

1-13-1863

947 ad
Prickett

Madisonville Tennessee.

Dear Matilda }

January 13th 1863.

Your of Dec. 27th came to hand at a very late hour last night and found me well, I had begun to think something was wrong, as it has been nearly a month since I received your last I had concluded not to write until I heard from you, and for this reason there will be quite an interval between my last letter & this, for which you must blame yourself, I thought perhaps I had carried the joke too far about your mistake in dating your letter, & you had taken offense, I thought best to wait till I heard from you before venturing upon another, jokes ought to be free in war times, it has been raining with all

vengeance since 3 o'clock yesterday P.M. and still it rains without any prospect cessation, it is a cold rain and we have no stoves nor fire places and can't have any fire in our tents, This is very disagreeable indeed, my feet are aching with cold and I am so chilly I can scarcely write, you wished to know how I spent Christmas it was a very pleasant day did not rain neither was the mud knee deep, On the contrary, it was clear and the roads dusty, Our Brigade was detailed as guards for the forage train, started at sunrise went 12 miles south west of Nashville and returned about 8.0 o'clock at night, pretty tired, Our dinner consisted of hard crackers & cold meat & water, The next day Dec. 26th the whole Army marched for Murfreesboro, came in contact with the rebels the same day drove them back fighting all the time until within 3 miles of Murfreesboro where we arrived Monday 27th, here the rebels appeared in force Tuesday we were in the reserve, There was some sharp fighting on

our right which continued all day, wednesday morning at daylight we were ordered to the front, and had just got into position and were ready to advance when we found the rebels were advancing upon us, and here commenced one of the most terrific battles of the war, they made a furious attack upon our right which they succeeded in turning, thus flanking us in that direction after which they came sweeping down our lines driving our men before them and capturing a number of pieces of Artillery and a large number of prisoners, our men being compelled to change front under a heavy fire from the enemy, before this could be successfully accomplished the rebels had us completely surrounded, Our Brigade was on the extreme left and in front, where they fought all day and held their position in spite of the desperate efforts of the enemy to drive them back, I believe with the exception of one other brigade ours was the only one of the whole army that held their ground during the battle, after our men recovered from the shock of the morning, and got their new line established, then commenced some of the most desperate fighting we have had, and the rebels were forced to yield the ground they had so lately won it is impossible for me to describe this battle as I saw it, my language is too feeble, so I shall not attempt it, I was slightly wounded in the leg, about noon and was ordered to the Hospital I had but just got there when the rebels charged upon the Hospital and took a great many prisoners, I could walk pretty well but I couldn't run I was determined not to be a prisoner until they crippled me so I could not go

without permission of

So I skedaddled from the Hosp. & waded the river
and succeeded in keeping out of their hands, the
next day I went back to the Regiment, I wanted to
stay with the company, but the Surgeon sent me back
to the Hospital and told me to stay there, I stayed one day
and two nights, then I went back to the Regt. & I am
with it yet, I have done no duty since then until
to day I reported myself for duty, my leg is not healed
yet but it is getting along finely, dont hurt me
much anymow, Our Regt. went into the fight with
339 men, had 105 killed & wounded, a good many slight-
ly wounded like myself, however, Our Brigade is
now 10 miles in the advance and we are expecting
to be attacked every day, it is reported that the
(Rebel) Gen. Morgan is "going for us" soon, we are
ready for him I believe, we only have 1100 men here
and one Battery - G guns - it is now after noon and still raining
and is getting colder, I have been out & got an old shelter stone but
I have got no stove pipe can't have any fire in it because it will
smoke me out of the tent, I have it sitting in the middle of
the tent, and imagine there is fire in it, so it keeps me
quite comfortable, we have had no snow since the 25th of Oct
to amount to anything and the weather has been warm & pleasant
this is the most disagreeable storm we have had this winter
Now about that Lithium I got leave to go to the Saguerrean while
in Camp near Nashville, on purpose to have my picture taken
for you, I thought it was a fine day, but he said "it was too
smoky" and he would not try it, so I could not get it taken.

William Henry Smith Memorial Library

INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Not to be reproduced without permission of the Indiana Historical Society

of Walter Gresham & Mrs Jackson had a poor opinion of me, I got a most outrageous
mad at her & Bill and some others the night before, I left very unceremoniously
and resolved that night that I never would associate with them again. The last time I left
I rode to Goshen with one of the Shobers he stopped at Jacksons Mrs Jackson was then on her death bed
I went in too to see her that is the only time I've been in fact, and house since the night of 9th or 10th of Wednesday

am sorry that circumstances are such that I cannot
comply with that request at present as I don't know as there
is now a Druggeman in 40 miles of here, I should like to
see Dr Senny. They tried to get me to go to Nashville when
I was wounded but I would not go, I must be worse
hurt than I was then before I consent to go to the
Hosp. to stay, I saw some sickening sights at the
Hosp. Men with both legs shot off by cannon balls
others shot through the body. The Drs. were sawing
legs & arms off all the time. it was a horrible sight
such as I hope I may never see again, I have often
wished I could be upon a hill close by & and overlook
a battle field while troops were engaged, this sight I saw to my
satisfaction, and the sight was truly awful, after I was wounded
I got upon a hill overlooking the field, could see the masses
of human beings swaying to and fro in deadly conflict,
horses running without riders Ambulances going without drivers
Teamsters hurrying their Teams from the field as fast as their
mules & horses could run, no artist could paint so terrible
a picture as this was in reality, but the rebels soon drove
me from my position and closed this scene from my
view, when will these troubles end? I should have been so
glad to have been to Benton while you were there, would you
come down again when I get home? I have nothing to write about
but war and I know you are tired of that, now you promised me
a long letter when you get home giving a history of your visit &
now I shall expect it & shall be disappointed if I don't get it,
accept this, from your unworthy lover, (Thom)

Thom

without permission of

1-13-1863

9th Ind.

Prickett

Readyville Tennessee

Dear Matilda

Yours of Dec. 29th came to hand at a very late hour last night and found me well, I had begun to think something was wrong, and it has been nearly a month since I received your last. I had concluded not to write until I heard from you, and for this reason there will be quite an interval between my last letter & this, for which you must blame yourself. I thought perhaps I had carried the joke too far about your mistake in dating your letter & you had taken offense, I thought best to wait till I heard from you before venturing upon another, jokes ought to be free in war times. It has been raining with all vengeance since 3 o'clock yesterday P.M. and still it rains without any prospect cessation, it is a cold rain and we have no stoves nor fireplaces and cant have any fires in our tents, this is very disagreeable indeed, my feet are aching with cold and I am so chilly I can scarcely write. You wished to know how I spent Christmas, it was a very pleasant day did not rain weather was the mud knee deep. On the contrary it was clear and the roads dusty. Our Brigade was detailed as guards for the forage train, started at sunrise went 12 miles south west of Nashville and returned about 8 o'clock at night, pretty tired, our dinner consisted of hard crackers & cold meat & water. The next day Dec. 26th the whole army marched for Murfreesboro, came in contact with the rebels the same day drove them back fighting all the time until within 3 miles of Murfreesboro where we arrived Monday 29th. here the rebels appeared in force. Tuesday we were in the reserve. There was some sharp fighting on our right which continued

all day, Wednesday morning at daylight we were ordered to the front, and had just got into position and were ready to advance when we found the rebels were advancing upon us, and here commenced one of the most terrific battles of the war, they made a furious attack upon our right which they succeeded in turning. Thus flanking us in that direction after which they came sweeping down our lines driving our men before them and capturing a number of pieces of artillery + a large number of prisoners, our men being compelled to change front under a heavy fire from the ~~the~~ enemy before this could be successfully accomplished the rebels had us completely surrounded. Our Brigade was on the extreme left and in front where they fought all day and held their position in spite of the desperate efforts of the enemy to drive them back, I believe with the exception of our other brigade ours was the only one of the whole army that held their ground during the battle, after our men recovered from the shock of the morning, and got their new line established, then commenced some of the most desperate fighting we have had, and the rebels were forced to yield the ground they had so lately won. It is impossible for me to describe this battle as I saw it my language is too feeble, so I shall not attempt it. I was slightly wounded in the leg, about noon and was ordered to the ~~the~~ Hospital and took a great many prisoners, I could walk pretty well but I couldn't run I was determined not to be a prisoner until they ^{3*} crippled me so I could not go. So I skedaddled from the Hospital. I waded the river and succeeded in keeping out of their hands, the next day I went back to the regiment, I wanted to stay with the company, but the surgeon sent me back to the Hospital and told me to stay there, I stayed one day and two nights then I went

back to the Regmt. + I am with it yet, I have done no duty since then until today I reported myself for duty, my leg is not healed yet but it is getting along finely, dont hurt me much anymore. Our Regt. went into the fight with 339 men had 105 killed & wounded, a good many slightly wounded like myself, however, Our Brigade is now 10 miles in the advance and we are expected to be attacked every day, it is reported that the (Rebel) Gen. Morgan is "going for us" soon, we are ready for him I believe, we only have 1100 men here and one battery - 6 guns - It is now afternoon and still raining and is getting colder, I have been out and I got an old sheet iron stove but have got no stove pipe cant have any fire in it because it will smoke me out of the tent, I have it sitting in the middle of the tent, and imagine there is fire in it, so it keeps me quite comfortable. we have had no snow since the 25th of Oct. to amount to anything and the weather has been warm + pleasant. This is the most disagreeable storm we have had this winter. Now about that likeness I got leave to go to the Daguerrean while in camp near Nashville. On purpose to have my picture taken for you. I thought it was a fine day, but he said "it was too smoky" and he would not try it, so I could not get it taken. I am sorry that ⁴ circumstances are such that I cannot comply with that request at present as I dont know as there is now a daguerrean in 40 miles of here, I should like to see D.C. Denny. They tried to get me to go to Nashville when I was wounded but I would not go, I must be wiser hurt than I was then before I consent to go to the Hosp. to stay, I saw some sickening sights at the Hosp. Men with both legs shot off by cannon balls others shot through the body. The Drs. were sewing

1-23-1863

PRICKETT

Not to be reproduced without permission of

INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

William Henry Smith Memorial Library

Camp of 7th Ind. Vols. Henryville Tenn.

Dear Mother

January 23. 1863.

Your welcome letter of Jan. 14th came to hand a few minutes ago accompanied by that mischievous picture, it looks somewhat familiar, but I had entirely forgotten the circumstances connected with it, I am going to shave my face clean hereafter, so spoil the comparison in that respect, otherwise the comparison between him & myself is very good I'd dare suspende with him at a venture I might if I had been in his place I should have bought one of her shoes, I think from the looks there was leather enough in one to have made him a pair.

Your apologies for not answering sooner, are satisfactory of course, I suppose you were somewhat disappointed you not getting to stay at Benton as long as you expected, and did it ~~not~~ ^{not} ~~not~~ cry over it? Oh! but she did, Oh! yes about the date of those letters we must settle that matter, I wrote you while on picket about Oct. 20. 1862 - with pencil - Then at Columbia Ky, Nov 1st we were mustered there for pay and I know the date but as I have not your letters now for reference I'll take the mistake upon myself and call it square, I generally keep your letters as long as I possibly can but on the eve of a battle I generally burn them, So on the morning of Dec. 26. we marched for Murfreesboro, and I knew we were going to have a fight, so before starting I had to perform the melancholy duty of consigning your letters to the flames, in case I got killed I did not want the rebels to get hold of any of my letters, but they did not kill me that time, I wrote you since the battle giving you the particulars so I shall say nothing about it in this, O! how I wish I could get letters oftener from you I get so lonesome lately that I

in company "D." This company is made up of principally of felons from Porter
and Lake counties, old chums at home. They hang together and work for each
other. They meant to have their own officers and once the Company, when we
officers were filled by their own crew. Gen. Wilroy saw the inefficiency
of the 1st Lt. and removed him, and placed in his stead Lt. Cole. Shortly
afterwards Capt. Blackstone resigned, and Lt. Cole became Capt. and our 2nd
Lt. St. being a non compos mentis, by Capt. Cole's influence my friend Lewis S.
Sickeson then acting orderly Sergt. (having been promoted from private to that pos-
ition by Capt. Blackstone when he saw the inefficiency of the orderly first in the
position) was promoted to 1st Lt. over the 2nd Lt. This caused disaffection
as Sickeson was from the 27th. Capt. Cole was from another company
and to cap the climax I was promoted to orderly. They took a vote
a vote on it at the time and all voted for me, The 2nd Lt. has been
busy ever since trying to get Capt. Cole out also Sickeson & myself, he is
afraid I will be promoted over his head, he has succeeded in creating an
ill feeling against, Capt. Cole St. Sickeson & myself. Capt. Cole is on special duty
acting Adjutant Gen. on Col. Hazens Staff. Sickeson commands the Company
and the men are getting too insolent to suit me, I shall make application
to go back into the ranks before long, I have made such application to Capt.
Cole, several times but he positively refused my request, the next time I shall
go to the Colonel. I am tired of acting orderly anyway, and I can't
stand their abuse much longer, they would reduce me to the ranks
disgracefully if I should knock some of them down, and that is all
that keeps me from it that would please them too well, if I was
a commissioned officer I would resign my commission if I could
and leave them to their own glory, There are quite a

Camp of 9th Ind. Vols. Readyville Tenn.

Dear Matilda

January 23, 1863

Your welcome letter of Jan 4th came to hand a few minutes ago accompanied by that miserable picture, it looks somewhat familiar but I had entirely forgotten the circumstances connected with it. I am going to shave my face clean hereafter I'll spoil the comparison in that respect, otherwise the comparison between him & myself is very good & I'd trade suspenders with him at a venture "anyhow" if I had been in his place I should have borrowed one of his shoes. I think from the looks there was leather enough in one to have made him a pair. poor apologies for not answering sooner, are satisfactory of course. I suppose you were somewhat disappointed not getting to stay at Benton as long as you expected, and didn't Matilda cry over it I'll bet she did. Oh yes about the date of those letters we must settle that matter, I wrote you while on picket about Oct. 20 1862 - with pencil - then at Columbia Ky. Nov. 1st. we were mustered there for pay and I know the date but as I have not your letters now for reference I'll take the mistake upon myself & call it square. I generally keep your letters as long as I possibly can but on the eve of a battle I generally burn them. So on the morning of Dec. 26th we marched for Murfreesboro and I knew we were going to have a fight so before starting I had to perform the melancholy duty of consigning your letters to the flames in case I got killed I did not want the rebels to get hold of any of my letters. But they did not kill me that time, I wrote you since the battle giving you the particulars so I shall say nothing about it in this. Oh how I wish I could get letters often from you I get so lonesome lately that I scarcely know what to do if I ever get an opportunity to get out of this company I shall leave it.

Readyville Tenn.

Dearest Matilda

February 9th 1863

Yours of February 1st 1863 came to hand this
 you, and that you were well, Hold on! I did not mean to
 say that I delayed writing because I thought you had taken
 offense at my jokes, you know I do it, but because I was
 expecting every day to receive a letter from you, and I thought
 I would wait till I received it before writing to you, since I
 did not know but that you had taken offense at something in my
 jesting, was the cause of your silence. Now for goodness sake
 don't you make it any worse than it is, this is all a small say at pres-
 ent, and as for your scolding I don't care if you only send
 me such a scolding every day. You ask me why I did
 not come home after the battle, and seem to think
 because I did not. That I care nothing for the loved one at
 home, now if I thought you were in earnest I should feel
 very much grieved, but I know you must be "in fun"
 when you say that! While I would be willing to
 give anything in the world, ^{almost} to see you, I could not
 have it said that I was a deserter for all the
 world and I could not have felt that I
 was anything else if I had ever tried to come
 home on pretense of my wound, I tell you

The simple truth when I say my wound was slight, and I do feel mortified sometimes to think that I allowed myself to be persuaded to leave the field, this is even so, but I also know of some who were no worse, ^{were} than myself, who are absent yet from the Regiment, but I don't wish to be classed with that stripe, and hundreds left without being hurt, at all

~~but few from our Regt~~

One of those came back to the Regt. a few days ago, and his comrades, carried him all through the brigade on a rail, my heart is with you where ever I go, I live in hope of seeing you again, but if I fall it is in discharge of a sacred duty all patriotic Americans owe to the best Government on Earth, many better, far better men have already fallen, men too, whose lives were worth to the world, what a thousand such as mine would ~~not be~~ the thought of the downfall of this noble Government, that the time honored Stars & Stripes, that have waved triumphantly over land & sea for nearly 87 years is now about to be fouled & trailed in the dust, is enough to nerve a man to desperation, Oh! My Country, I sometimes almost think it must be "victory or death" it is with deep feelings of regret that we hear daily by the mails, of our enemies at home who

dearly & know. The last letter he received from
her was full of love and but a short time
afterward he received a letter from one of his
brothers ~~stated~~ ~~escaped~~ ~~with~~ ~~him~~ that his in-
Teacher to Michigan where they were married
poor fellow & pitied him. He stated it the worst
thing he hardly seemed like the same fellow,
so you crossed the evening join the schoolmen tried
to keep you out Buggy riding so late, to prevent you from
going to church so I could not go home with you
but pleased me very much indeed, Oh how
I wish I could surprise you some Sunday
evening I think perhaps I could think of a
few things to say, it may be possible that Sigonia
may come in my course home if I ever live
to get there and if such should be the case I
intend to hold you to your bargain, see if I don't
you must drive away those gloomy forebodings about
my being killed in this only occasionally I am in a very
severe battle, and your faith is always with me, like
a guardian Angel. There has not a bit of snow
here this winter the weather is warm like spring now
I am writing in the tent to night without any fire
and it is comfortable, it is about 10 o'clock
and I must soon come to a close, I would
gladly write all night if I was were not so
tired it is a pleasure to write when I have
anything to write to you, it is reported that we are
receiving large reinforcements, 50,000 it is said came
yesterday and 30,000 more coming, I can touch fords that
with my special regards remain yours affectionately Sam

2-9-1863

PRICETT

Readyville Tenn.

Dearest Matilda

February 9th 1863

Yours of February 1 1863 came to hand this evening and found me well. I was glad to hear from you and that you were well! ~~Hold on!~~ Hold on! I did not mean to say that I delayed writing because I thought you had taken offense at my jokes, you know I didn't but because I was ~~id~~ expecting everyday to receive a letter from you and I thought I would wait till I received it before writing to you and I did not know but that you had taken offense at something in my jesting, was the cause of your delay. Now for goodness sake don't you make it any worse than it is this is all I shall say at present and as for your scolding I don't care if you only send me such a scolding every day. You ask me why I did not come home after the battle, and seem to think because I did not that I care nothing for the loved one at home, now if I thought you were in earnest I should feel very much grieved but I know you must be "in fun" when you say that! While I would be willing to give anything in the world almost to see you, I could not have it said that I was a deserter for all the world and I could not have felt that I was anything else if I had even tried to come home on pretense of my wound, I told you *2 the simple truth when I say my wound was slight, and I do feel mortified sometimes to think that I allowed myself to be persuaded to leave the field, this is ever so, but I also know of some who were no worse hurt than myself who are absent yet from the regiment but I don't wish to be classed with that stripe, and hundreds left without being hurt at all but few from our Regt. one of those came back to the Regt a few days ago and his comrades carried him all through the Bugside on a rail. My heart is with you wherever I go, I live in hope of seeing you again, but if I fall

it is in discharge of a sacred duty. all patriotic Americans owe to the best government on
to the world what a thousand such as man would not be the thought of the downfall
of this noble government that the time honored Stars & Stripes that have waved triumph-
antly over land & sea for 87 years is now about to be forever trailed in the dust, is enough
to nerve a man to desperation. Oh my country, I sometimes almost think it must be a
victory or death. It is with deep feelings of regret that we hear daily by the mails of
power to seize the traitors of the South base and cowardly villains. my
language is too feeble to express my contempt for these fellows we fear an outbreak
these everything seems tending that way, but vengeance, terrible vengeance will be
meted out to them if they dare thus desecrate the fair fame of Indiana nobly have
Regiments who have stood by the old flag for 18 months would leap with joy at an opportunity
to return to their own native State to rid her of those dastardly villains who are trying
to perison what remains of loyalty & patriotism. There I know that life is uncertain
and death stares us in the face on every battlefield but I can view it with more
calmness than you could imagine though I have a desire to live as I believe is
natural I know the danger to which to which I should be exposed before I enlisted
but I should be miserable if I thought I should never again behold that face that
should feel if you should serve me as sergeant in our company was served by his

2-19-1863

"lady love." She has been keeping up a correspondence with him since the war commenced and he believed her to be true and he loved her dearly I know, The last letter he received from her was full of love and but a short time afterward he received a letter from one of his friends at home informing him that his intended had eloped with their school teacher to Michigan where they were married. poor fellow I pitied him he hated it the worst kind he hardly seems like the same fellow do you recollect the evening Jim Bartholmeas tried to keep you out buggy riding so late to prevent you from going to church so I could not go home with you that pleased me very much indeed. I how I wish I could surprise you some Sunday evening. I think perhaps I could think of a few things to say. It may be possible that Digenies (?) may come in my course home if I ever live to get them and if such should be the case I intend to hold you to your bargain. See if I dont you must drive away those gloomy forebodings about my being killed as it is only occasionally I am in a very severe battle and your farm is always with me like a guardian Angel. There has been but little snow here this winter the weather is warm like spring now. I am writing in the tent tonight without any fire and it is comfortable. it is about 10 o'clock and I must soon come to a close. I would gladly write all night if I was were not so ———. It is a pleasure to write when I have anything to write to you. it is reported that we are receiving large reinforcements. 30,000 it is said came yesterday and 30,000 more coming. I cant vouch for its truth.

With my special regards I remain yours affectionately

Thom

William Henry Smith

Dear Madam

Dear Madam

February 13th 1833

So I expected to get a letter at once, but owing to the commo-
 tion in the bank had to manufacture the mail came
 more direct, and in great deal quicker, I hope that you
 will be glad to receive your letters, and I get some
 lying in camp so long, nothing to break the monotony of
 of camp life, and nothing to read do you may judge what
 I mean, and everyday when I fail to get a letter, I think
 well I'll have the pleasure of reading it tomorrow perhaps,
 and so I keep up spirits, your last two letters have such ten-
 of you and the most spiritual, I recollect the day you
 just think it is two years since, how time flies, the same
 I have half as much as you and I had, but she took one of
 my business that day, she asked me if she might take it she
 jealous, for it was thought of winning her affections.

I was very much surprised to find the first of this
 morning I was very much surprised to find the first of this
 morning I was very much surprised to find the first of this
 morning I was very much surprised to find the first of this

I always thought she was too cross, I was afraid of her.
at any rate, I think I could enjoy myself a great deal better
now myself, if I could live those days over again. do you
recollect that I pointed over to Bartholomew's and showed you
Bill, and asked you when you & him were going to marry
and you called him your uncle and wondered if I thought
you would marry him, O! you need not think I took any
offense at what you wrote about that engagement, it
was me who wrote the nonsense, not you; I will tell
you frankly Matilda I feel as though I was doing injustice
to you, by asking you to wait for my return. I am in
the service of my country, and I feel as though it is
my duty to serve her as long as there is such danger
threatning her even though it be 5 years ^{yet} and I live so
long, I can't forsake the "Stars & Stripes" in this hour of
peril. And again, I may fall in battle, now you may
in consequence of an engagement with me, refuse the
offer of some other person whom you would accept if
it were otherwise, thus you may lose a precious choice,
do you understand me? I don't want you to misconstrue
these words, nor think that I do not love you with my
whole heart, for I think too much of myself to have it
said that I trifled with the affections of any young
lady, but if you are willing to take the chances of my
getting through this war safe, with your consent
I pledge you my sacred honor as a gentleman

Not to be reproduced without permission of

INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

William Henry Smith Memorial Library

wh
safe
me
at
see
of "pe
as t
you
but
it to
my
=ose o
=mark
my o
I ha
prof
just
is v
are
wh
diff
ery
are
l

me to defray expenses, that we will be husband & wife
 at such times as we may agree upon after we have
 seen each other again, this may be a novel way
 of doing things if you please. we write with some
 but it remains here for you to say, yes; or no; and
 if to abide the consequences, these sentiments come from
 my heart, I am really glad if you mind neither does not app
 - our correspondence, said really from that she means that we
 - make to you and defend as much, but I claim to be honest in
 I had rather bear the contempt of all mankind than
 profess to be what I am not, and I believe you will
 justify me in this resolution, I know that my lady
 is very unpopular to all outward appearances, but than
 we more men in the world who believe as I do than
 any person is aware of, I have been astonished myself
 when talking with men whom I thought believe
 differently - to find in reality their views correspond
 very nearly with mine, but popularity is the aim of too
 many, of the sacrifice of honesty, I don't regret my past
 life, don't think I could better it much if I had it
 to live over again, and if there is a Heaven hereafter
 I believe I will go there

Not to be reproduced without permission of
 INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 William H. Smith Memorial Library

I always thought she was too cross. I was afraid of her, at anyrate I think I could enjoy myself a great deal better now myself if I could live those days over again. do you recollect that I pointed over to Bartholomew's and chawed you Bill and asked you when you + him were going to marry and you called him your Uncle, and wondered if I thought you would marry him. O. you ~~must~~ ^{need} not think I took any offense at what you wrote about that engagement. it was me who wrote the nonsense, not you. I will tell you frankly, Matilda. I feel as though I was doing injustice to you by asking you to wait for my return. I am in the service of my country and I feel as though it is my duty to serve her as long as there is such danger threatening her even though it be 5 years yet and I live so long, I can't forsake the "Stars + Stripes" in this hour of peril, and again, I may fall in battle, now you may in consequence of an engagement with me, refuse the offer of some other person whom you would accept if it were otherwise, thus you may lose a precious choice, do you understand me? I don't want you to misconstrue ~~me~~ these words, nor think that I do not love you with my whole heart, for I think too much of myself to have it said that I trifled with the affections of any young lady, but if you are willing to take the chances of my getting through this war safe, with your consent, I pledge you my sacred honor as a gentleman

which I prize as dearly as my life, that if I get home safe, and my circumstances are such, as to enable me to defray expenses that we will be husband & wife at such time as we may agree upon after ~~expense me is remains none for you is very far.~~

come from my heart, I am really glad if your Grandmother does not oppose our correspondence I did really hear that she made those remarks to you and I expected as much but I claim to be

honest in my opinion and recall. believe what I unless you help it? I had rather bear the contempt of all mankind than profess to be what I am not, and I believe you will justify me in this

in the world who believe as I do than any person is aware of I have been astonished myself when talking with men whom I thought believed differently - to find in reality their views corresponded very nearly with mine, but popularity is the aim of too many at the sacrifice of honesty, I don't regret my past life, don't

believe I will go there.

Now for something else! You say John Thompson is considered as being inclined to favor the Secesh and Jake writes the same. I talked with John before the Murfreesboro fight. I found out that he was a Buell man, but I did not ascertain his views on the Presidents Proclamation. I gave him my opinion of Gen. Buell in plain terms, I am sorry he is so prejudiced. John never was too good a friend to Abraham Lincoln. I know he was a Dewar man from the first and I suppose if Dewar would say we should acknowledge the independence of the Southern Confederacy John would endorse the sentiment. I am thankful that I am not so selfish. I am fighting for no single individual but for the benefit of mankind in general and I do think if the rebels are successful in giving their independence our System of Government is ruined for ever. And it is no time now to let party prejudice interfere while defending a Government sacred as this should be to every American. I heartily endorse every sentiment set forth in the Presidents Proclamation and also in the act of Congress to confiscate all rebel property. I believe it to be the only sure means means to terminate this unnatural war. I have no sympathy whatever for those contemptible cowardly wretches at home who are plotting daily to secure the independence of a Southern confederacy, if there is a spark of humanity existing in my Boson it don't extend to those scoundrels for I feel as if I should take a fiendish delight in hunting them down as if they were wild beasts what do you think now about McClellan taking command of the "Army of the Potomac". I believe he will yet. I would not be afraid to bet all I have in the world that if Bruce had had the command at Murfreesboro we would have been the worst whipped army that has been since this war commenced. But I believe we would have been in Nashville yet if he had been in command. It is nonsense for any man to talk that way I tell you if Buell had his way about it we would not have been in time to save Grants army at Shiloh last spring but when Nelson was furmost in urging him on from Spring Hill when we laid 10 days waiting for the pioneers to ~~but~~ build a bridge across Duck River Nelson told him he ought to be pushing on he wanted to

know how we were to cross the river, Nelson told him if he would give him leave to go on he would show him. ~~Buell finally consented~~ Nelson took the lead and we ploughed into the river and waded across as the world knows, as much for the immortal Buell, give me Rousseau a thousand times first, I must close hoping you will answer I remain yours affectionately.

Thomas.

My difficulty in the company is reduced down considerably. I have more friends than I thought I had, there is one old Buck as cross as a Bear. he got to abusing me the other day - to my back - but I heard him, I was considerably mad. I told him if I ever heard another word of abuse escape his lips I would thrash him as sure as he lived since then he has been perfectly quiet I had a good notion to do it then but he had not spunk enough to fight he is a ~~Bad~~ Butternut if there ever was one. The boys all said I did just right you wanted to know if I had mittens I had a pair, but I never wore them and they are lost, but we have not cold weather enough to use mittens.