field, now continued to pour down in torrents. The ground was soaked in this flood. I lost my partner in the darkness—my blankets were wet, I lay down on the edge of our tarpaulin, thrown down on the rough ground near the gun. I have been on many a battle scene since – In latter campaigns, when fighting was constantly kept up all hours of the day and night—on the raid—on the scout—all night without sleep—in cold and wet—in snow and rain—with nothing to eat—nothing for days—I have anticipated in this narrative; but this my first severe experience, stands a sad reminder of first impressions, said to be lasting.

As far as my personal comfort was concerned that night, there was also the other thought, of the surroundings. The additional dead, dying, and wounded left on the stormy field—The prisoners in the hands of the enemy. The dread disasters to our cause; the loss of the battle, The influence of these facts on the minds of the soldiery and with these vague ideas floating in ones [sic] mind, and worn with hunger, and the excitements of the day, lying on this gun covering, without a headrest was a more dreary night, in comparison, to Wednesday's when we wished for the day, yet dreaded its approach.

It was one of my cardinal points while in the service not to complain—I had taken the oath of office belonging to the soldier, and this trust I held sacred during the period of three years, and deemed it an unworthy act to find fault with the service and attendant hardships, which at the outset was expected to fall to the soldiers [sic] lot in the field; This night of all others would have been an exception, unless harnessed in with the right spirit of forbearance and endurance. S.H, that night slept or lay alongside, or curled up on the roots of an old pine stump. They were some protection from the wet beneath ones person, though not particularly soft. A much better bed, or resting place than where I lay. This was the eventful Friday night.

Saturday morning we moved back near by the ford, but not across the river, and went into camp at this point.

The command was worn with excitement, anxiety, marching, fighting, loss of sleep, the wet, cold and hunger during these historical days. Our supply wagons were well on their way toward Nashville in their mad rush to get back to the rear. This abandonment left us without camp equipage, and much needed rations of all kinds.

Our squad raised the wet tarpaulin, on which we had assayed to sleep the previous night, by rails, inclined at an angle toward a large log a fine place to make a fire heat away from the opposite direction from which, the wind at that time of the afternoon was then blowing furiously.

This with our proposed camp fire, in front would be a ground protection to our weary bodies from the threatening rain, and cold of the approaching night. It was my duty, after the horses were cared for, in company with three others on the detail to chop in three parts an old dry log in the rear of our gun. In this size, we could the more easily roll the sections up toward the pitched tarpaulins [sic] front. There with the other accumulated fuel we proposed to build our fire.

By a great effort so weak were all of us, that it took a long time to chop this fallen tree in parts.

We rolled these portions along on skids, placing them against our backlog. Beside this we heaped on the fuel and lighted the fire large enough to dry out our wet cover and for our warmth, and to cook by.

It continued to rain with some sleet falling during the night, with our ample protection, and our big fire, renewed in the hours while we slept, by the guard on duty, we were made comfortable in our exhausted condition.

Our suppers were of necessity a very frugal meal.

In the rapid advance by gallop to the front on Friday afternoon, passing through the bushes, my haversack was torn from my saddle. I lost my knife, fork, spoon, a few watersoaked [sic] crackers, my china cup and crockery plate. The cup I especially missed for I never could obtain the flavor, or realize a pleasant taste to my coffee, drunk from one of the old tin cups. And I usually provided (when they could be obtained) myself with one of these plates and cups, I used them while I continued in the service, beside, they were more easily washed and kept clean.

We lay down on our blankets this night more like human beings and good soldiers in need of rest, than any of the previous nights on the battle ground.

I was not disturbed during the night – In the morning I found my cap full of water. I had placed it under the edge of our shelter, where the rain fell and caught the drippings along the edge of the tarpaulin. Turning the water out I put it on, but when the sun came out, and the warmth of my head the next day it gave a disastrous and unmilitary curl to the front piece.

Having received a ten days [sic] leave of absence it was on Saturday the 3rd that L.H. started for Nashville, He in his intriped, [sic] masterly way made through without escort, though not without hindrance, by many of the enemies [sic] scouting parties, at intervals along the road

And gave to the Chicago people the first news, the famous dispatch telling of our loss, and achievements.

"It reads:

Nashville Tenn. January 3rd 1863

'Murray Nelson and Co.

"Chicago.

"Murreesboro is ours, Terrific fighting on Friday. No more casualties on the Battery; it has won a glorious distinction.

S.H. Stevens"

Answers came to us in camp in the morning of the evacuation of the field by the enemy.

Positive news did not reach us till about five in the afternoon. The enemy was on the retreat and the victory was ours.

It is considered in military parlance, that no matter to what extent the loss mourned on either side of the contending forces, the one who gains the field is the victor.

Official

These are the results of 43,000 men engaged on our side—A larger number on the Rebel side.

Our loss

1294 Killed

7945 Wound

1027 Missing

Rebel killed and wounded 10,000 (Probably estimated)

500 Prisoners

Grand Total 20,766

Having a little curiosity, and some leisure on Sunday, I visited alone the old position of Wednesday, for the purpose of looking over the ground, from the point where the rebels shot at me, during the engagement while I was trying to, and did get my horses into position, to "limber up" that disabled gun in the morning.

I walked down the hill, where the General descended in company with his escort,--I crossed a shallow stream at the bottom of a ravine, and passed upon the other side, to a small slight elevation and came into a circular opening in the woods. Here enclosed by rails, a temporary preparation I suppose, were gathered nearly a hundred of rebel

dead. They were killed in the vicinity and undoubtedly were hit by shot and shell by the evidences of the mutilated condition of the remains.

Arms and legs torn asunder; held to their bodies by a scrap of clothing-Faces in an unrecognizable condition, but with a dread appearance. Some heads entirely gone. Bodies in a bent form or lying on one arm. Some with hand raised as if to ward off the approaching shell, others crouching or in a sitting position; All dressed in an undressed uniform, of butternut clothing, their pockets turned inside out.

I passed around this enclosure satisfied with the curiosity, I had had to see the position of the enemy lying here all unconscious and I stole away, like as a murderer would, who had looked upon his victim the second time and he was assured in his mind his man was dead, and he could see him again in cold blood before taking his silent departure.

In retracing my steps and looking upward and toward the brow of the hill on which had been located the Battery during the fight, I say how easily the rebels could interpret the certainty of the position of our guns and, silhouetted at every blaze from the discharge at the cannons [sic] mouth, made us a sure target, dressed in our red and blue uniforms, And I also saw the true disguise of their position so well hidden from our rapid fire, from which we could not discover neither dislodge or silence their guns.

Yours,

S.C. Stevens