

STAND BY THE COLORS:
THE CIVIL WAR LETTERS OF LEANDER STEM

EDITED BY JOHN T. HUBBELL*

To the Soldiers of the 101st

Everything is ready at Camp save the blankets. Each man will take with him a blanket or comforter to use until Government blankets are supplied, when those taken from home may be returned.

Citizens will undoubtedly contribute to those who have no blankets or comforters. — Regiment to go into Camp on Monday.

August 20, 1862

L. Stem¹

The "Soldiers of the 101st" who answered this quaint call to arms were the 101st Ohio Volunteer Infantry, a fragment of the great outpouring of young men who won the Civil War for the Union. While a professional elite, comprised mainly of West Point graduates, dominated positions of greatest prestige, it was the volunteer soldier and officer who did the fighting and dying.

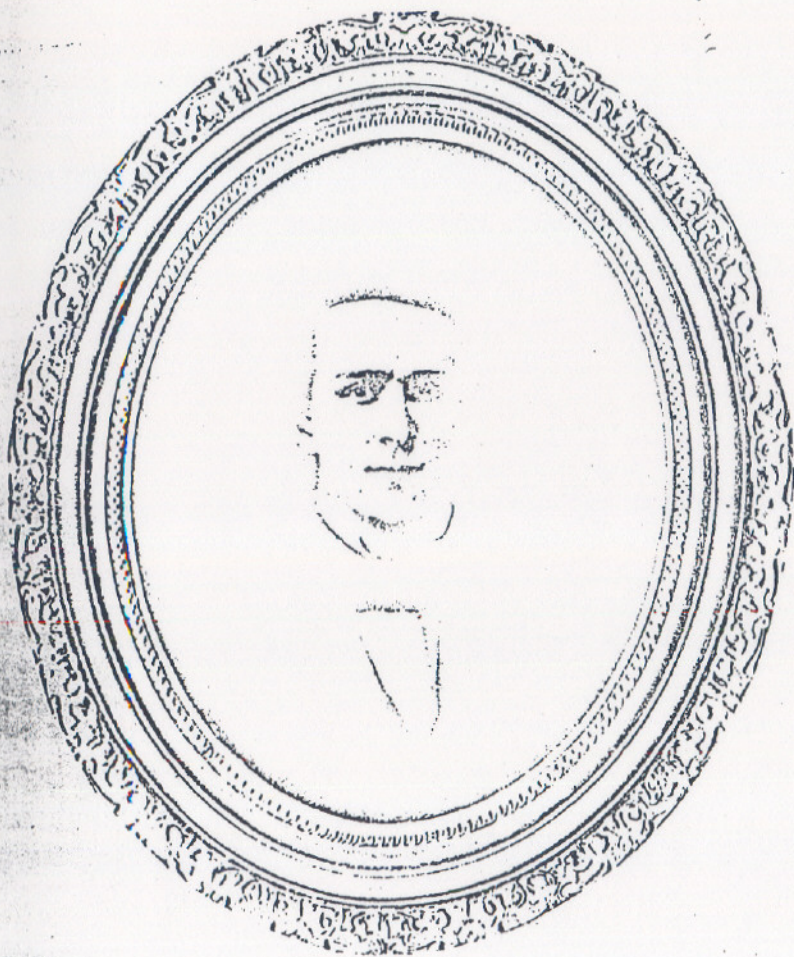
The "L. Stem" who signed the notice was Leander Stem, Colonel of the 101st, who, like his troops, assumed his duties with no particular notion of the trials that awaited him. He did know of his own fears, the greatest being a torturous doubting of his ability to lead men in battle. These doubts he kept to himself, except as he confessed them in letters to his wife; even the soldiers of his command, who had small regard for military authority, at least unproven authority, knew little of these fears.

The 101st was sworn into service on August 30, 1862 at Camp Monroeville [Huron County], Ohio. Most were sons of Seneca County and its environs, farmers, and small town men and boys, with a sprinkling of professional men among the

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¹ Sandusky (Ohio) *Daily Commercial Register*, Aug. 22, 1862.



Leander Stem, Colonel, One Hundred and First Ohio Volunteer Infantry.
Courtesy of Rutherford B. Hayes Library, Freemont, Ohio.

officers. Of the 1044 men who began the long campaign, 329 remained at the mustering out three years later. Many had left the service via medical discharge, but the melancholy statistics of war showed that eighty-six had died in combat; 118 died of disease; thirty-four died in prisoner-of-war camps; and eleven were unaccounted for. But, as the historian of the regiment later commented, the high-spirited boys could not foresee the bloody trials to come, even when the Colonel predicted that many would not return.²

As the 101st left Monroeville, the prevailing attitude was an already jaundiced view of the army and its workings and a desire to get in a few licks at the Rebels before the war was over. On September 5 [1862], they arrived in Cincinnati, amid rumors of an imminent attack on the Queen City. They did not linger among the cheering crowds but crossed the Ohio River into Kentucky and in a clearing some two or three miles south of there [Covington] set up "Camp Stem." There they remained for several days, trying through long hours of drill to learn the martial arts. The distinct possibility of a Confederate attack lent vigor to their efforts. Or perhaps, as one soldier put it, the sweat and strain under the Kentucky sun made them angry enough to fight the rebel army and welcome the chance.³

While his men paraded and drilled, encumbered by their obsolescent twelve-pound Austrian rifles, Colonel Stem dashed about on duties of his own. His primary concern was that he not injure his men through his own inexperience, a thought that weighed even more heavily upon him because there was no one to turn to for advice. He had to rely on his common sense and profit from his mistakes. Fortunately, he possessed common sense to an uncommon degree and learned quickly.

The monotony of camp life, even when spiced by dashes to defensive positions, was finally broken by orders to move to the

² A. J. Baughman, *History of Seneca County, Ohio* (Chicago and New York, 1911), I, 197-98, for a short account of the raising of the 101. L. W. Day, *The Story of the One Hundred and First Ohio Infantry* (Cleveland, 1862), p. 18.

³ Sandusky *Daily Commercial Register*, Sept. 4, 1862: Day, p. 27.

Louisville area. There the 101st joined the main Union force under Major General Don Carlos Buell in time to pursue the Rebel army commanded by General Braxton Bragg. The routine became march, camp, march, camp and march again. Stem's concern for his men increased at this point and his confidence in the high command wavered. At times he wondered if he was partially to blame for the hardships of the march, even if he could not furnish water where there was none nor supply his men with necessities when none was available.

The first taste of fighting was only that, a taste. At the battle of Perryville, on October 8, the 101st remained on the periphery. They could hear the cannon and musketry and later got a close look at casualties of both armies. Stem expressed revulsion at the carnage but at the same time regretted that Buell had not seized the opportunity to commit his full strength against Bragg and possibly, as some officers stated, destroy his army. Stem's criticism of Buell was not unique. Somehow the green Ohio troops recognized what the professionals seemed to miss — the great military task was to close with the enemy army and destroy it.

Following the disappointingly inconclusive clash at Perryville, the 101st joined in the arduous series of marches into Tennessee, always tantalizingly close to Bragg. Stem's leadership was again severely tested as his men suffered from the heat and dust of the day and the chill of the fall nights. The shortage of tents and blankets became critical, but, according to Stem, the main damage was done through the erratic pace of the march. Instead of a steady pace, with appropriate periods of rest, the day's march seemed to consist of a series of dashes. In consequence, he would find the regiment strung out for miles, with even the most conscientious soldiers falling by the wayside. Late in the evening, the stragglers would drift into camp, there to fall asleep without bothering to eat or care for their aching, blistered feet.

The Colonel wondered if he could in some way alleviate the situation, or, more importantly, if the men blamed him for their hardships. Evidently they did not. As one trooper wrote, his

conversation with other men in the regiment "confirmed the opinion formed some time since, that the men have confidence in Col. Stem, and fully believe that he did all in his power to relieve their wants during their severe exposures."⁴ Had he known of this expression of confidence, Stem might have rested easier, but in the absence of such assurances he could only harden himself to the suffering and resolve to do his best.

In December, the 101st arrived in the vicinity of Nashville. Major General William S. Rosecrans, who had replaced Buell, was admired by his men and under his lead they would soon get their fill of Braxton Bragg's army. The place was near Murfreesboro, some twenty miles south of Nashville. Here, along Stone's River, was fought one of the bloodiest battles of the war. Stem's boys, as he referred to them, were as ready as new troops could be, their confidence reinforced in part by the issuance of new Springfield rifles and by some successful skirmishes with the Rebels. Perhaps they reflected also the new confidence of their Colonel, as Stem now seemed to assume an air of command that was understandably missing earlier. And perhaps the hard marches would now force the decisive battle many had hoped for.

On December 30, the regiment arose quietly without benefit of reveille, and at 3:00 A.M. formed in line of battle. It maintained contact with the enemy that day, uncomfortably close at times, but the two sides did not come fully to grips. That night, many of the soldiers sensed that the Rebels were moving. As the regimental historian later wrote: "All night long we could hear the movement of troops and artillery to our right. So serious did this seem to us that we several times sent word to Regimental headquarters calling attention to the fact. Colonel Stem forwarded the report to Brigade, Division, and Corps headquarters, but nothing was done about it. To this day it seems strange that no attention was given the matter. The very

⁴ Letter signed "L" in the Sandusky Daily Commercial Register, Sandusky, N.Y., 1862. The letter was written from Edgefield Junction, Tennessee, near Nashville.

existence of the army was jeopardized by the failure to do so."⁵ The last may have been a slight exaggeration but the Confederate movement proved nearly disastrous to the regiment and in fact fatal to its highest ranking officers.

In the early morning of December 31 the southerners attacked the Union right in full force. As the 101st met the assault, Colonel Stem had dismounted and was standing quietly by his horse, a picture of calmness under fire. As the battle developed, the regiment was ordered to its left, presumably to a more tenable position, as it was in danger of being flanked. As the movement began, Stem was hit and went down. His second in command, Lt. Col. Moses Wooster, rushed to his side. They spoke briefly, but shortly thereafter Wooster also fell, mortally wounded.⁶ Major Isaac M. Kirby, who assumed command of the regiment, later reported that Stem was hit at 8 A.M. just as he had shouted to his men: "Stand by your colors, boys, for the honor of the good old State of Ohio." Because of the terrific exchange of fire both Stem and Wooster were left on the field and taken prisoner.

Wooster died the next day but Stem lingered until January 5 in the nearby home of a Mrs. Bedford. She transcended her Confederate sympathies to attend the Colonel, but his wound, which had paralyzed his lower body, was too much even for his powerful constitution. On the evening of January 5 he slipped away, his last words being a prayer that his successor would look after "his boys" in the 101st.

A few days later, after the debris of battle was cleared somewhat, Mathias Stem went to Murfreesboro and began the sad return home with his brother's remains. And the funeral at Tiffin was doubly sad, as Maggie Stem, the Colonel's four year old daughter, was buried with him, a victim of scarlet fever. A great crowd witnessed the services, aware it seems, that the quiet lawyer and family man was after all more than ordinary, that he represented something good in their lives and that his loss was part of the terrible sacrifice demanded by the god of

⁵ Day, 101 O.V.I., p. 82; ch. 9 deals with the battle of Stone's River.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 353-359, for accounts of the deaths of Stem and Wooster.

war. A local editor expressed it well when he described the fallen leader as "what a Colonel should be, both the commander and the friend." A fitting epitaph to a brave man.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Leander ("Lee") Stem (September 19, 1825 — January 4, 1863) was a graduate of the preparatory school at St. Mary's College in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and returned there for a year of college. July 31, 1851, he married Amanda Marshall (September 9, 1830 — December 2, 1889). In addition to formal schooling, he and his brothers and sisters were taught by private tutors in the home. His father, Jacob Stem, was born in 1792 in Carroll County, Md. Ca. 1830 he came to Tiffin, Ohio where he bought about 1,200 acres of land, including a sulphur spring, from which the village of Green Spring (later, Green Springs), takes its name. The Stem family remained prominent in the area for the rest of the century.

Leander Stem was a law partner with his older brother, Jesse Stem (1820-1854). Jesse became an Indian agent in Texas and was killed there in 1854 by renegade Indians (who were later punished by their own people for the murder). The brothers had studied law in law offices, after the custom of the day.

Letter No. 1

Head Quarters 101 Reg O.V.I.
Near Ft. Mitchel, Ky, Sept. 7 1862

My Dear Wife

This is the 2nd day of our sojourn in this state and hot days they have been, and days of hard labor [and] heavy responsibility to me. The men are all so raw and I so much more so than some of my officers greatly increase my labor and responsibility. If I only had a full understanding of my duties I could get along much better.

As it is however, I have so much work to do that I have no time to learn.

Our trip from Monro[e]ville to this place was very satisfactorily accomplished, but the latter part of [it] was attended with a great deal of hard work. After passing Tiffin [county seat of Seneca County, in northern Ohio] on Thursday the 4th we got along comfortably but slowly to Cinc., riding all night was at the city at 7 o.c. A.M. of Friday the 5th inst. Found the business houses all closed and a good deal of bustle and confusion abt. the Rail Rd Station. Got our men and baggage off finally [and] march[ed] up to 5th St. Market, where after a long spell of waiting we got some breakfast. And I then reported myself to Genl [Maj. Gen. Lewis ("Lew")] Wallaces⁷ Head Quarters for orders, and was ordered to report myself with my Regt. to Genl Judah⁸ in Covington Ky. We then marched across or rather march[ed] to the Ferry [and] rode across into Covington on the Ferry and then marched up into the town. It was very hot and stopped in the streets of Covington for the men to get water, and then were conducted a street or two farther to the Head Quarters of Genl Judah.

I reported myself to him and he assigned me to his Brigade and ordered me to march out on the Lexington [Road] 2 miles [and] a half [and] select a camping ground. We started [and] by this time with my running about looking after this that [and] the other I had got pretty tired and felt the necessity of having a horse. Saw a livry stable close by [and] offered to hire one, [and] was told they were government horses [and] that if I needed one I had the right to take it.

So I went in, picked out a nice looking young horse, had him saddled [and] started on after my men, who had by this time got a good

⁷ Lew Wallace: *An Autobiography* (New York, 1906), I, 603ff, for the events of fall, 1862, and the defense of Cincinnati. Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Blue* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964), pp. 535-536.

⁸ Maj. Gen. Henry Moses Judah (1821-1866), West Point, 1843; classmate of U. S. Grant. Warner, *Generals in Blue*, pp. 255-256.

deal ahead of me. I found that I had got a right smart horse but he was untrained [and] trotted, oh, so hard that I wished I had trusted to my own feet; but then it seemed to me quite necessary that I shd. go ahead and select the camping ground, before the men came up in order to avoid keeping them standing in the hot sun so long.

So I whip'd ahead, took the Surgeon⁹ [and] the Lieut Col¹⁰ and rode on forward to select a camp ground. Such a bumping as I got — finally by whipping, kicking [and] jerking I got the animal into a sort of gallop, and on over the hills of "old Kaintuck" we came, until we had made the 2½ miles; and such a barren hilly country I haven't had the fortune to find lately. Narrow knolls with deep ravines all round, so that one can hardly find an even piece of ground large enough to encamp a Regt. on. But one great thing to be looked to was, water we must have water — riding where we could [and] walking where we had to sweating and anxious [and] perplexed, I almost regretting the undertaking [and] though I should feel better carry[ing] a musket — Finally we [?] up the narrow ridge where I am now writing and squatted down on it in the open face of a hot sun [and] spread ouselves out [,] laid out a camp[,] unloaded our plunder [and] fit to spend friday night the 5 of Sept —

Well wife it is almost 11. o.c. I am tired [and] must get some rest have been busy all day excepting half an hour when [I] tried to sleep, will make an effort tp write you further tomorrow.

Your husband

Leander Stem

Love to my little ones [.] I hope they are all good children.

Write to Me

Col L. Stem
101 Reg. O.V.I.
camp near Covington Ky

⁹ Dr. Thomas Cook, surgeon with the 101st OVI, entered the service at age 45, Aug. 12, 1862 and mustered out with the regiment June 12, 1865. Ohio Roster Commission. *Official Roster of the Soldiers of the State of Ohio* (Cincinnati, 1888), VII, 447.

¹⁰ Lt. Col. John Franz, 101st OVI, age 50, entered service Aug. 12, 1862, resigned Oct. 14, 1862 on surgeon's certificate of disability. *Ibid.*

Letter No. 3

Head Quarters 101st Reg O.V.I.
Near Ft Mitchel Ky
Sept 13 1862

Dear Wife

I have commenced twice today to continue my little narrative, but was interrupted both times [and] now begin the third time rather late at night.

But I want to keep up a brief sketch of my progress and must work at it when I can to bring up to the present time [and] I wish you wd. preserve my letters that I may refer to them hereafter for dates [and] facts —

I left off last night with stating the excitement that prevailed in Cinc. on last Saturday the 6th inst. — People were going out into the center of Vine St. [and] looking over the river into Covington to see if the rebels were not coming — I heard frequently repeated the remark that the rebels were within four miles of Covington [and] fighting had commenced. Armed citizens were hurrying down to the ferry [and] crossing over into Ky to aid in keeping the rebels out of Cinc. — [and] I soon met near the Gibson House with Mr. Phelps, Doct. Brown, E. S. Bartlett [and] others from the Springs [Green Springs, Seneca County] who had come out at the call of the Gov. — And learned that there were large numbers from all parts of the state who had turn[ed] out to defend the border — I felt as though I was very much out of place [and] ought to hurry back to my regt. — but after making what inquiry I could, I heard things that I knew could not be so, as to the situation of matters out here [and] so set down the great alarm about an immediate attack to be without foundation and went hurriedly to finish up my business [and] return to the Regt. at Camp Stem, — as the boys persist in calling it. Judge Seney¹¹ was with me in the city on business pertaining to his department and was of my opinion as to the foundation for any alarm — After we had finished our business in the city we rode out to Camp (which you will remember is 2½ miles from Covington on the Lexington Pike.)

We found that there had been some anticipation of trouble and that several Regts had been drawn in line of battle, but no real expectation

¹¹ Judge George Ebbert Seney, b. May 29, 1832, in Uniontown, Pa., was from a prominent local family. As regimental quartermaster, he resigned from the army, Nov. 22, 1864, and pursued a distinguished legal career. *Ohio Roster. Commission*, VII, 447; *History of Seneca County, Ohio* (Chicago, 1886), pp. 825-131, for a sketch of Seney; a photograph and other information is in Day, *101 O.V.I.*, p. 33.

of an immediate engagement, although there was a determination to be ready for one if necessary.

I found that a verbal order had been left at our camp for me to report at the Head Quarters of the Brigade at once — Our Regt. had been assigned to the 1st Brigade commanded by Genl Judah (who is a Kentuckian I believe) [not a Kentuckian] whose head quarters had been at Covington. I rode back quickly to Covington [and] report[ed] myself [and] found myself in presence of Genl Lou. Wallace who was occupying the rooms in which I had found Genl Judah the day before — He was seated in an armed rocking chair at one side of the room; while in the centre sat a table surrounded by aid[e]s [and] clerks writing [and] answering questions — I should have mentioned that in front of these rooms there were some ten horses held by om [one?] orderly sergeant, while nearly as many more were tied to posts, [and] that aids [and] orderlies were going [and] coming in great haste, many of them undoubtedly riding in more haste than the business required—

On being shown to Genl Wallace I informed him that I had been ordered to report myself there, [and] just then up steps some anxiously officious fellow [and] addressed him upon business concerning something or somebody, when the Genl quietly observed to him that he was "talking to this gentleman" — The Genl asked what I was to report there for — I told him I had not been informed what I was to report for. He then asked me what Brigade I was in [and] what Regt I had — I told him [and] he said to me Genl Judah's Head Quarters to which [I] was to report, had been changed, that Genl Judah's Head Quarters were in the field with his Brigade — It occurred to me at once that I should not trouble Genl Wallace with questions as to where Genl Judah's Head Quarters in the field were. So I turned away determined to find a guide — I knew that the Brigade was composed of some 6 or 7 Regts [and] that they were stretched out [and] scattered somewhere about the Lexington Turnpike — Coming down from Genl W's Head Quarters (formerly Genl Judah's) onto the pavement I asked the men who held horses [and] were on their horses where Genl Judah's Head Quarters were, but no one knew — I got on [and] started back to hunt up the Head Quarters of Genl Judah. It was growing dusk [and] I began to reflect, as I had already done that I had been absent from my post [and] some mischief might come of it [and] that I might have a long ride in the night to find the "Genl's head quarters in the field" — I was so occupied with these reflections that I crossed the "Lexington Pike" without noticing it [and] rode on out of Covington a short distance before I discovered that I had not taken the road I intended to. I felt tolerably safe from any censure as the order left for me had been verbal — when I discovered [I] was not on the Lexington Pike: I made inquiry for it [and] for the Head Quarters of Genl Judah — I was soon directed to the Pike [and] putting spurs to my horse soon overtook a young fellow riding along on a bay mare with a sword by his side.

(but evidently both horse [and] rider were novices in the military service) I inquired of him for the Head Qrs [and] recd. the gratifying ans. that he was going there, so I concluded to go with him although he didn't so fast as I thought I probably ought — The young man sd. his name was Colwell, that he had been riding hard all day bearing messages [and] was tired — We passed horsemen [and] wagons going both ways, most of the horsemen riding quite fast — We reached the Head Quarters a little after dark [and] found them located in a nice farm house. What was very agreeable to me they were close to my Regt. [and] all that was wanted of me was to send out two Cos. for picket duty — I rode back to my camp [and] found that Lieut Col Franz had recd. a second message while I had been hunting Head Quarters [and] had taken the Cos. over for duty —

So I settled down, looked after the necessary business of the regt [and] late at night — got to bed very well satisfied —

On the next morning Sunday the 7th inst. the men got their breakfasts, washed cleaned up, [and] abt. 10 a.m. we had religious service for those who chose to attend.

The sermon was a very good one [and] attendance very fair — many of the men seem to be members of church — I spent most of the day preparring orders for the Government of the Camp [and] attending to the many little wants of the men [and] in writing to you — I hope you will be able to read this but expect some of it will trouble you —

Kiss the babes for me [and] give my love to all. I have been looking for a letter from you [and] have recd. but the one — Good bye —

yr husband
L. Stem

Letter No. 7

Head Qrs 101 Reg O.V.I.
Camp Gilbert Near Jeffersonville
Inda. Sept 25 1862

I have only time my dear wife to write you a very short letter tonight — it is after 9 o.c. P.M. On the evening of the 23d., Tuesday last, I recd. orders to be ready to march in 1 hour — goods all packed in wagons ready to go to Cinc. and take the cars for Louisville Ky. — It was just dusk, I had just eaten a light meal and thot. to go to bed and sleep off the last linger[ing] shades of my fever and chill. But I set to work, issued the order and hurried things along and about 10 o.c. was ready to

and did move off. The whole Regt marched along cheerfully in the starlight followed by two ambulances carrying sick men, and by a train of ten wagons all but two of them drawn by 6 mules.

We went to Cinc. took the cars and got started a little before 4 o.c. A.M. for Louisville Ky. We got to this place last night abt 10 o.c. with scarcely anything in our haversacks for supper. After a good deal of trouble and vexation the men stowed away for the night. Have had rather short allowance of provisions for the men today. This is because they hurried us away without teams to haul everything and without giving us time to obtain rations to fill the haversacks.

Tonight I recd. an order to move tomorrow to Louisville or a little back of that, between Louisville and Bragg's Army.¹²

So you will write to me as *camped near Louisville Ky* hereafter.

Good night kiss the little ones for me. I hope Freddie is better, but fear I hope in vain —

your affectionate
Husband
Leander Stem

Letter No. 8

Head Qrs 101 Reg O.V.I. Near
Louisville Ky — Sept 30 1862

One thing has crowded upon another in such rapid succession and many duties to perform new to me, that I have been unable to write my Dear Wife half the letters I would like to, much less write a narrative of events as they pass. I have been suffering some inconvenience from the cold I took while at Ft. Mitchell, to which I have made frequent additions by the way.

Since we have been here, we have had to rise every morning at ¼ before three and stand under arms 'till day light. This has been a double burden to me as I have most of the time had to be up until 11 o.c. [and] am often awakened in the night by inquiries about a hundred little things which the men ought to determine for themselves.

This morning while the men were standing under arms I recd. an order to [be] ready to march by 4½ o.c., with three days rations in haversacks. We made ourselves ready as soon as possible. I supposed the men would have to eat their breakfast of hard crackers or rather hard

¹² General Braxton Bragg.

bread as it's called as they march. Nevertheless, they persisted in having the Company cooks make their coffee, and (we were to wait further orders before moving) ate their breakfasts with their knapsacks on their backs. By the time this was done we recd. another order to stack arms and await orders, all which we were already doing — And now it is 11 a.m. and we are still waiting.

Where we are going or why we dont know, and indeed we may be ordered to remain where we are. Orders have been issued cutting down baggage and the number of teams so that it is altogether likely that I shall have to buy a valise and send my trunk, coat and other surplus home by express.

Major Genl Nelson of this army slapped Brigadier Genl Davis¹³ commanding this Division in the face yesterday morning whereupon Genl Davis shot Genl Nelson. Nelson died in a short time. He has the name of being very abusive and tyrannical. Davis is an Indiana man was formerly a member of Congress. Tis said that Nelson and Davis had some sharp words in relation [to] the business of the Army in which Nelson is represented to have told Davis that all Indianians were cowards and some such wholesale charges.

The general feeling seems to be that Davis did right. A very wide spread dislike, I dont know, but I may properly say, hatred prevails against Nelson in the Army for his tyranny and abuse of his inferiors.

I have seen Col. Gibson,¹⁴ Phil Spielmans son, John McCormick, Dr. McMeens and other acquaintances here all looking well.

Gibson's men and some 45,000 of the troops of this Western Army have made a very severe march from Northern Mississippi to this point in pursuit of Genl Bragg and his Army. They say that if Genl Buel¹⁵ had permitted it they wd. have whipped Bragg and captured a good part of his Army.

A strong current of feeling prevails among these men that Buel did not want to capture Bragg, but of course they know very little of what they talk about. Why dont you mail a Tiffin paper to me occasionally?

Louisville is a larger, richer, finer looking place than I expected to

¹³ Maj. Gen. William Nelson (1824-1862), Warner, *Generals in Blue*, pp. 343-344. Maj. Gen. Jefferson Columbus Davis (1828-1879), veteran of the Mexican War. After the set-to with Nelson, was relegated to secondary roles. *Ibid.*, pp. 115-116.

¹⁴ Col. William H. Gibson, 49th OVI. Entered service, July 31, 1861 at age 38. Commanded the 6th Brigade at Stone's River. *Ohio Roster Commission*, IV, 489.

¹⁵ Maj. Gen. Don Carlos Buell (1818-1898), West Point, 1841. Warner, *Generals in Blue*, pp. 51-52.

find it. It is indeed a beautiful place and bears marks of hav[ing] much wealth in its population, especially if you estimate the "Cold. pussons" worth anything. They are very numerous and of all shades. I noticed at the upper windows of some of the houses as we marched through the city some very handsome women, fair complexioned and gracefully formed, (most of them very amorous looking however) but the hair, even in the 3d. stories had very visable curl, and the eyes were large with a full share of the white visable. They mix up a good deal I take it. The country about Louisville is very fine and in an excellent state of improvement so far as we have come and that is only outside of the city. I saw yesterday abt. half a mile from here a sort of country tavern stand kept by a German. He has 10 acres most beautifully improved with grape arbors[,] shade trees and a little basin of fresh spring water. But this Army of men is leaving its impress upon it. Almost everywhere the men tear down the board fences to make themselves shelter from the hot sun and rain and heavy dews. The[y] burn the rail fences to cook their victuals, dig the sweet potatoes[,] pick the apples and peaches to eat. Kentucky is paying dearly for her neutrality.[?] The whole interior and Southern part of the state must be completely ruined and devastated by the passing and repassing of the two Armies. Those who remain at home securely in the Northern States can have but a faint conception of the ruin that wd. overtake them if the rebel army shd. succeed in getting a foothold across the Ohio river.

The boys are generally quite well. Henry Pittinger¹⁶ stands it bravely and cheerfully so does Frost.¹⁷ Henry Taylor¹⁸ has complained some but I have relieved him from all heavy duty. I am disappointed at not getting any letter from home since here. Why dont you all write. I long and fear to hear from Freddie. Give my love to all and kiss them for me.

your affect. husband L. Stem

¹⁶ Pvt. Henry Pittenger, Co. I, 101st OVI, 18 years of age when he entered the service, Aug. 12, 1862; mustered out with the company, June 12, 1865. *Ohio Roster Commission*, VII, 475.

¹⁷ Pvt. Josiah Frost, Co. H, 101st OVI, age 19, entered service Aug. 11, 1862, was discharged Feb. 14, 1863, at Nashville. *Ibid.*, 470.

¹⁸ Pvt. Henry Taylor, Co. I, 101st OVI, entered service at age 17, Aug. 11, 1862. Discharged May 17, 1864 at Columbus, Ohio, (to date) with a surgeon's certificate of disability. *Ibid.*, 475.

Letter No. 9

Head Quarters 101 Regt O.V.I.
On Salt River Ky
Oct. 4 1862

I was very glad indeed my dear wife to get your letter of 29th inst. and feel better to hear that Freddie was improving even so little. I am writing now before breakfast on my saddle flap lying down myself on my blanket on the ground. Troops and fires al[1] round men intermingled with wagons and mules. Some question to ans. every 5 minutes and sometimes oftener.

We are marched off without our camp kettles and have a hard time cooking anything. We left Louisville on the 1st and marched abt 11 miles. It was pretty hard for the men, not used to marching — Evening 9 o.c. by light of the Camp fire — I was interrupted just there this morning by the order to march. Have [been] marching slowly most of the day over hills and through valleys and made about 10 miles and are now encamped 10 miles north of Bardstown Ky. The troops and camp fires cover the side hills and the large valley. When interrupted this morning I was speaking of the march. Yesterday was the first time our regt. forded a stream. It was a shallow one however and those of the men who had good boots got over without taking them off. The stream was Fern Creek.

This morning we cross Salt River at a point where it was so low that a few rails thrown in enabled the men to get across without even taking off their shoes. Bragg and his army are said to be at or near Bardstown. It was reported that he was fortifying himself there to give us battle, but I have no confidence in the report. Yet it may be he will.

Army and seems to give very fair satisfaction. [Col. Stem's regiment was at that time in the 31st Brigade, under Col. William P. Carlin]. Its Ginny St. John's husband. He saw service in the Mexican War, it seems. I have had three short conversations with him. I found him today on the side of [a] steep hill on horseback, waiting to see the artillery safely up a steep hard pull. I slept out on the ground last night and shall have to do the same tonight. Our teams have not been able to keep near to us and may not reach us tomorrow. I put two blankets under me and my thick overcoat over me. I slept warm enough last night, but it was very damp and will be tonight I think. We find a good many negros here who are ready to go along with us.

¹⁸ Maj. Gen. Robert Byington Mitchell (1823-1882). B. Mansfield, Ohio, served in the Mexican War. Commanded 9th division of Gilbert's Corps at Perryville. Warner, *Generals in Blue*, pp. 328-329.

Oct 5/62

The fire burned low and I wrote by the light of the moon last night, until the clouds obscured its light. We were arouse[d] this morning at 3 by an order to prepare to march immediately. It is now broad day light and we are not started. They must mean to chase old Bragg right up [?]. I have a chance to send this to Louisville and must close it.

Write via Louisville
Ky — Kiss the babies
in haste your
husband
L Stem

Letter No. 10

Camp near Perryville Ky²⁰—by
the campfire Oct 9 1862

We had a little battle here yesterday, but 101 did not get the Artillery. We were marched up along with it into line of battle to defend it. The shot and shell flew over us pretty fast and we expected the rebels to pitch into us, but they didnt, with musketry. We have a large Army and our line of battle must have extended 6 or 8 miles, comprising several divisions, under the command of different generals, while the whole is commanded by Genl Buel. Genl Rosecrans[']²¹ command had some hard fight tis said with musket, and reports differ very widely as to how much was done on each side. [Rosecran's was not in the battle of Perryville.] One thing is certain however, we are on the ground occupied yesterday by the rebel army[.] Their killed and wounded are here in a very neglected condition, but perhaps they do the best they can for them. The men behaved charmingly under the feeling of almost a certain fight. Some of course pretended sick and staid, others were really sick. Henry Taylor and Frost are well. They were not in line of battle with us. Henry has not been able to carry a gun. I

²⁰ For battle of Perryville, see Thomas L. Connelly, *Army of the Heartland: The Army of Tennessee, 1861-1862* (Baton Rouge, 1967), pp. 256-267. *Official Records*, Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, pp. 1076-1079, for report of Brig. Gen. Robt. Mitchell, 9th div., 14th Army Corps.

²¹ Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans (1819-1898), West Point, 1842. Warner, *Generals in Blue*, pp. 410-411. W. M. Lamers, *The Edge of Glory: A Biography of William S. Rosecrans* (New York, 1861).

bought a mule and put my blanket and overcoat on him and Taylor ride [rode] him. He did not come up last night, probably because of the danger so I had to sleep on the ground without anything but my rubber coat and I did [not] rest very much as I got cold.

I dont feel first rate tonight and as I may start any moment I propose to stop writing and go to bed. I have my coats and blankets and will be warm enough tonight.

The rebels are said to be far enough ahead, 10 or 12 miles tis said.

Kiss all the little ones for me. how many times in this short absence would I have given most anything for one quiet hour with wife and little ones and friends at home. We are moving with no baggage and deprived of all comforts nearly and may not get your letters for a week or even more. But write, write to your affect. husband and tell the girls to write. Tell me to[o] when I left off my comment [?] narrative of events and I will try to resume it. These hasty notes by camp fires are very incomplete.

Your Husbd
L. Stem

Letter No. 11

Head Qrs 101 Reg O.V.I. Near
Danville Boyle Co. Ky Oct 13, 1862

Here again my Dear Wife am I, not in a first rate humor for writing however.

I have [been] quite well since I last wrote you, but woke up this morning a good deal sick at my stomach, not however to the extent of vomiting.

I couldn't eat hard bread at all, I did however drink a little coffee and eat a small piece of tolerable bacon.

We have been moving constantly since I wrote you of the battle near Perryville (which was the last letter I wrote you), moving with only what we can carry on horse back. I bought a small mule, on which I carry my blanket and some provisions. Henry Taylor being to[o] feeble to stand the marching I have had him ride it, and take care of the things. If Henry dont improve soon I shall make an effort to have him discharged and sent home. We are rouse[d] at 2, 3, and 4 o.c. in the morning, march sometimes steadily along all day with intervals of halting, some-

times moving rapidly for an hour or two and then halting an hour or less; marching sometimes 'till 10, or 12 o.c. at night, not often though, so late as that. While we are marching this way I cant write often nor long letters, and doubtless many of my letters will fail to reach you for a long time and some may fail altogether to reach you.

I forgot abt the wood; let Mr. Keen see Mr. Clevidence and then buy the winters wood, and then let Clevidence make his arrangements to haul it in as fast as possible before bad roads.

I intended to have sent you a chk on—————[?] before this, but Keen did not inform me what they said about paying it. I will send you in this a check for 30\$ at all events and will try to bear in my mind to send you some money in good time again. I infer from what you say in the last letter I got from you going somewhere in the buggy that you still have the horse then. If so you ought to let him be kept at the farm, as doubtless you do. You can send the cows to the farm if you like. If they give any milk Mrs. Clevidence might milk them and make butter and give you a share. If they dont give enough to make butter, you ought to have at least half of it and that brot. to you every morning by one of his boys.

If they give enough to make any butter of any account after you have what milk you need, you ought to have half of that I think. At all events the cows kept on [the] farm and afording plenty of good milk for the family is better than to buy a quart or so a day. You can use milk so as to supply the place of much other provision which you wd. have to buy. By the way how do you get along with keeping an acct. of your household expenses and paying as you go. I [am] afraid it is going to be a couple of mos. yet before we draw our pay.

Doct. Cook is not promoted. The Brigade Commander, Col. [Wager] Swayne, at Ft Mitchel had him acting as Brigade Surgeon for awhile and some of the boys then thought he was promoted. He at first [thought] there would be a chance in it for promotion and so did Seney who was offered a chance to act as Brigade Q U [M], but both of them after reflection were sharp enough to see that was "all in the eye."

I want a good pocket map of the slave states of [the] United States, the latest publication that can be had. If you can get me one at —?— or —?— send it to me by mail; I [am] not particular about it having a back to it. Get a cheap one and send by mail right away (one like Ez Stone has in his house) and I will send to Cinc. for [a] better one.

Where is Bob [Bud?] and his better half[?] Dont forget to let me know where I left of [f] my connected narrative for I shall have to write it out soon or I will forget most of it. When I commenced this I tho. I wd. only have time to say a few words, and indeed stopped once because troops by the side of us were moving off and I suppose [d] to [o]. I got ready and have written half my whole letter

ut about every hour of the day of the 17th some order wd. come from brigade Hd. Qrs. requiring something to be done, and I have not yet ot my assistants in the way of doing things without my personal upervision.

And yesterday I had officer and company drill in the forenoon and attallion drill in the afternoon, and these with the orders recd. from me to time and ordinary routine of business used up the day. And in the evening came an order requiring a Memorandum of what clothing, imp Equipage etc the regt. required immediately. I have the officers ill their men into line, take a memd. of what each one wanted required me time and as fast almost as they got that done they come to my tent as I have almost the only one) condense and arrange their Memoranda. o that it was after 10 p.m. when I had got statement finished and arted for Brigade Hd. Qrs.

I have had a little diorhea [sic] for a week and yesterday morning and this morning after breakfast embraced an opportunity to lye down a rry few minutes. This morning after my few minutes rest and giving instructions to the Quarter Master abt. Clothing etc. I went to divine rvice and after that called on Brigade Commander for leave to change ie location of my camp. By the time I had returned to my quarters and rted myself, Benj Porter²⁴ (formerly Captn and now a Major in the th O.V.I.) made me a call and staid until 11½ when I went with m to see Col [William H.] Gibson for a little consultation abt. romotions[,] appointments and the like. It was a ride of 4 ms, and I und Col. G. well and contented as he sd. with everything but the nduct of Genl Buel. G is comdg the 6th Brigade and his men seem like him well as a commander.

They like ourselves have been moving pretty rapidly without tents id with but little other baggage. Though they being in McCooks²⁵ Corps ere treated with more liberality in transportation of Camp kettles and e like than we were. I returned from the 49th by 3 p.m. and have had sitors, Doct Cook and my Captns. until 6 p.m.

It is now 20 m past 6 and I am admonished that Brigade Hd. Qrs ill send off a mail in the morning, hence what I wd. write for that mail ust be sent over tonight.

²⁴ Lt. Col. Benjamin Porter, 49th OVI. Entered service, Aug. 24, 1861, age . Promoted to major from captain, B Company, Sept. 30, 1862. Wounded c. 31, 1862 at Stone's River. Promoted from major, Jan. 1, 1863. Discharged m service, Oct. 4, 1863. Ohio Roster Commission, IV, 489.

²⁵ Alexander McDowell McCook (1831-1903), West Point, 1852. One of e famous "fighting McCooks" of Ohio. Warner, *Generals in Blue*, pp. 294-295.

I would like to write to Amanda [his wife], but must write to the Gov. [David Tod] and ought to write to C. L. Boalt.

I have endeavored above to give you an idea of how a portion of my time was occupied. I will now mention some of the incidents of our march which I omitted fearing that I shd. not have time to bring up to our present encampment. One of the things most striking, was the facility with which the men adapted themselves to their new situations. The scanty fare was no trial at all to them apparently, nor was the lying out in the night and rain, but when the hard bread and fat pork are wormy, they had to complain. On the march from Louisville the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th days water was scarce during a good deal of the way and the weather warm. Thousands of men passed along the same road before us every spring wd. be emptied before we reached [it] and as the water flowed from the fountain it would be kept constantly mingled with earth as many cups as could be got into the cavity wd. be plying there for hours as the long lines of armed men passed by. The streams were all low many of them entirely dry, none of them had flowing water, although none that we used looked stagnant. Horses and mules waded in drank and muddied the water and the men filled their canteens from the same muddied pool, not five feet distant and many in their extreme thirst as they hurried along would snatch a cup full from out the foot hollows made in the saturated earth by passing horses or mules or even where hogs had lately wallowed. When the column halted near a premises where wells and springs were used the pumps were run constantly until they cd. bring up no water or broke. The long line of horses and men following us fared even worse than we did. Our first [camp?] near a stream was on a plot on the banks of Salt River. The thousands preceding us had encamped along its banks before we reached it. All of us were thirsty and sent to the river for water. I thought the water had a singularly disagreeable taste. After getting a little hard bread, muddy [?] coffee, and half cooked beef, broiled on coals without salt, all which by the way I partook of with zest. I went to the river to bathe. The water seemed cool and fresh, but was exceedingly muddy, men were washing, soaping themselves freely, mules and horses were drinking and again men were getting water to make coffee. While bathing I got some water in my mouth and at once it occurred to me that the singular taste of the water I had drank was owing to the soap in the water at least in part. I didnt drink much water afterward that night or the next morning, but I did drink a little coffee at breakfast. Any day almost of our march the water of the Sandusky river such as it is just below Tiffin [Ohio] would be nice drinking water.

Notwithstanding all this but little complaint was made by those who had just parted with the cleanliness and comforts of home. They have uniformly been cheerful and gone at their duty steadily.

without faltering. A great many times one and another wd. laughingly cry out on the road "who wd. not sell a farm and go soldiering?"

I shall have time to write so [me?] long letter to each of you. Must send this and the other letter to Robt.

I must now close for this time — dont forget to send me the map and frequently to send me newspapers. My horse does first rate.

Your Bro
Lee

(The letters will be continued in the July Issue.)

STAND BY THE COLORS:
THE CIVIL WAR LETTERS OF LEANDER STEM*

EDITED BY JOHN T. HUBBELL

Letter No. 15

Head Qrs 101 Regt O.V.I. Camp near
Lebanon on Rolling Fork Ky. Oct 23 1862

I thought this morning my dear wife [Amanda] that I shd. take a great deal of satisfaction in writing you a very long letter, writing to Clemy, a washing for my own bodily health and comfort, but am so far *slightly disappointed*.

In the morning an order came that this 'Corps of the Army wd. remain in camp till further ordered.' That was not very definite, but when you remember that when we halt at night or in the day time we never know how long we will remain, and when ordered to move or march (which are used synonymous terms) we hardly ever know which way or where we are going; you will understand how it was that we regarded it as certain that we shd. remain here all day, unless indeed some sudden emergency shd. arise. I therefore had my tent pitched, my trunk taken out and my cot put up, and feeling languid from the effect of a slight diorhea laid me down to rest a while. But found little rest. Guards had to be stationed, sinks for privies dug. Men were washing themselves and cloths in the stream right where we got our drinking and cooking water, the teams needed shoeing, the sick wanted some one favor and some another, and all run to the "Col" of course to know what privileges indulgences or rights the[y] have or can be permitted. I endeavor to give my personnel attention as far as possible to all details that concern the health, comfort or discipline of the men and consequently soon gave up all idea of resting quietly. Attended to these several things and then sat me down to write a letter on business first and to make out an acct. with my Lieut Col of some matters between us during same time contrived to send a boy out to buy some potatoes and bread and tin cups, plates and spoons of which I never had a supply, nor indeed of cooking utensils of the most indispensable kind. And this reminds me that I never mentioned to you that at Cinc. while our Regt. was lying near Ft. Mitchel, Doctor Cook, his 2 assistants, the Chaplain, Major, Lieut Col and myself had bot. a mess-chest with a full outfit of utensils; hired a good gentlemanly cook; and that at Louisville the cook had to go home to attend a law suit and then when we were ordered away from there we had to leave our mess-chest and outfit of utensils, and since then I have had to take it as I cd. catch it.

*Continued from the April, 1975 Number.

(I believe I will not try to write between lines it is harder writing and must be hard to read) I hadn't for two weeks or nearly that after we left Louisville, and indeed have not had yet a solitary cup or anything to cook in or eat in but that was loaned to me. I had however no trouble on that score for some one or generally more of the men wd. offer me of what they had. And young Frost whom I had selected and kept as my clerk, almost always looked to it if every on[e] else forgot it, but that didn't often occur.

To return to the occurrences of the morning, the business I have mentioned occupied my attention until noon when I found that Frost had prepared some coffee, fried cracker or pilot-bread and fried bacon, (all which had [been] procured before) I ate a scanty meal with Frost and the Major, had a little talk with Major, Doctr. and some of the Captns. when lo! an order comes to be ready to march immediately. At once all hands are at work privates packing knapsacks, officers packing haversacks and valices, saddling horses and in a little while — it seemed not more than 10 minutes — the men were in line ready to move off my horses were saddled, my tent struck and packed with my trunk in the wagon. Just then an orderly comes along and says "the order is countermanded we dont march tonight."

Just here, supper was announced — had boiled sweet potatoes, a sort of corn cake made by Frost, some light bread which I had Taylor buy today and coffee with milk in it (the latter my hostler managed to get) and some fat pork — quite [a] supper for us. After supper Doctr. [?] Cook and²⁶ Yingling called in and Captn Kirby to[o] so that I have not been able to renew my writing until near 8. o.c.

When called to supr. I was about to add that after the order to march was countermanded I had my tent pitched again and my trunk and cot taken out of the wagon again and so after an hour and a half's interruption I was permitted to sit down to write to you. Since supr. my fingers are so cold that I can hardly write.

When I wrote you last I was in camp near Crab Orchard. Our last day and night there was Sunday the 19th. On that day I sent in conjunction with Capt. Barnes²⁷ for something eatable. Taylor to[ok] my horse and performed the task by bringing in two chickens and 4 turkeys. The Captn. had a good cook in his Co and we got him to cook the chickens and one of the turkeys for Supr. that night and breakfast next morning. It was good for camp fare and I ate too much of it; it disturbed my rest and perpetuated my bowel complaint to[o] I think.

²⁶ Dr. George S. Yingling, Asst. Surgeon, 101st OVI. Entered service, Aug. 13, 1862, age 22, resigned Jan. 15, 1863, on surgeon's certificate of disability. *Ibid.*, 447.

²⁷ Capt. Newcomb M. Barnes, Co. I, 101st OVI, appointed Aug. 2, 1862, age 31, resigned Jan. 13, 1864. *Ohio Roster Commission*, VII, 472.

Abt 12 Sunday night we recd. notice that the Army wd. march 7½ a.m. I was sound asleep when the order came and could not have been fairly aroused when the order was repeated; for I slept again awhile, awoke at 2 looked at my watch with the firm conviction on my mind that 4½ was the hour and that it would be necessary to have the men called at 3. I lay in a half wakeful state until 3 and then had the men aroused and notified to be ready to march at 4½. Accordingly all was ready at 4½. And then the Major and several others said they were awake when the order was deliv'd and that the hour was 7½. So we waited until 7½ and then the order came to form line which was done. We mounted horse and marched abt 6 rods and then waited until 10. o.c. before going forward. The road was blocked up by troops who were to precede us and who shd. have been out of our way but for some reason were not. We marched that day 15 ms.; the day was warm and much of the marching done at a rapid pace without proper stoppings. Before night many of the men stopped by the way side foot sore worn out and some of them sick. We were retracing our steps and came back through the town of Lancaster and 5 ms. this side that day. Bivouacked after dark with less than half my men present, but most of them came up with us before midnight. Some overtook us next night, some last night and the remainder I think today. On Tuesday morning started at 7. o.c. & came on through Danville where we left some of our sick in hospital. Danville is the County seat of Boyle Co., is pleasantly located in a rolling fine tract of land and looks like a very pleasant town. There are said to be (by Doct Cook) about 2000 sick soldiers there. The court house & 2 or 3 of the churches are used for hospitals. I could only stop long enough to see my sick men unloaded from the ambulances, but Dr. Cook was left behind a couple of hours to make the necessary arrangements for them and the Chaplain by my direction remained as long as in his judgment might seem advisable for the welfare and comfort of the men. Hospitals have been located at other points of our march out viz at Bardstown and Perryville and some others. You may form some notion from this what great numbers in so large an Army break down from marches and exposure to wet and cold.

At Perryville, however, most of the patients were the wounded in the battle near that place. Of this battle I had intended to speak more at length, but thought to do so in the continuation of my narrative. Really tho, it looks now as though I shd. not be able to resume that narrative. Our constant marching imposes so much labor that I cant write at night after being in the saddle all day, and stopping so late as we do, it is generally after 9 by the time I have supr over and things prepared to lye down, which I always do with the reflection that I am liable to be aroused at any moment by an order to march. Continued our march on Tuesday last we had a cool windy day for it, a pleasant day for marching, but the dust was very annoying. The men's faces became so covered with dust and sweat that you would hardly have recognized an intimate acquaintance.

on the weak lungs and hard on the eyes. We
 came into our bivouac badly used up. Halted again after dark and men
 came straggling in as before. At these halts we bivouac in close order.
 Imagine 20,000 or even 10,000 men encamped or rather bivouaced
 (for we have no tents excepting the field officers, one or possibly 3, and
 are without them most of the time), as close together as they can be well
 stationed, and all the ground, being 2 or 3 miles in circumference,
 covered with camp fires the smoke from which fills the air for miles
 around, while the fires viewed from a distance and attended with the
 hum of voices, braying of mules, neighing of horses and driving of
 wagons over the stony roads make one think of a large city or the
 bivouac of some wandering tribe of Indians — only the latter dont have
 wagons I forgot that. Will ride in dust all day, go to work and
 bivouac eat supr. get horses taken care of and blankets ready for sleep
 with your eyes and lungs all the time filled with this smoke as it is wafted
 from these 1000s of fires and then think of reading or writing. Well I
 can't sure.

Yesterday we had a fine day marched moderately all day from 7 a.m.
 to 6 p.m. with reasonable halts and got along much better, made 17 ms
 and got here after dark a little. We expect [to] get some tents and
 teams and then go I dont know where, but South I presume. I must
 close write often kiss babies and Willie must not forget to use his
 crutches. Love to all. Dont forget papers send often and write often.
 Have had no mail for over [?] a week.

Love to all — affectly
 L. Stem

Letter No. 16

Head Qrs 101 Regt. O.V.I. Camp on
 Rolling Fork near Lebanon Ky.

Oct. 24 1862

Oh dear! Oh dear!! How little of ones life is his own my dear sister.
 I wish I hardly know what, but as nearly as I can get at it, I wish I was
 what I understand to be a good Christian endowed with mental
 faculties and physical abilities capable of accomplishing a wonderful
 deal of good and finding in all the labor and privation necessarily
 incident there to a high pure and exalted enjoyment.

Here we have been bivouaced since night before last, and yesterday
 morning on the first intimation that we were likely to remain during the
 day I thot. I wd. write a long letter to Amanda and one to you wash
 myself and all that. But I didn't get it done yesterday and today I have
 not been able to commence it until 11½ A.M. All morning I have been

giving and writing orders and ans 2. questions and looking after this
 and that and the other thing.

Your letter of the 4th inst. was recd. abt the 18th and a most
 welcome messenger it was, but I don't think it comes as often as it
 ought to. [The boys say the mail has come, I must surely have some
 letters, but will keep cool for fear of disappointment. It was reported
 that Morgan had captured one of our mails, but we don't know anything
 about (it)]. You are "so busy [?] putting up peaches and fixing matters
 of the Aid Socy that you dont find time to write." Well indeed I ought
 to be studying the Art of War dilligently, perhaps instead of writing
 to you, but I must write now for I dont know how soon an order may
 come to march and when we do march we dont know when we'll have
 another day's halt. You thot. we'd have a fight with Bragg near
 Louisville. I didn't unless one of two things happened viz that Bragg
 found a good chance to make a sure thing of giving us the worst of it,
 or that Buel[1] should earnestly and perserveringly seek it. Our force
 was so large, that if properly managed the former couldn't well happen.
 and from the general reputation Buel had his army, privates and officers,
 the latter was not at all to be expected unless precipitated by the
 determination of some one or more of the Genls of his command. And
 from all I can learn the battle at Perryville was brot. on in that way.
 Genl. McDowell²⁸ pressed forwd. he says, farther than he was ordered
 to and became engaged with the enemy, and had a very bloody fight
 against superior numbers. But one opinion is expressed by officers and
 men viz that had he been supported as he might have been very readily
 Braggs Army would have been annihilated with but little greater loss
 than was sustained as it was.

All we can claim is that our men held the field and the rebels
 retreated in the night and that there [their] loss was greater than
 ours [not correct]. It is astonishing what an uniform expression of
 distrust and condemnation is expressed for Genl Buel. He is openly
 denounced as a traitor by officers and men. 'Tis declared by Brigadier
 Genls without hesitation or reservation that repeatedly, since he has
 pursued Bragg from Tenn. to near Louisville and back to the Southern
 boundary of Ky, he cd. have taken the major part of Braggs army
 and that on one occasion his generals begged him to let them make an
 attack and he refused. This state of feeling is a great damper to the
 ardor of the Army, and the expression is often heard from the ranks
 that these hardships would be no great matter if it only amounted to
 something, but to chase the enemy until you have him in [a] good place
 to whip him and then lye still and let him escape without a blow isnt
 what they bargained for. You need not be surprised if Buel falls by the
 hands of one of his own men.

The dust settles on my paper so that I cant write with satisfaction.

²⁸ Maj. Gen. Alexander McDowell McCook.

...ingly dry and dusty, water is generally scarce and I fear
...ffering if we shd. march soon for any distance. It is very warm
today and my tent is near the road, the dust very deep and flies in the
air all the time.

Personally I am well pleased with Lincoln's²⁹ proclamation and only
wish that there was no room for any question as to his constitutional
authority to enforce it. I have had some little opportunity to see how
the Army does with Negros but not much.

On the march of course many negros are seen along the road.
Some of them come out and offer to hire or go along and a bargain is
made and forthwith Mr. darky enters upon his near situation by
carrying such luggage as may be handed him. Others are accosted by
men or officers with the question, dont [you] want to belong to this
Regt or here I want you to go with me I'll do so and so for you and the
darky starts off. I have not witnessed any of these performances, dont
know that they are so and dont want to know anything about it. Day
before yesterday a gentlemanly farmer looking man claimed one of these
darkies, saying that he had left a *wife and children*. The darky
acknowledged his master and made no objections to going with him and
I didnt interfere. This is the extent of my experience. I should not
allow the men to coax darkies away nor shall I aid in restoring them to
their master unless ordered to do so by my superiors. I have been so
much interrupted in my writing that I feel like giving it up.

Mr. Neff³⁰ has been complaining some but stands the privations and
hardships well, is the best officer in his Compy. I do hope Lydia will be
well by this time. I dont like to hear of any of you being sick. My poor
little Freddie has had a hard time of it and may not recover, tho. they
say he is getting better. I had a few lines by this mail from Amanda
and Mag and a few from Mat. Mats and Mags letters are very short.
Mag was doubtless busy as Amanda was sick but I dont know why
Mat couldn't write a longer one. He says that Jimmy³¹ is announced by
the papers a Majr Genl. I'd like to be in his Corps. Where is he, write
him tell him where I am, he may do me some good. Unless I can have
more time to study I have poor opportunity of becoming a Brigadier or
anything else worth mentioning I fear.

I close this hoping you will all write often and send me newspapers
often to[o].

Love to all
Your Bro
Lee

²⁹ Emancipation Proclamation.

³⁰ James I. Neff, 2nd Lt., Co. H, 101st OVI, entered service Aug. 11, 1862, age 22.

³¹ Maj. Gen. James Birdseye McPherson.

Letter No. 17

Head Quarters 101st Reg. O.V.I.
Camp near Lebanon on Rolling Fork, Ky
Oct 25 1862

Dear Bro

Your letter of the 16th Inst. was recd. yesterday. It was not much
of a letter Mat., but still I was glad to get it, glad to hear from you in
any shape that brot. no bad news. I cant remember now whether I wrote
you since leaving Covington before reaching Crab Orchard Camp or
not. At Crab Orchard Camp I wrote you two letters, one of them
on the 16th.

I have so far no reason to complain of anything concerning my
relations to the Regt., but this continual moving keeps me from
studying the art of war as I ought to and must in order to succeed.
If the Gov. shd. make the appmt. to the Lieut Colcy which I have
requested I shall have no trouble. I think otherwise I shall not get
along so smoothly. I shall have to spend a little less time writing letters
if we dont have longer and more frequent halts than we have had.

At Louisville this Regt. was finally assigned to the 3rd Corps of the
Army of the O. [Ohio] commanded by Major Genl [Charles C.
Gilbert]³² (as he claimed to be, but probably was not), 9th division
commanded by Brig Genl J. G. [Jefferson Columbus] Davis, 3rd Brigade
by Col. Carlin,³³ but on the killing of Nelson and arrest of Davis
therefore, Genl Robt [Byington] Mitchel of Kansas son-in-law of
Henry St. John was placed in command of the division.

It seems however that Gilbert had been a Captn in the Regular
service and Genl Nelson being dissatisfied with his Brigadier Genls, had
influence enough at Washington to have Captn. Gilbert appointed a
Major Genl so that he could put him in command over the Brigadiers.
The appointment had not been confirmed by the Senate, and a day or
since Buel becoming dissatisfied with Gilbert deprived him of his
command broke up the 3rd Corps as I understand it and the 9th
division is now assigned to the 1st Corps I think it is. At all events it's
Genl McCooks Corps and we are all gratified with the change. Genl
Gilbert was vain over-bearing and sometimes abusive. Riding on the
road a few days since, when troops, wagons and horsemen were

³² Maj. Gen. Charles Champion Gilbert (1822-1903), West Point, 1846.
Warner, *Generals in Blue*, pp. 173-174. Charles Champion Gilbert was appointed
acting major general by Maj. Gen. Horatio G. Wright, Commander of the De-
partment of Ohio; the Senate failed to ratify. He was named brigadier general
by Lincoln, the State not ratifying.

³³ Wm. Passmore Carlin.

he was delayed a few seconds by riding agt. a soldier
 the way. Gilbert's shoulder straps were concealed by an
 man I didn't know I was in your way. Gilbert boxed his ears saying
 "dont call me man, I am more than man."

16th

I had an uncomfortable place to write last night and gave it up
 until today, feeling entirely satisfied that I should remain here some two
 or three days. Col. Carlin who commands this Brigade [31st], is a very
 different man from Genl. Gilbert. The Col is about my size, light hair,
 mild blue eyes, modest, moderate, and always speaks mildly and rather
 slowly. Was a Captn. in the Regular Army and has commanded a
 Brigade thro. a long march from Northern Mo. southward to the
 Arkansas River across into Tenn. and in the battle of Shiloh afterwards
 north to Louisville and now so far South again. So far my intercourse
 with him has been almost exclusively in relation to the business of the
 Regt., but has been very pleasant. Genl. Mitchel has been in the service
 during nearly all of this war and war with Mexico. Was wounded 4
 times he says at the Battle of Wilson's Creek, Mo. He is egotistical, but
 friendly and quite sociable; takes pride in the profession of arms and
 gives a good deal of attention to detail. He has given me repeated
 assurance of friendly feeling and a desire to accommodate. He is now
 absent on short leave and our Brigade is commanded by Genl [Col.]
 Woodruff³⁴ who was so long a prisoner with Corcoran [Brig. Gen.
 Michael]. Woodruff is a large man with Hazel eyes, black hair, very
 moderate in talk but appears to be active and considerate of the welfare
 of the men.

You speak of battles in Ky. There has been only one battle in which
 any part of this army was engaged viz that of the 8th inst on Chaplin
 Creek called the Battle of Chaplin Hills or the Battle of Perryville and
 I believe some of the men in writing immediately afterwd. called it the
 battle of Bean Ridge, because some of the men who had been in the
 Battle of Pea Ridge were in this fight.

The part taken by the 101st Reg in the battle was not very
 important that I can see. We with the 38th Ills (in Carlin's brigade)
 supported the 2nd Minnesota Battery which did good work. We
 however were not attacked or permitted to make an attack. We
 marched forward in front of our battery and directly under the fire of
 the enemy's batteries, but only a few shot fell anywhere near us. The
 movement of the troops of the 101st under the circumstances was
 pronounced admirable by officers and men of older Regts. There was

³⁴ [Col. William E. Woodruff, Louisville, in command of the Third Brigade,
 First Division, Rousseaus, Fourteenth Army Corps, Rosecrans.]

great danger that the enemy might throw shot and shell into us, but
 there was no hesitation, no faltering or confusion. They marched in
 line of battle through cornfields over rugged hills and fences in as good
 order as veterans could. The fighting was done mostly by McCooks
 Corps and there is but one opinion heard of here viz if Buel had allowed
 our Corps to come up into the action and rendered other aid where he
 cd. as well as not Braggs Army wd. have been completely flogged and
 mostly captured. [Gilbert's Corps was engaged mainly in helping
 McCook.]

We have marched back here from Crab Orchard we suppose to
 obtain stores and equipage with a view of marching South.

The longer I use *George* the better I like him. The roaring of
 cannon, rushing of troops, neighing of horses and all that fazed him
 scarcely at all on the 8th and all times he has been very easily managed
 and kind and so far stood the racket well. The fare has been scanty.
 I intended to say when speaking of the battle that if you read Genl
 Rousseau's³⁵ report you will notice his modest allusion to the proximity
 of Gilbert's Corps in his greatest need. And should have mentioned for
 several days there had been and was afterwards a good deal of
 skirmishing and shelling of woods and forming of line of battle often
 during the day and lying on our arms at night. I have had to hurry with
 this to get it ready for the mail. Letters "via Louisville" will always
 reach me. Write often and send newspapers. Love to all.

Your Bro
 L Stem

Letter No. 18

Head Qrs 101 Regt. O.V.I. on Rolling
 Fork near Lebanon Ky Oct 26 1862

Once more my dearest wife [Amanda] I am sitting down to write
 to you. So far as my health is concerned I am better than when I last
 wrote, indeed am pretty well, if not quite so. Have had my tent and
 trunk at hand for the last three days and do pretty comfortably only
 that the cooking is bad a good deal of the time. I calculate soon to have
 a cook by some means. If I can get a good darky from some man
 known to be a rebel I shall take the proper steps to do so. I wrote to you
 I think on the 23d just before the note written by May on the 12th was
 recd. and on which you wrote a few lines on Monday morning. Some
 how or other I cant be positive about what I did write to you on the

³⁵ Maj. Gen. Lovell Harrison Rousseau (1818-1869), Warner, *Generals in Blue*,
 pp. 412-413.

gave you a hasty sketch of our turning "about face" back two or rather thro. Lancaster and Danville and then turning towards Lebanon and halting on Rolling Fork about 5 miles from the town. We found during our stay there the 23d and 24th good water[,] river water in plenty something we haven't had much of the time.

Yesterday we changed the location of our bivouack about 5 ms keeping on the same stream and abt. the same distance from the town [Lebanon]. We have still plenty of the *same good water* and more room for our troops. I ought to have mentioned before that all the movements we have made have been with the whole "Army of the Ohio" variously estimated at from 85,000 to 120,000 men [61,000 before the battle, 57,000 after, counting Sill's division], with indeed this exception, that one division [Sill's] of 10, or 15,000 [7,000] men was sent off to Frankfort [and Lawrenceburg] and when we left Crab Orchard a considerable force was retained there.

So that wells and ordinary springs are of no account nor are common sized cornfields, hay stacks, or straw stacks. Yesterday when we came here there was a very large straw pile in this field, but it wasn't 20 minutes after we stacked arms until it was all gone.

There are about 3000 men in this Brigade, and we always halt, camp and bivouac and march together and are preceded and followed by other Brigades of the same division of the Army. And in taking off a pile of hay or straw every man with an arm full it reminds one of a large collection of ant hills, only that the men are not so quiet by a long ways as the ants are. When allowed use rails for firewood[.] Two miles of rail fence will disappear in a twinkling, all carried by the men.

On starting for this "station" yesterday morning the weather was exceedingly cold. When we got here (about 11. o.c.) it was drizzling and continued to drizzle and be cold all afternoon. I dispatched a messenger back after the wagon on which the officers baggage and mine and the hospital tent are carried. It was so cold that I concluded that as we were likely to remain three or 4 days I would make a furnace in my tent to warm it. So I started off [f] some boys and went myself for some flat stone. I carried one half a mile, but we found the others nearer. We dug a trench in the ground extending two feet inside and 2 feet outside the tent under the canvas; then covered with stone leaving an opening on the inside to put the wood in at and the Majr. [I. M. Kirby] went to work and built a chimney outside about 3 ft. high. At first it drew the wrong way and all seemed inclined to give it up; but I felt satisfied that after it got warmed it would go, so I fanned away with my old white hat and an old newspaper until it got well started[.] It drew first rate and keeps the tent nice and comfortable. Inst [?] after dark it commenced snowing and snowed fast until midnight, if not

longer, but I was dry and comfortable. I pitied the men, they have no tents, yet they had contrived to make comparatively fair shelter with rubber blankets, straw, cornstocks and brush with the leaves on; in front of which, (they are all open on one side) they built large fires. A report just reaches me that we are to march in the morning; if this is true you need not be surprised if this letter is not followed by another for some time. An order has just come for us to march at 8½ in the morning towards Bowling Green. We are all greatly disappointed at this for it was expected that the Regt would rec. tents and camp kettles, but this order cuts all off, at all events for the present.

I have never told you of the part we took in the battle near Perryville on the 8th inst. On the 6th and 7th we had been as reported close on to the rear of Braggs Army and frequent firing of cannon was heard in our front, and we were drawn up frequently in line [of] battle and marched often in line in anticipation of an attack. Our position then and during the fight was supporting the 2nd Minnesota Battery [Capt. Wm. A. Hotchkiss]. On the 8th we started in line of battle early in the morning, the battery firing at the enemy. Soon after 12 the firing of both ours and the enemies batteries became very rapid and I was ordered along with the 38th Ills. to advance to the left and pass our battery and take position in a field about ¼ m in front and to the left of the battery and lie down behind a rise in the ground so as to conceal them from the enemy. During this movement we passed directly in front of the enemies cannon. Most of their shot and part of ours one passing almost directly over us two of the enemies shell fell near us but hurt no one. To the left of our position during the fight was the scene of the principle battle. We passed by some killed and wounded of the enemy but not many. Saw one of the federal troops who was wounded. Where the heaviest fighting was done the battle was severe and those who visited the field next day say that it presented a horrible picture. I could take no satisfaction in gratifying that kind of curiosity and therefore didn't go. The day after the battle we remained all day on Chaplin Hills near Perryville and that day I wrote you a letter.

After resting a day and a half we marched through Perryville and on to Danville and Lancaster. At the latter place we had some reason to expect a fight, there was some skirmishing with Cavalry and artillery. One shell passed through our line of battle, a piece of it striking one of our men. . . .

[remainder of letter missing]

19

Head Qrs 101 O.V.I. Oct. 30 1862

[To his wife, Amanda]

As usual my dear, the first thing I do, after a halt that affords time and opportunity, is write to you. I wrote you last Sunday from our Camp on Rolling Fork near Lebanon. I hardly know where I [am] writing from now. Only that we are in Ky on the Rail Rd. leading from Louisville to Nashville, either in Barren County or just in edge of the next Co. west of Barren. [probably Hart County] and that we are about a mile west of [a] little village which I am told is Cave City, but I dont think it can be Cave City it is so small. We are abt. 8 ms from Mammoth Cave, which of course most of us wd. like to go a[nd] see, but will not be likely to have an opportunity. We left Camp at Rolling Fork on Monday Mornng. at about 9 A.M. The snow which had fallen as mentioned in my last during Saturday night (about 3 ins. deep) had melted from the roads, but still hung upon the matted grass and weeds in fields and upon bushes in the woods. The air was quite cold, clear and bracing, a fine morning for exercise. But a great many of the men didn't seem to enjoy it. Some were still foot sore, some a little rhumatic from exposure, I suppose to night cold and dampness and others weakened by diarrhea, poor fellows how I pitied them. The sorrow I have felt for the sufferings of these men on these rapid and continuous marches has been almost more than I could endure without being guilty of mutiny. I have doubtless been somewhat indiscreet in openly denouncing the cruel neglect of the sick and worn out soldiers in their presence. I am happy to say however that the manner of marching this week has been more reasonable and men are improving generally in health. It is quite singular to one who has never before given the subject any reflection, to observe the fact, that men started off properly and marched steadily with a halt of 5 to 10 minutes every hour will march 15 to 20 ms, with less than half the falling out from fatigue or sickness and with comparatively no suffering as a mass, while if they are allowed to rest much longer at irregular periods and compelled to march rapidly there are but few of them who will not be quite out of breath and used up at night. When so much fatigued, although they may have had but a poor and hasty lunch of "hard tack" and water at noon, most of them will lie down and drop to sleep without supper and very many of them without taking any pains to cover themselves against the cold dews which they know will occur later in the night.

Our march on Monday from Rolling Fork was conducted with steadiness and moderation; the roads were in places a little muddy from the snow, but most of the way the walking was good. After a march of some 6 ms we began a gradually and winding ascent upon a good turnpike road along, what I shd. think would be called the side of a mountain. It was an interesting sight. The road in its gradual ascent winding now round a project[ing] spur with rocks and stunted trees

above on one hand and below on the other, now apparently running along a narrow ravine into the mountain [no mountain, just hills], but turning again around another projection and still ascending would bring us out where we could see and feel the sun and looking across a valley could see on our right another range of hills or spur of mountains as large and rugged as those along whose sides we traveled. Winding out and in, this way sometimes we would come within a little stones throw of our troops half a mile nearly, ahead of us apparently at first glance coming in a direction opposite to that in which we were traveling, but looking again you wd. see them winding away again to the left around another projection of the rugged mountain side and still going higher and higher by an even regular grade. The column extended for probably 6 to 8 miles, of troops on foot or infantry (in military parlance) cavalry, and artillery and trains of provision[s], ammunition and baggage wagons following after of nearly or quite the same length. When the head of the column goes into camp at 3 P.M. the rear will not get in until 7 P.M. and then the wagon trains are until 10. o.c. midnight getting [in]. These latter then start nearly as much later on the march in the morning. In the after part of this day we got upon what seemed to be a "table land" high and flat, a few buildings, some of them originally good farm houses or perhaps taverns on the road side with a farm, but they were neglected and going today without an effort to repair for years although still inhabited. A small family of whites and a larger one of negroes would be seen generally and in more than half the negro families are the different shades of color, from a genuine black down or up as you please to the bright mulatto and in one or two instances, had not the real white stood by the side, I should have the darky for a white child. I have dwelt so long upon this part of the march here that I have not time now to dwell upon the other as it is growing late will only add that by fair and steady marching we got here today at noon and halted for half a day and none of us know why. We are ordered to [be] up at 4 and ready to march by 6 and it is now late bed time. No mail yet. I am wanting to hear from you that you are all well. Those little boys of ours must be good boys and our little fat daughter must be a good girl. Mind what mother says and be kind to one another to make their father glad.

We expect to reach Bowling Green in a two days march at farthest, can do it in a day and a half very easily. The distance is reported 25 ms.

Perhaps I ought to mention that our Suttlers Tomb and Seney came up today and that I ate some canned peaches and pineapple tonight with milk. Milk prepared from what is called solidified milk. They were very good.

The lads from Tiffin are all well. Henry Pittenger stands the work very well.

Good night,
Affectionately,
L Stem

Head Qrs 101st Reg O.V.I. 31st Brigade
9th Division 14th Army Corps Department of
the Cumberland in Camp on Rl. Rd. 10 ms
from Nashville Tenn.

This will be my first to you from this state my dear and I notice that in giving Brigade location and all that I have omitted the date, but it is the 7th day of Nov. and 9. o.c. P.M. I am pretty comfortably fixed, having made an exchange of the wall-tent I had heretofore for a Sibley-tent in which I have our mess stove with a fire in it. You wd. probably think that we wd. hardly need a fire in this Southern region, but the nights have been disagreeably cold since the 20th Oct particularly and yesterday today quite cold all day. Today I wore my overcoat all day and had to walk some then to warm myself. From about 11-A.M. until dark today a little sprinkling of snow was falling. The nights indeed have been cold with occasional frosts during most of our march from Louisville. We arrived here today at about 3 p.m. and went to a tolerably regular encampment, being admonished as we did so that we might remain here several days, but at [the] same time might be called upon at any moment for a sudden and active service.

By regular encampment I mean pitching all our tents in regular order, some what in the form that barracks stood in Camp Monroeville. We have however only a little more than half a supply of tents for the men. To bivouack is to camp without tents.

I have my cot and trunk and the officers mess chest in my tent and Frost and Saml Weirrick³⁶ stay with me to look after things run of errands and pack up when about to march. Last night we were notified by Genl [Col.] Woodruff, who now commands this Division (Genl Mitchel being absent on leave) that we were in the vicinity of the enemy. They have broken up the communication on this Rl. Rd. (the Louisville and Nashville RRd) have burned and blown up the bridges and cut the Telegraph wires and annoyed the Union men generally. This morning we heard there was fighting at Nashville and expected to be marched direct on to N____. We are stopping here, I suppose to protect the Rl Rd, which is being rapidly repaired for the purpose of furnishing supplies to us and the troops in and below N____.

This is not the service I shld. prefer and I hope we will not be kept at it long, for it is difficult to keep men in good discipline or good health while engaged at it.

A small party of rebels seized Suttler and his effects [on] our route

³⁶ Pvt. Samuel T. Weirrick, I Co., 101st DVI. Entered service, Aug. 11, 1862., age 19; discharged, Jan. 22, 1863 at Nashville on surgeon's certificate-of disability.

today. The Suttler was traveling in the rear of his division and our Brigade being a little behind the rebs, dashed out from a ravine, took the Suttler and his wagons up into the ravine when our troops came up and attack[ed] them killing several and rescuing the teams, but the rebs carrier the Suttler off with them. In as I may be routed out at any moment, I think I will go to bed, that is to my cot and finish this another day if permitted.

Nov 8 — I believe I cant get over my old habit of working late at night. I begin to think that and sleeping late in the morning are here to stay and that it is useless to try to recover from. If not hereditary it must have become constitutional with most of our family and to get over it I shall have to bring about a constitutional change.

At any rate here it is late quite late, I dont like to say how late, but 'tis near 11 P.M. that I resume my letter. I seem to have been busy all day, but I can hardly see what I have done. It is true I got up late this morning (7. o.c.) just because I could and because it seemed nearer home to be lying abed in the morning with my eyes closed to everything around me and my ears to[o] so far as I could.

But the pounding of coffee and the noise of horses and mules the beating of drums and blowing of fifes, dispelled the sweet delusion as did the narrow limits of my cot.

The noises were not like the surroundings of home, if the lying late abed was a little like it. The crying, (if not in pain) even of Willie or Maggie or Freddie would have been far more musical to me than anything that cld have been produced from drum or fife or any other set of instruments, saving their own sweet voices in a jolly laugh or call for Papa. Nothing in short could so have stirred or soothed either to sweet repose like the voices of wife, children and friends at home. And you to[o], I suppose, would all let me have home a week or two. You were always patient enough with me for my failings, but I know you would be glad to be more so for a little visit from me. And I am sure I would be very glad to forgive without mentioning all the faults I ever thought of in you for a little time say a week at home. Not that I am homesick, nor that my absence has been so long, but the privations of this live [life] are well calculated to make the heart warm up and the blood flow quicker at the thought of home and friends "left behind us."

Then to[o] life is uncertain and doubly so perhaps here tho. I do not see that on the average more lives are lost in the battles of armies than by diseases among the same number of men at home in civil life. But I was going to explain why I left to this hour the finishing of this letter. I was looking as usual after the welfare of the men, regulating guard duty, rations, forage, teams, tents cloths and all that and directing some drilling, getting advice until 2. o.c. P.M. when I recd. an order to

orrow morning at 7. P.M. in command of my own
regt., 38 Ills back 8 ms on the road. We came yesterday
to make a reconnaissance and guard a narrow defile on the Louisville
and Nashville turnpike. This has occupied all the rest of my time nearly,
getting instructions and giving orders. I want to write a short order yet
and a short letter to J. B. McPherson [Maj. Gen. James Birdseye
McPherson, of Clyde, Ohio] and will consequently stop where I am.
I recd. Willies Maggies and Freddie's little letters with real pleasure.
I like yrs I love those little missles [missives]. They must suggest some
more letters for Mama or Aunty to write. My fingers will get cold.

your affectionate Husbd. L Stem

Letter No. 21

Have the Squire get a half sheet of P O
stamps and you send them to me

Head Qrs 101st Regt. O.V.I. Encamped near
Edgefield Junction Tenn Nov 14 1862

It is quite a mystery my Dear [wife], how time flits away and days
and weeks are multiplied into months and so little seems to be
accomplished, not by the Army alone but by myself. I had no thought
that this whole day wld. go by and the early hours of the night sped
away until it shd. be 9 P.M. when I commenced this letter to
you, but it's so.

I have not been out of Camp today, have been busy, and can't see
what I have done. Our Camp guards require daily instruction, the
officers require looking after and instructing, the Camp has to be kept
clean, the sick men looked after and the delinquents in duty punished.

Officers and privates run to me for advice and instructions on all
kinds of subjects, and each one occupies 10, 15 or 30 minutes and all
have to be listened to pleasantly and patiently. It has been a hard task
to bring myself to punish the men for careless and negligent discharge of
duty, but I have had to come to it.

Today I had to put ten of them on extra labor for leaving their Cos
without permission and exposing themselves to being taken prisoner by
these roving bands of bush whackers. It has been in some respects
greatly to my disadvantage that we have been kept on such constant
and active duty, but perhaps on the whole better for the health of the
Regt. They have escaped the run of fever and other diseases known as
"Camp diseases." The marches and privations however, of the first three
weeks from Louisville were to[o] severe and I am satisfied unneces-

sarily so and the consequence is a large sick list and several deaths and
the spirits and energy of the men very much broken down. The good
heart and will of the men in the cause they have entered upon has
subsided into a feeling of indifference to some extent and obedience to
orders is not so cheerful as it would have been. I have no doubt
suffered a depreciation in their good opinion for not providing what it
was not in my power to obtain, though no doubt they honestly think
I could.³⁷ Doct. Cook to[o] has not proved to be the man I thought
him to be. He is exceedingly selfish and close to a degree amounting to
meanness. He has become quite unpopular and many complaints are
made to me by men and officers for his inattention and negligence of
their needs and comforts, while he industriously attends to his own.
I was at first unwilling to believe that there was real cause for
complaint, but am compelled to admit that he is not what he ought
to be to the men.

We have here two men dangerously ill, and he has never made
known to me the fact that they were so and am sure has not made the
effort he ought to have made to obtain medicines and nursing for them.

I shall be compelled to visit the sick myself every day. Frost tells
me that some of the boys have been writing home horrible tales of the
suffering of the 101st.

Our hard marching on scanty supplies of food and water was a
thing seemingly cruel but it [should] not be exaggerated. Among the
accounts that are sent home I dont expect to escape censure by any
means; I cannot expect among so many in the midst the duties
devolving upon me [to] regard it as possible for any man to satisfy all,
that everything has been done that should be and just as it should be.
I have been deeply grieved at the privations and hard labor the men
have been called upon to endure by my commands, but there was no
help for it; to have resisted the orders of my superior officers wld. have
been mutinous and might have cost me my life and that of some of the
men, without bettering the condition of those who went unpunished by
so severe a penalty. I am still more deeply grieved to hear of the
deaths in hospitals, which I am sure might be more than one half less if
proper care were taken of the men left there. I drop this unpleasant
subject by adding that I have long intended writing to Doctr. [A.D.]
Reed of the Sanitary Commission at Louisville upon this subject, but
I suppose his hands are to[o] full to admit of his doing anything in the

³⁷ In a letter signed "L" from Edgefield Junction, Tennessee, ten miles from
Nashville, spoke of difficulties of the march and of life in the field, lack of sup-
plies, especially tents. "... my intercourse with the regiment has confirmed the
opinion formed some time since, that the men have confidence in Col. Stem, and
fully believe that he did all in his power to relieve their wants during their
severe exposures." Sandusky Daily Commercial Register, Nov. 27, 1862.

but I must write tomorrow. Last night was
reports from and writing to hospitals.

In the conclusion of my last letter I wrote you that I was going out
in command of this and another Regt. on a scouting expedition. Well
did so, when I started I thought it was a dangerous business and
expected some fighting. But if there was any danger we didn't see it.
Small parties of what are called bushwhackers had infested the road
for 10 ms. back along the Louisville and Nashville turnpike, over which
we had marched to this place. They had taken several of our men whom
they had caught lagging back behind the regt. on the march, took
their guns and blankets from them and let them go. Others from other
regts. they had held as prisoners and some others they paroled.
On our way here (at the point where I was to give particular attention
to protecting our supply train), they had attacked a sutlers wagon and
attempted to run it up a ravine, but our brigade coming up drove them
back killing some of their party. I had seen one of the dead as we had
marched passed the spot. It was to be my business to clear the
neighborhood of these marauders killing [or] capturing all I could. But
I saw none of them although I had the country thoroughly scoured
for 8 [to] 10 miles square miles.

Sunday Nov 16 1862

You will "take notice" as Capt'n [N. M.] Barnes says that I have
suspended writing for a while, and you will no doubt wonder why that
is and I suppose I may as well tell you. And firstly on Friday night
before I commenced the letter I had promised Capt'n Kirby that I would
go the rounds with him at 12. o.c. at night to visit the pickets and
outposts around the Brigade. So I wrote until I felt like sleeping a
little, then laid down until 11½ when the Capt'n. found me awake.
I had scarcely more than dozed away the while I laid down. We took
a little bite of bread and butter and cold chicken (that sounds like
comfort and house keeping dont it) and mounted our horses and
started. It was quite dark, couldn't see the wagon track leading from
our Camp to the turnpike. Our first post was stationed about a mile
and a half east of our Camp in the woods. We had some trouble to find
it in the dark, but found it after riding about [awhile] through
brush and weeds and scrub oak woods. The others we found without
any trouble, though in one of [our] attempts to cross a little depression
in the ground my horse lost his balance for a little while and fell on
his knees, but without particular injury. I had not gone out because it was
my business to do so, but because Capt'n. Kirby would know how the
duties of his visit shld. be discharged, and I wanted to learn. It was
after 2. o.c. when we returned and I retired to wake up at abt. 7. A.M.

and find that Frost had a pretty good breakfast prepared for me and the
rest of the mess. Yesterday I was busy arranging to have to [two?]
sick men taken care of. They had been neglected and I personally
carried to them some white sugar for their tea, and furnished from my
own supply; likewise some light bread and had it toasted and a
toast-tea made for one who is very low. Besides this Joel Hales of
Fostoria and W. D. Smith of Bascom called to see me the day before,
staid all night in camp and of course occupied a good deal of my time.
I had to go to Head Qrs of Brigade to see after and obtain leave to
dispense with afternoon drilling that the men might wash themselves
and their clothes without them [having] to appropriate Sunday for that
purpose. On the way I stopped at the hospital of the 38th Ills, which
belongs to our Brigade, to learn of the Surgeon how it was that the 38th
cld. have its sick in a building, while we were compelled to content
ourselves with a tent. Came to the conclusion that the fault was in our
Surgeon in part and in part in officer commanding Brigade Col. Carlin
to whom I had applied for that comfort for my sick men three days
before the 38th took possession of the house referred to. And came
back to camp raring some at my surgeons and Col Carlin. Being about
¾ of am. from the Cumberlin [Cumberland] River I concluded to take
a bath myself although I knew the water wld. be cold enough
for it. I got my clean shirts drawers and socks and Dr. Caswell³⁸ 2nd
asst surgeon and Major [later Lieutenant Colonel M. F.] Wooster and
myself walked down to the river and took [a] first rate bath. The water
is clear and deep with a greenish cast which I have observed in all the
waters nearly of Ky and Tenn. The banks here are high and rocky, the
river pretty wide and the spot rather picturesque. After my bath supper
and a visit to the sick men I was to[o] sleepy to write any last night.

Now that explains the delay in finishing my letter. I omitted to
mention one thing in connection with my going out to visit the outposts
the other night. On that day one [of] our men had gone alone to the
river and while there washing was shot at and hit in the hand. And
when I started out in the night, I thought there was danger from some
[of] these scamps and more danger in approaching some of the green
pickets; who might be alarmed at our approach and fire upon us without
waiting to demand the counter sign, but we had no adventure at all.

To return to our scouting party. We went back on the Nashville
and Louisville Turnpike about 8 ms to where the Sutler had been
attacked (I have named the hill Sutlers Hill, but doubt the names
coming into general use). I stationed the other Regt. near there and
[a] little this way, at [the] same time placing two Cos. [of] my own

³⁸ Dr. Walter Caswell, asst. surgeon, 101st OVI. Entered service Aug. 17,
1862, age 30. Resigned July 28, 1863, on surgeon's certificate of disability.
Ohio Register Commission, VII, 447.

the mouth of two ravines opening onto the turnpike, at that point and for several miles this way runs in a valley of (about) in width, and instructed the commanding officer of the Regt. to guard two other similar ravines further south and to send out two or three Cos on the West side of the Land N pike. I then took the remaining 8 cos of my regt up the hill, which 1 1/4 ms. long by the road, and 1 m beyond the top encamped. By this time it was near 2. o.c. I started out two other cos. to reconnoitre the East side of the Pike.

One of these I accompanied for a couple of ms and seeing them fairly in the way of their duty and no probability that I should be needed by them I returned to camp alone saving my *cook* and *Srey Frost*, stopping on the way to eat some very good persimmons. Arriving at Camp I sent a report to Col Carlin of some information I had gained as to the residence and doings of a couple of secessionists and then rode off to the camp of the other regt. to ascertain whether anything had transpired and to visit on the way the two cos. posted to guard the ravines. When I returned to the 101st it was getting quite dark, and although the pike had been literally thronged all day with teams, foot men (soldiers fallen out and coming up by ones twos and so on) horsemen and occasionally a buggy and troops of cavalry, it was all still and quiet and I met only one solitary horseman galloping down the hill. He drew a little as he approached, 'till I suppose he recognized my uniform, as I did his and ejaculating all right, galloped on. I had rode pretty hard, been [in] the saddle most all the time from 7 A.M. 'till then near 8 P.M. and had chafed the skin off against the stirrup leather at my knee and was riding at a smart walk. When half way up the hill, I saw an object in the road before me some 5 rods which I supposed was a calf, but in an instant after, my horse wheeled suddenly round and but for my firm hold of the reins he wld. have run like a good fellow. Turning him again I urged him forward, he refused to go, backed off near the high and steep descent at the edge of the road, was obliged to turn him down the road to avoid *dashing horse and rider* into [the] ravine below. The horse was evidently badly frightened and as he seldom frightens I concluded I might be mistaken, but the mysterious object stood perfectly still, evidently I thought with its head toward me, and I was unable on a deliberate survey at the nearest approach I could make to determine whether it was a calf or not. Thinking of the wild, rocky hills and ravines all round for miles, I thought it might be barely possible that it was a panther or some such varmint. I tried to get my horse forward but he made a rush at a steep and impassable side hill rising [on] my right rather than go one foot nearer to it. I didn't use the spurr much for he seemed so really frightened that I apprehended if forced too near to it he might make a bound in spite of me down into the ravine.

I saw the thing move its[elf] and felt quite assured it must be a calf,

but it was next [to] the hill side, if I force my horse along his aim would be to get by on the side next [to] the ravine and if he didn't get over his alarm would as leave go down the ravine as closer to it. I concluded to coax him along until I could determine upon a plan of moving the thing. To shoot at it might kill a widow's calf (there were two poor widows living close by the top of the hill who had a cow and some pigs taken by the soldiers) and alarm the camps some little and might by a bear [bare?] possibility bring a wounded panther at me. I didn't believe it was anything but a calf, and I didn't wish to hurt the calf, anyhow, but I couldn't account for its standing so perfectly still while I [was] prancing about there just before it. Could it be a Rebel in disguise waiting a closer shot at me? No, there was no need of Rebs going to that pains, he could have secreted himself anywhere almost along that hill and had a dead rest at me within 10 or 12 ft. as I rode along. Final[ly] I unbuttoned my holster, took hold of my pistol, thinking widow's calf or not I cant fool here any longer; but I waited a little longer and sure enough a calf walked off deliberately up the hill. The horse then becoming of my mind as to its true character, walked on at his usually brisk and elastic pace and soon passed the dreaded spotted calf. I should have felt rather calfish afterwards if I had shot the calf under the first impulse that [it] might be a panther. Soon after getting into camp I got word from Col Carlin that he wanted me to send a strong detachment about 6 ms over on the Long Hollow Pike east of us where I had sent him word I had ascertained two noted active rebels lived, who had been bushwhacking. So next day I sent out 6 cos and one in another and one in still another quarter. I went part of the way with one of the cos the major in command of the large detachment, having before given orders for the other regt. to keep up an active reconnaissance in the west. While ours most of them went east. When evening came the large detachment returned well supplied with chickens and turkeys taken from the Rebs. They however found the houses of the two men whom I had reported in flames when they got there. It seems that the 4th Inda Cavalry had got the same information [I] had on the same day doubtless that I had, and they had sent out at once to avenge the wrongs committed upon our soldiers. I dont think I ought to say avenge either for I dont understand that to be the purpose of the authorities, but the object is to show to these bushwhacking rebs that if they will claim protection as non-combatants and pass as citizens in citizens dress from place to place in safety, they must not keep weapons concealed in the hills and ravines and rush out in armed squads to capture by surprise sick and worn out soldiers of our army. I was glad I had not witnessed this house burning when they told me of the crying of the women and children over their burning home; although in the morning I had a desire to command the detachment in person thinking there was a chance for adventure. I regarded however as my duty to remain where I could command

and go with to any of the parties sent out who might need it. But none of them met with any armed rebels. Our or rather my instructions were to attack all armed parties not in the service of the U.S. and to shoot on sight all armed butternuts found prowling about the country.

All these people wear clothes colored with butternut bark, save in a few instances. Some of them have obtained our uniform of blue and wear it to deceive us. I was also instructed to take from known secessionists any provisions I could find (suitable for the use of my men or horses giving a receipt therefor and in all cases leaving enough to support the family for six months.

Under this order we appropriated sweet potatoes flour corn meal port, some apples and a good many chickens and turkeys.

I had one of the men buy some butter for me and since then have lived rather high.

Frost makes good dumplings, pies and biscuits and roasts chickens, turkeys first rate under the instruction [of] a negro cook some of the officers brot along. We were ordered to return to this camp on last Wednesday and did so having found no armed rebs at all. On Thursday last Doc Cook, Seney and myself went to Nashville and I got some good wheat bread to last us a week. I have something to say of Nashville and the country around but cannot do so now and if I dont now shall doubtless forget it.

On Wednesday I got one of your letters and another yesterday, one from Clemy to[o] and one from Robt on Thursday one from Ezra and today one from Emeline and Sally with a lot of newspapers, all of them very acceptable.

I have a letter from Mat. All of these I ought to ansr. besides writing to sundry friends and of course all will expect long letters. And then too I have not written to the Squire. Call at the office, give my best regards and apprise him I do not wilfully neglect him. My hands are fuller now if possible than before, the health of the men is so bad that I have doubts, which trouble me very much, of Cooks capacity. I wish I had Doct. Gibson or Cronice or Parks[.] By the way I met Thomy C_____ at Bowling Green and Parks at Nashville[,] found them well and contented and enjoyed a good little visit with them. I have a high opinion of Cronice as a Physician. Mention to their friends if you meet any of them that I saw these men.

I wanted [to] say a good deal to Maggie Willie and Freddie but I have hardly time now. I would like very much some more of those nice little letters they wrote me. Tell Willie that I ride a nice little black horse that Uncle Mat. got for me. He is the lightest fastest walker

I have seen, as gay as a bird, holds head as proud as a boy with new boots on, and gallops off as fast as a streak. He is as kind and gentle as a lamb, dont scare at all at the firing of guns and when the big cannon booms near him, he just looks up as though he thought shot was funny, but dont rear and pitch nor try to run with me. He has to stand out of doors all the time and sometimes for a week he dont get anything but corn to eat, and occasionally not enough of that. But he is always ready to take me on his back and canter off as full of life as anybodies [sic] horse. I ride him all day long many times he got no dinner and sometimes not enough water and that most always so very muddy that no horse would drink it if wasn't most starved for a drink. But sometimes I had [to] drink where he and others horses drank. I didn't drink much there though. The longer I have the better I like him. I hope I may be able to bring him home with me.

Willie must not neglect to use his crutches.

Always

[remainder of page torn off]

STAND BY THE COLORS:
THE CIVIL WAR LETTERS OF LEANDER STEM†

EDITED BY JOHN T. HUBBELL*

Letter No. 22

Camp Andy Johnson
4 mi. S. of Nashville
Monday Eveng. Dec. 1 1862

I desisted from writing last night on account of my eyes and shall be able to write but little tonight for the same reason and for the additional reason that I am commencing rather late.

Although I am endeavoring in this letter to give you a general outline of our march from Louisville, I may as well mention here that we're comfortably encamped here in close proximity to the enemy who is understood to occupy the country South and S. West of us in some force and I suppose there is no impropriety in adding that we await the coming forward of supplies and the perfection of the new organization of the forces under Rosecrans [Maj. Gen. William Starke Rosecrans, Commander, Army of the Cumberland]. Last evening abt. 4½ o.c. two regts of this Brigade were ordered out in haste to meet what was supposed to be a strong reconnaissance by the enemy. This and the 15th Wis. went out abt. 2½ ms. but finding no enemy advancing returned just after dark. Today some slight cannonading was heard off to the West of us and in front; probably in [Brig. Gen. Joshua Sills³⁹ commander of First Brigade, Brig. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan's Third Division] division of this wing [101st Ohio Reg., Stem's, Col. William P. Carlin's 2nd Brigade of Brig. Gen. Jefferson C. Davis' First Division of Maj. Gen. Alexander McDowell McCook's 14th Army Corps].

As no particular difficulty was anticipated, I obtained permission to go to Nashville and take a team along to bring out some boxes at the express office and buy myself some lightbread and a hat. I told the Genl. [Davis] I wanted a new hat and he cldn't deny it. I returned a little after dark, spent a good deal of time in instructing

† Continued from the July, 1975, number (reprint).

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³⁹ Brig. Gen. Joshua W. Sill (1831-1862), West Point 1853, Classmate of McPherson, Schofield, and Hood. Killed at Stone's River. Warner, *Generals in Blue*, pp. 448-449.

some sentinels and visiting our sick and then take up my pen again. By the way we are having too much sickness and it is proving rather fatal, most of it is typhoid fever.

To return to the battle of "Chaplin Hills" as it is called in the official reports — After retiring about a mile we slept on our arms until morning and arose to find that the foe had fled. The first blood I saw that was shed in battle was that of a federal soldier. As we were hastening forward to support the battery we passed within a few rods of a man lying on his face with his pants stripped down, his clothes all bloody and a few men near him. Further along we crossed a pretty deep hollow in [a] large field, down in the ditch (there was not water in it) lay a rebel in "butternut," a bullet hole was perceptible in the thigh of his pants, beside him lay a litter and his pantaloons leg was full of fresh blood. I asked him as we passed if he was much hurt; he replied "Oh! Sir if you can do anything for me do." I would gladly have helped him, but could not. On the brow of the opposite hill we passed near a large fine looking man in brown clothes, full of blood about the back and seat. He lay on his right side with his back toward us and his head resting on his outstretched arm as though he might be asleep. Farther from our line of march lay a few others apparently dead. These were all I saw that day. On the day after the battle we marched a few miles probably to "Chaplin Hills" and encamped near but not on the scene of the hard fighting. Our camp this night was not more than two and a half miles from where we had encamped the night before. In getting there however we must have traveled 6 ms. We passed by in this 6 ms, a number of our own cannon dismounted and the spokes of the wheels cut to disable them. Some accounts ran that the rebs had captured them; others that our horses had been killed in the fight the men driven from the guns in the face of superior numbers and that before abandoning they had disabled them. I am not able to say which is correct. A little beyond these guns we approached a double log house of one story and one story frame. All along the fence corners lay wounded men singly or by two or threes, sheltered imperfectly from the sun and wind by blankets stretched on rails one end of which rested on the fence and the others on the ground. The houses were turned into hospitals and the cries of the wounded men could be heard as we passed by.

A good deal of time had been occupied in our circuitous march of 6 ms. and we went to camp or rather we bivouacked about the middle of the afternoon. I then had an opportunity and sent a hundred men back to bring up the blankets and knapsacks that had been left the morning before. It rained hard that night, but I found that my hostler had picked up an old caisson cover; (a heavy canvass about the size of a 4 horse wagon cover) with that stretched over a pole in front of a good fire he my boys and the Major and myself, slept tolerably dry and comfortable. The day following was spent in this camp. The

other divisions and a part of ours being engaged in burying the dead, taking care of the wounded and making up lists, and in taking schedules of the captured property. It was a disagreeable drizzling day; I had some diarrhea for several days, felt like keeping still and did so as far as possible.

Some of the men and officers visited the field of the hard fought battle, none of them I think a second time. I didn't go on to it, my curiosity was not so strong as my horror of the sight of mangled forms and suffering humanity.

After our days rest at "Chaplin Hills" we continued our pursuit of Bragg frequently forming in line of battle and advancing toward the foe. At Lancaster Ky. Bragg seemed inclined to make a little resistance, but it was evidently only to secure the removal of his train. Our battery was brot. into play and hurt a few of them, but we didn't get within musket range of any of them. Their rear guard of cavalry was within view every day until we passed Danville Ky. but we marched on afterwards to Crab Orchard Ky. Here it was understood that Bragg had escaped. We halted from the 16th to the 20th [of] Oct. and then started back toward Danville. From Danville to Crab Orchard we had not marched so fast. The first days march on our return was however a hard one. Many of them, indeed most of them were so tired out when they reached the place of encampment that without trying to prepare any supper they took a few bites of hard bread and laid down in their blankets and went to sleep. We had got into camp after dark after a march of about 6 ms. After halting a while, not long enough for the men to prepare any supper, Genl [Col. William E.] Woodruff, then commanding the Division, Genl Mitchel having gone home on leave, sent to me for one compy. of not less than 40 men and 2 commissioned officers for picket guards forthwith. I ordered out the compy. In the course of half an hour I think, an adjutant called inquiring why the compy had not been sent over. I replied that it had gone, his ans. was that there was only 14 men. Going to the line where the Co. were quartered I found that all the rest of them some 50 men, were either really or pretendedly unable to go out. I reported the fact to the adjutant and ordered more men from the next Co. in order of numbers to make up the 40. They reported to the Genl for duty and were dismissed and nothing more was said. The next day and nearly all the time since our marching has been moderate and endurable. The first days march from Crab Orchard was not too long for us, but for some reason, probably confusion in the trains before us, we would be delayed by long halts of 20 or 30 minutes and then have to go very fast for too great a distance at a time and the day was hot from 11 to 3. o. clock.

From Lancaster Ky our course was towards Bowling Green. A few little incidents occurred which I had intended to speak of and took some

notes when I could of the towns and country on the march intending to sketch them off briefly in my letters, but my hands were too full to keep it up.

Our hard marching, in heat dust, with scarcity of dirty water and a few occasions marching without anything for breakfast or sleeping without supper, without protection from the frost of the nights, had had its effect upon the men, and every day some of them would give out and be left on the way, to get forward as best they could. And great care and watchfulness became necessary to avoid their being lost and forgotten by their Captains several of whom would be quite worn out at night themselves. Consequently in the morning on the march at night I kept myself busy looking [after] these men, encouraging them all I could, having their guns or knapsacks hauled when the wagons were near enough to us to do so. This kept me too much occupied to allow me time to keep up my notes or write out much of what I saw and felt. My Lt. Col. [M. F. Wooster] was a good man, but too slow to understand and the Major [I. M. Kinby] was too cold and selfish and the adjutant [Leonard D. Smith]⁴⁰ too careless and thoughtless to do for me in such a case.

I omitted one incident which will illustrate how it is that men are broken down so fast sometimes in the service. It is customary for the men when they get quite tired and are halted for a few minutes to breath, to sit down and lie down in the road anywhere if it is not wet. They get so in a few days that when halted in the road to rest, hundreds of men in a few regts will be found to drop right down where they stop in [the] road and lie there until they are ordered to march. One day before we reached Danville and after the battle of Chaplin Hills we had bivouacked for the night in good season after a moderate days march. It was dark and chilly and the march was rapid along narrow byroads. About 9½ when the men had got well warmed up, when marching through a long narrow lane with a stone wall about as high as our arm pits on each side, we were halted. The men were worn and weary, the ground just damp enough to pack hard and smooth under the tread of the men who had first passed along and was cold; on this the men stood awhile and no further order coming sat down on the ground, many of whom soon lay down flat and fell asleep. Here we remained one hour, not knowing what was the cause or how soon we would be relieved.

Finally the order came to right about, we were on the wrong road. The men were chilled and stiff, but we crossed over some fields about a mile and half and then bivouacked for the night again and laid down about 11½ o.c. to rest.

⁴⁰ Adjutant, 1st Lt. Leonard D. Smith, entered service Aug. 4, 1862, age 20, Ohio Roster Commission, VII, 447.

The following morning we were on the march by 7 o.c. To such work as I have described I ascribe the great degree of illness to which my men are gradually being subjected.

We have been obliged to leave some at hospitals all the way, at one 10, [one] 14 at another 54 and at Bowling Green 81, and from this came 20^{odd}. I believe altogether over 200 have been left and we now have about 25 sick in camp. All who have ever been troubled with rheumatism and they are many, or who have had any predisposition to diseases of lungs or who have at any time recd. injuries of the spine or had fever sores once healed up, have them developed with increased[?]. It is surprizing how many have concealed affections of these kinds from the surgeon on their preliminary examination. It is astonishing too how many feign illness and make a great ailment out of a little one and how they become discouraged, get homesick and finally really ill of fever from it.

Dec 2nd Tuesday Eveng

I managed to write some today but not much. Indeed I have already taken up too much time with this letter and must close and mail it. I have to do the duties of Division field officer of the day tomorrow and must study them tonight. If I make any great blunders Genl Davis will give me fits. Maybe will for little ones.

I must however mention very briefly a case that took up a good deal of my time today. Abt. 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ a.m. Private Witter⁴¹ of Republic (a young man) came into my tent and said he was going to die. He looked quite well but somewhat dejected. I told him not to talk about dying. Yes he said he wouldn't live a week longer. I laughed at him, told him maybe we had better help along with [it] and not make a weeks work of it. He began to tremble, fret and weep. I then tried encouragement, asked him to take my horse and take a little ride. No he said he was able to ride twold. do no good anyhow. I asked it of him as a favor, that [the] horse needed exercise. I couldn't do anything for him.

He left me and soon returned, requested me to take charge of some receipts for notes and have them settled properly after he was dead and to send his body home in a decent coffin. I urged him to abandon such thoughts, tried to divert his attention. But he held the papers out to me, trembled violently threw out his hands and declared he was dying now and seemed about to fall off the stool. I took his papers in one hand felt his pulse with the other and found it good. However he

⁴¹ Pvt. Jonathon Witter, Co. H, 101st OVI, entered service Aug. 11, 1862, age 26. Discharged May 7, 1863, Louisville, Ky., surgeon's certificate of disability. Ibid., VII, 472.

seemed to have a genuine spasm and I sent for Dr. Cook. He came out of it finally said he was cold took off his boots and stockings put his feet to the fire and tried to tell me how he felt. Was discouraged out of heart and couldn't get over it must die, was dying now. We could make no impression on him and the Dr left promising to come again soon. Concluded to humor him undertook all he asked of me and more. Finally I said to him I was mistaken at first, he was correct he was going to die and it was my duty to telegraph his friends and have them here if possible to take him home immediately after his death and finally that as coffins were very high here and his means small the had better bring one along. He rather objected to this being in such haste and suggest that he might live a week or two yet. That I thought bearly possible and I didn't wish to neglect so solemn a duty too long. They indeed (his friends) would esteem [it] a great privilege to here before he died and minister to his last wants. After a great effort having consented and objected several times to the course proposed, he said it wouldn't look well to have them come here with a coffin and he not dead. While [I] was pulling on this string the Dr. came in and began to encourage him but he would [not] be encouraged. Doc finally referred him to me and I assured him that I had nearly given up all hope, would be glad however to find that there was. Yet on the whole my duty [to] Witter and his friends required me to take immediate steps to have them here as soon as possible and that with the means of decently removing the body. More of the same talk and Witter declared he was dying and wasn't going to and would see the war out. The Doctr. called me out and asked what I was up [to]. I told him I had determined to fall in with Witters idea, humor it until by degrees he would see how foolish and ridiculous he was making himself appear. Doc thot well of it, but the fellow had been so long given over to melancholly that he feared his becoming insane and prepared to take him off to hospital. The good pulse healthy color and his frequent mention of a furlough to go home now raised a doubt in my mind whether it was not a ruse. He is at the hospital now however.

Here I must stop and bid you good night if I find time I will write soon.

If worth the postage send this to Amanda and let her sent it to Robt. I have more work than I can attend to and can't write long letters to all. I am in debt one letter to Robt., 1 to Em, 1 to Clemy, 1 to Lydia, 2 to Keen and 3 to Amanda and have letters to write to hospital surgeons and parents of some of the boys.

Your Bro.
L. Stem

Dont publish anything I have said that will make friends feel uneasy about men in the Regt.

Letter No. 23

Head Qrs. 101st O.V.I. Camp at
Edgefield Tenn Nov 27 1862

You will have some cause of complaint now dear wife [Amanda] for my delay in writing.

A week ago I took a violent cold which resulted in a severe inflammation of my eyes and I have done no writing or reading that I could well avoid until today. Have kept in my tent a great deal of the time and don't feel now that it would be prudent to write much. We are camped as you see above, the town of Edgefield is opposite Nashville across the Cumberland river. We move however tomorrow to a point some 4 ms south of Nashville where we expect to remain a few days and then go farther south.

I got the box by Hewlet all right and exceedingly glad of it. Wish though that you had sent me white or crushed sugar instead of the Brown. We get a very good article of Brown from the Q.M. as cheap as you can send it. It isn't quite so nice though as what you sent me. Judge Seney got a box too, but it was filled with potatoes, suppose it had been open and pillaged. By the way you said some time ago that he had written his wife that he liked it first rate in the Army. He is on the contrary very sick of it, but don't say anything about it, for there is too much discouraging news going home from my Regt. Many reports that are utterly false. About these things I will write at length when my eyes are well. Mr. Jordan arrived here yesterday with a handsome lot of good things for the boys, and they have been exceedingly generous to me, gave of their apples, butter, apple butter, sorghum molasses, peach butter and fruit in cans. Their generosity toward me was a great satisfaction to me and I assure you. Indeed I have had marks of the same feeling in the same way many times before, but these delicacies from their friends at home made me feel that they have at least a good deal of respect for me. Mr. Jordan says he expected to have had a box for me from the Springs but for some reason did not find it on the cars as arranged.

He brought a good large one horse wagon load of good things. I think anything set to anyone in the regt. by express to Nashville will reach them safely. The boxes should be pretty stout and well nailed. Apples and potatoes are worth \$3.50 a bushel, sugar and butter 80 and 50¢ and coffee \$1 a pound in Nashville. Coffee and brown sugar however we buy of the Q.M. as cheap as you have them at home. I will put up in this letter some persimmon seed; plant 3 or 4 of them abt 2 inches deep and mark the spot. Keep 3 or 4 to plant in the spring and send the rest to Robt. and Ezra Stoner to try.

We have had two deaths in the regt. (one Saml Stewart⁴² and the other ————Shearer⁴³) within 10 days.

I am very sorry to lose men of disease and fear that I have left under something that might have been done for the poor fellows. I am quite sure Doctr. Cook has not done his duty and feel that I ought not to have relied so entirely upon him. I have blowed up pretty hard within the past two weeks and the sick are having better care now. But the cruel marches made in October will prove fatal to more of them if they are not sent home and this can only be done by a discharge which is difficult to obtain.

My eyes are suffering from this writing. Good night love to all and kisses for my little ones. I will be able I hope to write more for them soon.

Your affect husbd.
L. Stem

If you see Mrs. Jno Pittenger dont forget to tell her Henry is well and gave me some of her nice butter and apple butter. And tell Mrs. Genl Mitchell that the Genl is well excepting a bad cold. Am sorry is not to command our division. Genl J. C. [Jefferson Columbus] Davis commands our division now, but I prefer Mitchell because I am acquainted with him. Davis is a good officer. [Davis murdered his commanding officer, Maj. Gen. William Nelson on September 29, in the Galt House in Louisville].

Letter No. 24

Head Qrs 101st Reg Ohio Vol. Infantry
Camp Andy Johnson Tenn Dec 3 1862

You must not expect much of a letter from me this time dear wife. I shall be obliged to spend less time at letter writing and more at the study of tactics. I am Division field officer of the day today or I should not be writing to you now at 11½ o.c. at night. It is my duty to visit the pickets on the outposts after 12 at night at least once and I have been writing letters in relation to sick men and discharge papers

⁴² Pvt. Samuel Steward, Co. K, OVI. Entered service Aug. 13, 1862, age 26; died Edgefield Junction, Tenn., Nov. 25, 1862. *Ibid.*; 478.

⁴³ Pvt. Michael Sherer, Co. E, OVI. Entered service Aug. 11, 1862; age 21; died Nov. 17, 1862, Edgefield Junction, Tenn.; Pvt. Adam Sherer, Co. E, 101st OVI, entered service Aug. 11, 1862, age 14. Killed at Stone's River, Dec. 31, 1862; Pvt. Henry Sherer, Co. E, 101st OVI, entered service Aug. 11, 1862, age 21. Died Dec. 7, 1863, Bridgeport, Alabama. *Ibid.*, 462.

and visiting the sick in camp until this hour of night, and have now concluded to put in half an hour at least upon this letter. Our pickets here are posted within a mile and a half of the enemies pickets, but you must not be alarmed at the idea of my going out so near the enemies lines at night. I shall take care to keep within our lines and the object of going out is to see that the pickets are awake and alert attending to their duty in such a way as to prevent being surprized. Pickets you will understand are men posted as far out toward enemies lines as may be deemed safe for them, in order to watch the movements of the enemy and give the alarm if any danger threatens and to intercept all persons liable to give information to the enemy of our doings position or strength. For instances a compy. of men is sent out for this purpose and one man is stationed on a road as near the lines of the enemy as it is thought prudent to approach, another is stationed on his right and one on his left 8, 10, 15, or 20 rods off and others again same distance from them, forming a chain of 8 or 12 sentinels. Inside of these and toward our camp the bal. of our compy take a favorable position in a body. From this inner post men are sent out every hour or two hours to relieve and take the place of the outer posts or sentinels. If any danger threatens the outer sentinel the balance of the compy. go to their rescue and by the fire of the guns the whole encampment is notified of the approach of any force of the enemy. We have in our present encampment of the 9th Division 3 Brigades and each Brigade has 4 regiments and one Battery.

The Division occupies a space East and West of about six miles and the whole front of this is guarded by pickets in this way night and day by companies from the several regiments of the different Brigades. The companies remain out 24 hours and are then relieved by others. It is the most important points of this picket line that I am now about to go out to visit at 12 o.c. at night.

Dec 5 Friday

I dont know but that [I] shall string this out from day to day until I make a letter of it all. It is now near 11. o.c. A.M. and I have spent all the time since I got up advising about matters concernint duties of men and officers, answering inquiries as to whether this or that would be permitted, and writing letters to help things along in which the men are interested; such as boxes coming by Rl. Rd. and all that. And now here comes another interruption. This last one is Mr. Ellis of our County who has come here to see his Brother and Brother-in-law, John Watson⁴⁴ both of whom have been sick a good deal. I was of

⁴⁴ Pvt. John McC. Watson, Co. I, 101st OVI, 21 yrs. of age. Discharged Dec. 12, 1862, surgeon's certificate of disability. *Ibid.*, 475.

course glad to see him, it makes one feel nearer home. A Mr. Smith and a Mr. Deacon and a Mr. Stewart called this morning before I was up and staid until sometime after breakfast. Two of them have sons in this regt. Smiths son is quite sick and I fear will not get well. He is a faithful good hearted soldier, a better man in my estimation than the Genl whose imprudency caused his death, if he di

Friday night Dec. 5th

Mr. Ellis and Mr. Stewart together-with Mr. Shriver who is also from our County visiting his sick son [Captain Jesse Shriver]⁴⁵ and the various questions connected with the drilling of men and instruction to officers dress parade and visiting the sick have taken all afternoon and evening until 10. o.c. Today just after dinner the ambulance came in from town (where it had gone to take Captn Sheldon⁴⁶ to the Hospital) and who by the way occupied $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour of my time this morning) and brought me the second box; and soon after that Charlie Stoner brot. me your letter of 30th ulto. with which I found-enclosed 3 little letters from Willie, Maggie, and Freddie, the little rogues. You can hardly imagine how thankful I am for this box. It is nearly twice as large as I had expected. What nice looking ham, turkey and such a glorious lot of golden butter. I had just bought a colls. worth at 75¢ a pound. The apples two [too] beat anything I have seen in the land of slaves by a long ways. Unfortunately a can of jelly came open and the contents all spilled out and ran all over one end of the box, moistening the bread ham and turkey so that they had moulded on the outside; but I think they are not spoiled. I regret the loss of the jam, for I think it would be very greatful to our sick men. [Our sick men would be grateful for it]. I gave them most of the dried cherries and peaches in the other box. This I could well afford to do for I live well enough here. I can buy very good light bread at 10¢ the pound loaf and have had butter at 50 to 75¢ a pound. I occasionally buy chickens at 25¢. The cakes and snaps are rare treats I assure you. I sent a good slice of the fruit cake and one of the largest apples to Genl Mitchel. Shld have sent him more if I had known there were so many in the box. I must say before I forget it, you must call on Mrs. Mitchell at once. The Genl has been so very cordial and kind that you owe it to her on my account. The Genl. is tolerably well says he had a letter from his frau yesterday. [Robert Byington Mitchell was born in Mansfield, Ohio — not far from Tiffin].

⁴⁵ Pvt. Ezra C. Shriver, I Co., 101st OVI. Entered service Aug. 12, 1862, age 21. Died Dec. 12, 1862, Nashville; Pvt. Emmanuel J. Shriver, I Co., 101st OVI. Entered service Aug. 12, 1862, age 18. Died Jan. 13, 1863, Nashville. *Ibid.*, 475.

⁴⁶ Capt. Henry Sheldon, D Co., 101st OVI. Entered service July 24, 1862, age 24. Resigned Jan. 28, 1863, Nashville. *Ibid.*, 457.

I told you that I was sitting up to go out to look after the picket guards when I commenced this letter, but I have not told you anything about my midnight ride. It was something after 12 when I started, clear, frosty and bright moonlight, with one attendant. I rode along the line some 4 ms. part of the way on a turnpike road and part in the woods. The pickets are posted 10 to 20 rods apart. Every one would halt me, and most of them made me dismount, (all of them shld. have done so) and advance and give the countersign. I found them all vigilant and after giving some caution or instruction to those who needed it and returning to camp I found it was after 4. o.c. I laid down and slept awhile 2 or 3 hours perhaps, then got up and went to Genl. Davis Head Qrs to report; of course having breakfast first. From Genls' Head Qrs I went to Nashville to see Genls Mitchel and Rosecrans about business. While there I called on some of my men in Hospital and altogether didn't get back until about 8. o.c.

It is high time I was in bed and I am going, and hoping to finish this in the morning.

Sunday night 10. o.c. I have just recd. an order that our Division must be prepared to march at a moments warning. I am quite out of patience at the interruptions I have endured in writing this letter and in my study of my duties. All day yesterday I was busy until 9. o.c. at night. It is true I suffered most all of the business interviews to be protracted a little beyond and some of them a good deal beyond the time required to attend to the business, but I thought it best to do so. Part of the time was taken up with our Seneca Co. friends. Today has been a repetition of the same thing, only that Captn. Shriver spent the evening 'till 10. o.c. with me. You may send me a box about half the size of this 2nd one when it is convenient and put into it a peck of onions, they are highly recommended to prevent disease. I don't think of anything else only a can of butter. This you have sent me will last me a good spell I think with care.

Your tomato catsup is a splendid finish to our fat meat. I sent a slice of your nice cake and a couple of those fine apples to Genl. Davis and a similar present to Col. Carlin. Maybe they'll think I am trying to curry favor, so they may if they want to. You must not feel disappointed if you dont get another letter from me soon. Direct the box via of Louisville and Nashville.

The measles are among the men and I fear a sorry time awaits us on our march. I dread it terribly.

I wanted to have written a letter to Willie and Maggie and Freddie but have not had time and my fingers are cold now and it is late bed time. Kiss them for me and dont fret about me. When my eyes were sore I almost wished they might get sore enough to enable me to get home for a little while. As to money if Mr. Keen is short of

funds you'll be obliged to call on Robt. but dont be afraid to speak frankly to Mr. Keen about anything you want. I will surely write him next. We will not get any pay I am afraid for a month longer, have had not yet. Your husband L. Stem

I had a letter from Genl McPherson. He send his respects to all the folks at the Springs, is very busy, expects a battle, thinks can hardly get my regt. into his command, has good opinion of Col Carlin.

Letter No. 25

Head Qrs. 101st Regt O.V.I. 7 ma.
South of Nashville Dec 15, 1862

My Dearest Wife—

It is now 9 P.M. Captn. [N. M.] Barnes has been in my tent most of the evening and has the blues pretty badly. Wants to go home. Judge Seney has been in with him part of the time. The Judge hasn't got the blues but his patriotism has been at a pretty low ebb for sometime.

Indeed between you and I, I never thought it was love of country or a desire to serve his country that brought him into the Army. Captn. Barnes and the Judge went to Nashville today together and it rained nearly all afternoon and has been dark and raining tonight. The rain however ceased a while ago. Being under orders to be ready to march in the morning and having got a little wet, the Captn. I suppose was thinking how nice and comfortable it would be at home along with wife and children; and so it would and if all men yielded to the love of home our country would be gone, and without a country, without a government there is no security for home or friends. There are however some things which unavoidably tend to shake ones faith in the success of our great and good cause and one not the least of these is the conduct of the commanding authorities in diverse and sundry matters touching the health and even life of the private soldier. Sick men by the thousand[s] are kept from their friends, placed in hospitals in crowds where they cannot be well cared for in many cases and where they die in great numbers a mere bill of expense to the country. The reason why they do not allow these sick men to go home on furlough is that they refuse to return when they get well. I am not making a very cheerful letter of this I fear and when I tell you that one of my men came to me tonight, with a letter from his sister, telling that his wife and oldest daughter would die very soon and that if he would see them alive he must hurry and I could only offer the poor fellow poor consolation while he wept you will not wonder that I am not feeling particularly lively.

I could only say to him that very many of us would be found on inquiry to have dear relatives dangerously ill and that our business in being here was to lay down our lives if need be for our country's cause and hence it was not expected that furloughs could be had to go home to our sick and dying friends. Besides this poor fellows case, I see reports in the papers and get them by letters from Hospitals, of men I have left in charge of Hospitals dying and their friends have taken their bodies home. This is anything but cheering. The measles have commenced among us and I applied to Genl Rosecrans to have my Regt transferred to Genl Mitchels command which will occupy Nashville for a month or two, but met with no success. I requested Doct. Cook [First Surgeon T. M. Cook] to show to the medical authorities our exposed condition at this season of the year but he is a poor stick. My Regt. is of course much smaller than when I started and every day more of the men are becoming sick and discouraged.

They have realized what seems to be in their higher officers a degree of indifference to their sufferings, but I suppose it is only a seeming indifference. I know for myself that while [I] can do but little for them the care, responsibility and anxiety, the grief I suffer in witnessing their sickness and exposure is more than I ever anticipated, although I always [recognized] my responsibility as very great and expected to witness all that I have so far met and more. Our fathers in coldest winter, half clad marked the road they trod with crimson streams from their bleeding feet that we might enjoy the blessings of a free government. And while perhaps many sufferings born by our Army might be made less if the management was different, we remember it is human to err and that all these errors are none too great if we are in the end rewarded with the preservation of our free and happy government.

When I commenced I didn't expect to write so much as I have. You will notice by the caption of this letter that we are not now at Camp Andy Johnson. We are only three miles further out however. If we move tomorrow, we may not move far and may have a battle and we may not move at all. I thought I had mentioned to you that Genl Mitchel had returned. Indeed I am sure I did and requested you to call on his wife as the Genl had been so kind to me. [Apparently, Gen. Mitchell's wife was living at Green Springs in Seneca County, Ohio, Tiffin, the county seat, Stem's home county]. Frost is with him as clerk to his adjutant. The Genl has command at Nashville. You need not trouble yourself about paying Gibson or any of those old matters contracted before I left. Let them wait until Uncle Sam pays me. I have your letters of 7 & 10 inst and they are most welcome. I assure [you] Kiss the little ones good night.

Your husband

L. Stem

Letter No. 26

Head Quarters 101st Reg O.V.I.
Camp 7 ms south of Nashville

Dec 20 1862

[to his wife]

I went to town yesterday for the purpose of seeing the sick in Hospital, taking a bath, having my picture taken and looking after some boxes for the men and myself, coming by express. I got some days ago the box which Jordan should have brot. all right excepting the two chickens, which were only slightly tainted. I am very much obliged indeed to Ginney and Sallie and all the rest of them.

Yesterday I recd. a long box from the Springs [Green Springs, Stem's home] full of canned and dried fruit. I dont know whether it is all intended for me or not. I shall however give of it liberally to my sick men. Enclosed you will find the picture, its not good, it was too late in the evening and I had to sit so long that it gave the eyes a staring look. If we stay here a few days longer I will try it again. I couldn't get a citizens coat to put on or I would have done so. Genl Mitchel tells me that Mrs. Seney and Mrs. Mitchel talk of coming to Nashville and that if they do perhaps you would want to come along.

Saturday night 8. o.c. I had been studying hard all forenoon today to be prepared for Brigade drill this afternoon and it occurred to me that I ought to notify you at once of the possibility of your having a chance to come to Nashville and I pitched in at once to do so in haste in a very short note, but in the midst of a sentence looked at my watch and saw that I couldn't get it off today. Therefore I stopped short and went to work again at my preparations for Brigade drill. We had a pretty good drill, but it was not very satisfactory to me as I made several mistakes; indeed one great blunder and I am almost afraid that mischief may come to me for it. I am satisfied that Wooster, my present Lieut Col. owes me no good will, and I am apprehensive that he is working underhandedly to my injury in order that the minds of the commanders of our Brigade and Division may be prepared to regard me as incompetent to command the Regt. The fact is, that I have been a great proportion of the time without any assistance from field officers, who should have been at their posts to assist me, and as a consequence have had but little opportunity to study tactics. I think now however that I have got fairly started and shall be able to make rapid progress. At all events I am determined to work at it hard and to accept any fate that awaits me with philosophic resignation. But about coming to Nashville; General Mitchel says he will know soon whether this army will remain in or near its present position long enough to justify a visit by you and Mrs. Seney and will let me know. You can come to Nashville and this encampment with perfect safety and the expense will not be so very great.

You must use your best judgement about leaving home. I know it will be your pleasure to come and I know that those I owe and those who are liable for my debts, will think my money ought not be expended in that way, and I know also that if they were in my situation and reflected upon the uncertainty of life they would do as I do, and rejoice in the opportunity of seeing their wives once more at least. You must not think of making any outlay for the sake of dressing well, if you do come. You are always dressed well enough to see Genl Mitchell or any other Genl. Mrs. Seney and Mrs. Mitchel will be dressed much finer of course, but their husbands cant love them any finer or better or richer than yours does you; so never mind the togging.

I wish you could bring the three rogues along, but that would hardly be advisable. Possibly one of the girls might afford to take a trip to the South before the Union is finally destroyed. I am sure I should like to have a visit from you all down here in Dixie. It is not at all uncommon now to find men here from Seneca Co. or one of the counties adjoining to visit their friends or rather relatives.

I have omitted to mention that I have received your letters of the 10th and 15th insts. and from what you say I think you cannot have recd. all of mine. Although its tiresome for me to write on my lap I think I have written you more than one letter a week. I am entitled to carry a small field desk, but there has been so much confusion about means of transportation, sometimes an order allowing us one wagon to a regiment besides the ammunition wagon, sometimes 6 and sometimes 12 that I didn't want to be encumbered with a desk. I think however I will have one made by some of the men.

Freddie says he is going to take Mama out "buddy ridin when he dits big." I hope he will. I like to have them write by her hands their childish thoughts about themselves, papa and mama and all other subjects that enter their little brains. Willie and Maggie I suppose will soon be able to make the letters of the alphabet so as to form short sentences and tell me about their schools sabbath schools, books and plays, "old jack" and "old ned."

I suppose you have snow now and Willie wants his sled fixed of course. If he takes care to use his crutches all the time and to have them made longer when ever he can use longer, his sled must be fixed; but he must not draw heavy loads on it. If he wants to on horseback and drive in the buggy he must not lift or draw anything that is a little hard for him until he gets stronger. He and Freddie and Maggie can do a great many things for Mother, such as getting her a little water and a few small sticks of wood, setting the table and washing dishes. They will all gladly learn to make themselves useful by degrees with patient encouragement. I hope they will all learn to read and write and to study geography and arithmetic and be good scholars. But above all things let them have plenty of exercise in the open air. Mother will

cloth them warm and then if they go out and get cold they wont tak cold. Give the stout cheap (in the long run) woolen cloths. Let ti tell me how "old-ned" behaves, does he let them play with him free is he cross. What do the little toads think about men sleeping out of doors; long rows of men lying on the groud with all their cloths on, blankets wrapped round them, but nothing over them, as we hav been doing. What do they think of cloth houses such as we now hav My tent is a "Sibley tent." You never saw one I suppose. It is sha just like a funnel turned upside down without the spout to it, usuall open at the top, but provided with a cape which by means of ropes ca be drawn over the opening so as to keep out snow and rain. The do a slit in one side with a flap to close it and tie with strings. I have n a Sibley stove, which is made just like an inverted funnel with a very long spout and a door in one side. The funnel spout is made of joints of stove pipe. By keeping up the fire well it warms the tent well. The weather here however is not cold compared with what yo have. We have had one hard snow storm (while at Camp Andy Johnson, which is 3 ms from here), but the inhabitants say it is a very uncommon occurence. The nights though are cold usually, sometin quite mild too, and then occasionally cold enough to freeze water to ice, but not much.

The days are pleasant. We are having fine weather indeed now, anticipate rain and mud to any extent in Janry and Febry. It is out of the question to determine when we will move at present or how sox we may have a battle, but I don't see anything that indicates either very soon. When it is determined that there will be time enough for y to make us a visit I will telegraph you and you can inform me by telegraph of your starting, if you should conclude to come.

I wrote you to send in your next box some onions; the doctors consider them a great health preservative in the army and in putting up articles of food for the sick the societies and friends should bear it in mind.

I wish you would advise with Doctr Gibson about the diet of our children and ask him whether he thinks it best to use that Hypophites occasionally or anything else designed for the same purpose. Tell [hir I am going to make a proposition to our Seneca Co. Compys to hire him to go with the Regt and what he will take. I enclose 2 [dollars?] to pay for the diary. I have to borrow here and it is cheaper to borrr at home or I would send you more. I wrote to Keen about this matter and hope to hear from him soon.

your affect Husband

L. Stem

Apparently no letter was written by Colonel Stem to a member of his family after December 20, 1862. The Army of the Cumberland, under Rosecrans moved on the road from Nashville to Murfreesboro, which was held by Bragg's army. The bloody battle of Murfreesboro, or Stone's River, one of the fiercest and deadliest of the war, and one of the most inconclusive, was fought December 31, 1862—January 1, 1863.

At daybreak of December 31, Hardee's left wing of the Confederate army delivered a smashing blow against the Union right under Maj. Gen. McCook. Unfortunately for it, Stem's 101st Ohio Regiment was moved to an exposed position on McCook's right, and flanked. High Union officers had previously been warned that heavy Confederate forces were moving by the Union right, but the warning apparently went unheeded.

The report of the 101st action was written, January 5, 1863, near Murfreesboro, by Major Isaac M. Kirby, upon whom command fell following the loss of its colonel and lieutenant colonel. A portion of that report is here quoted:

At or near 10 o'clock, Tuesday morning, December 30, the regiment was moved forward in "double column at half distance," supporting the Twenty-first Regiment Illinois Volunteers. About 3 o'clock in the afternoon the Twenty-first became engaged with the enemy, the One hundred and first lying a short distance to the rear, supporting the Second Minnesota Battery, which was engaging a battery of the enemy. Just at dark the Twenty-first fell back through our lines, leaving us in front. This day our loss was 2 men wounded. Before moving forward, Second Lieutenant Cline reported himself unfit for duty, and permission was granted him to go to the rear. Immediately upon taking the front for the night, we advanced a picket line. The regiment was ordered to sleep on their arms. Ten men were kept on guard immediately in front of the regimental lines, and one field officer constantly on the watch during the night.

At early daylight, Wednesday morning, December 31, the enemy was discovered moving in heavy force to our right; soon after their skirmishers opened fire on us from the front. By order of Colonel Carlin, Colonel Stem moved his line forward about a hundred yards, when the firing became quite brisk. Soon after, Colonel Stem was ordered to fall back to his former position, sling knapsacks, and form a new line a short distance to the rear, which he performed in good order. Here the firing was very severe. Our forces falling back on our right, without our knowledge, the enemy turned our right flank,

and poured a terrific crossfire upon our lines, which we were unable to stand; consequently the regiment fell back in some disorder. It was at this time Colonel Stem and Lieut. Col. Moses F. Wooster were mortally wounded, while gallantly and nobly attempting to hold the regiment in line. Colonel Stem fell just as he had called out, "By your colors, boys, for the honor of the good old State of Ohio!" We again succeeded in rallying the regiment at the fence, just on the edge of the woods, where we stood under a terrific fire until we were given permission from Colonel Carlin to retreat. Then the march became quite disorderly, through the corn-field and cotton-field, to the edge of the timber, where we again rallied; were in turn driven from that position, rallied again in the woods; marched in good order to a new line of battle; were finally ordered from that position, and formed in front of a dense cedar thicket, from which position we were soon driven in confusion; but we rallied about 30 men on the colors, and led back into the cedars, but were driven from that, and rallied for the last time on the railroad, from which position we were marched to the brigade a short distance to the rear, and rested till near 3 o'clock in the afternoon. At this time there were present Captain McDoyle, Captain Messer, Captain Barnes, Adjutant Smith, Lieutenant Latimer, Lieutenant Neff, Lieutenant Parcher, and Lieutenant Beckwith, all of whom performed their whole duty during the entire day.

(*War of The Rebellion Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Ser. I, Vol. XX, Pt. I, pp. 284, 285).

Camp near Murfreesboro, Tenn.

June 13, 1863

[Isaac Rule⁴⁷ to Elizabeth Stem]

After an almost inexcusable delay kind friend, I make the endeavor to respond, to your highly appreciated favor, of the 1st ult. The kindness, the interest, the sympathy, therein expressed, for the members of the hitherto unfortunate Regt, with which I am connected, are indeed cheering, and fully convince me that, though absent we are yet remembered, and the knowledge of this fact, will tend to sustain us, in the hours of severe trial, which we are doomed to experience, ere we can again peacefully return to enjoy the blessings of home.

⁴⁷2nd Lt. Isaac P. Rule; Co. I, 101st OVI. Age 25. Promoted from 1st Lt. Jan. 25, 1863. Died Sept. 20, 1863 of wounds received Sept. 19, 1863 at battle of Chickamauga. *Ibid.*, 472. Also, L. W. Day, *Story of the 101st*, p. 153, photograph.

I this morning, started out to find the ladies, Bedford, found their residence which is located near our picket line on the Liberty Pike. They were at home, and Mrs. Bedford though not endeavoring to conceal her proclivities which are decidedly Confederate, as they term themselves, was apparently glad to see me, and said that she had long desired to see some of the officers of our Regt. She said she was with the Colonel, nearly all the time that he lived after he was brought to Murfreesboro; I would conclude from her appearance that she was a most kind and congenial nurse, and such was your brother's appreciation of her kindness, that he called her the good Samaritan. When he had become acquainted with her, he would not eat any food unless it was brought by her. He requested her to write to his wife; she says she wrote, but after waiting a long time for an opportunity to send it north, and none presenting she tore it up. She however said she would write again, and bring the letter to me to send. I shall therefore not particularize all that she said, believing it will be more satisfactory if presented in her own handwriting. The name of the physician who was most attentive to him was Wagoner. Maj. McGahey and Lieut. Wilson have been exchanged and have gone back to their army. They were very kind to him. She says that Lawrence was very attentive and kind though at times somewhat annoying, from his many words. The Col. said that he felt he was dying in a good cause, and believed he had done right. His suffering on Wednesday night was severe but was much subsided by morning, and on Thursday and Friday he rested quite easy. On Saturday he was again in much pain, and from that time suffered a great deal until he died. He remarked that he did not think he would be able to ever fill his place in the regt. but hoped that some one would be appointed, who would treat his boys kindly, thus as it were in the hours of his death, evincing the same brotherly love, which all his acts had proven, during with us as commander of the Regt. Though gone his image is yet cherished in our hearts, and will ever live to urge us on in the path of duty.

I delivered the letter which you had placed in my charge. The lady felt amply remunerated for all the kindness and care she had given, by the gratitude evinced by the Col. himself. The letter which you had sent to my address at the Davis House, I received, and beg pardon for omitting to mention it when I wrote you before. William T. Herald was detailed upon the Pioneer Corps on the 23rd day of Nov and has not been staying with the Company since from that [time] he was placed upon the roll of honor, and is now one of the cavalry guards of Gen. Morton.⁴⁸ He has been unwell for a short time, but is again able for duty. He is still considered as one of our company and is reported as on

⁴⁸ Maj. Gen. James St. Clair Morton (1829-1864), West Point, 1851. Killed at Petersburg, Va., June 17, 1864; considered an engineering genius. Warner, *Generals in Blue*, pp. 336-337.

detached service. He is a noble fellow, and justly merits the esteem of all. I was much grieved to see him leave the company, but I suppose he has a better position than he had here. Joseph is with us, and appears to get along well since he returned. Four of our men, that is of our Co. that were taken prisoner at the fight have returned, six are [not] yet back.

About the cherries, I did not receive your letter till some days after Benham returned. The note which you sent for me to hand to him I accidentally left in the envelope, and did not discover it for some time after. I supposed that he had made some disposition of them and if I should then speak of it, it would do no good. I respectfully return to you my thanks for thus kindly remembering me, and assure you the kindness is as highly appreciated as if I had received them.

I hope you will excuse all defects in this letter. It has been written with a group of men sitting near me who are carrying on an animated conversation. We do not have the opportunity to quietly retire to our room, and write, as we were accustomed to at home, but must do as we can.

Hoping soon to hear from you again, I respectfully subscribe myself your friend.

Isaac P. Rule

[Following the battle of Stone River, Orderly Sergeant Isaac P. Rule took command of Company I, 101st Ohio (Jan. 1 to 5), Captain Barnum being sick and unfit for duty].

Immediately within the gates of the cemetery at Green Spring Ohio lies the shared graves of Leander and Amanda Stem. The obelisk has crumbled somewhat but the base of the monument stands firm and the inscription remains clear and plainly reads:

"Erected to the memory of Colonel Leander Stem by the officers and soldiers of the 101st Reg. O.V.I. as a token of their love for him as a man and admiration of him as a soldier."