

# After the Battle

On Battle-field of Fredricksburgh.

Dec. 15. 9.30 A.M. - 1862.

Dear Parents,

Having an opportunity to send a letter, I will write to you. - Last Wednesday night, I wrote a letter for the Citizen. - I have been into a battle, where many were shot & wounded, & came out without a scratch. - Gustavus was wounded in two places, - in the <sup>left</sup> ankle & in the calf of his right leg, - both ~~flashes~~ wounds & not severe. - No one could have conducted himself with more coolness & bravery, than he did, through out the action. All who saw him, speak of him in the highest terms. - As before, our Brigade was the first to advance, & "opened the ball". The troops were all in position, on the left, from before noon, on Friday, & a battle was then expected. Skirmishes were thrown out, & some of the rebels fell back, there being some firing between them; our lines were then advanced, & a new disposition of troops was made. We thus remained till Sat. morning

at 9 o'clock when our Brigade formed a new line  
a short distance ahead of the old one, & prepared  
to advance towards a piece of woods, extending  
~~some distance~~ <sup>some distance</sup> north & south (parallel with our  
line) about half a mile distant, where the rebels  
had a strong position. Our skirmishers were  
sent ahead, & Gen. Taylor gave the command  
"Battalion forward, guide center, march." It was  
an important time; we expected hot work; many  
of us might never retrace our steps over that field,  
& many would return mangled & bleeding.  
Firing commenced between the skirmishers,  
just ahead of us, & the bullets began to whiz by our  
ears. Steadily we advanced, over the heavy soil, which  
struck to our boots, & clogged our progress. Soon a  
tremendous fire opened from the rebel batteries,  
& a shower of shot & shell, grape & canister  
came pouring over the field. The roar & the crash  
was terrific. We halted & lay down. One man  
was already killed & five wounded, including  
Lieut. Rockwell, of the 4<sup>th</sup> Co. commanded by Gen.  
Lynn, & composed of the remnants of Co. G. S. & K.

He was wounded but slightly in the foot, by a grape shot.  
For an hour we lay under the fire. Part of the time, I was  
writing in my diary from which I will transcribe a little.  
For the want of paper, I must write close. - "Sat. Dec. 7th. A cold night,  
last night. He was shot on the ground, in rear of our line of  
battle, which was then most advanced. Our picket was but  
a few rods in front of us. It was very foggy, for some time, in the  
morning. The rebel skirmishers were but a short distance  
from ours. About 9 o'clock this morning, the line was formed, troops  
moved out, farther to our left; skirmishers & balladeers advanced  
together. In a few moments batteries opened, & the fire was terrific.  
Our Reg. was <sup>gloriously</sup> ~~bravely~~ but the grape, canister, shot & shell flew close  
over our heads for an hour, bursting & striking but a few  
rods beyond us. This already wounded near the centre of  
the Reg. (Chief of the Color Guard) & one was shot in the forehead,  
& must have died in a few moments. The boys have  
been very cool, though shell. The different noise of  
shot & shell & bullets, was very peculiar. Some though high  
fell low on the ground, over taking, & some falling together (strange to  
say) while the shells flew thick & fast. Skirmishing is still going on  
in front of us, & bullets fly close every minute. It is now  
about 12 o'clock. About ten minutes ago, the cannonading almost  
ceased, but it has commenced again sharply, again  
right & left, but the rebels do not reply. The noise of the  
war of the explosion in the woods, is tremendous. Skirmish-  
ing becoming sharper, bullets fly thick & fast - hot work ahead.  
I must put up my book - in danger of being hit."  
At this time, the order was given "fall in" & forward.  
Skirmishers advanced, but fell in the rear, as soon  
as the rebel skirmishers had retreated into the woods.  
We soon halted & opened fire into the woods, & thus  
kept to work, for some time. After awhile another Brigade  
came up, as we supposed, to relieve us, & we fell back  
a short distance, then marched by the right flank, & took  
up a new position, here we remained awhile, pouring our  
fire into the woods, & again advanced. Finally, after  
fighting an hour & a half, & losing 33 men & 2 offic-  
ers wounded & 2 men killed, we marched off the  
field in good order, with about 100 men left

having gone in with 165 rifles (8 some without  
arms, who carried off the wounded) & <sup>our</sup> ammunition  
million (6 rounds apiece) being entirely exhausted.  
Grove was the last Reg. to leave the field, & another  
Brigade came in after ours. Almost none were about to  
fall. Gen. Guineas was hit in the ankle, & Lieut.  
Parrons & I loaded arms with him, on each side,  
to help him off the field. Not being able to move  
very rapidly, we could not keep up with the Reg.  
but were left some distance in the rear, with  
no one between us & rebel bullets, which, (as  
we saw a camp fire mark, now a mound  
& other paraphernalia), flew thickly around us,  
& one that hit passed over my shoulder, & another  
shot in the other leg, but still we could walk with  
our help. - A rebel battery poured its destructive  
charges at the retreating troops. One shot  
struck close about feet striking the dirt in every  
face & eyes, almost blinding me. Another struck  
a stone against my leg, which at first made  
me think it was perforated. - Guineas went  
to a hospital a short distance away, in safety  
with another wounded man, to have his wounds  
dressed. - Big the only officer left, in charge of  
the 4<sup>th</sup> Co. I could not leave, but saw one die  
near the front, who said he had the wounds  
washed & dressed. - One man was struck dead  
when we had been the night before, the lines be-  
ing much shorter than before the fight. All the  
Reg. suffered severely. The 26<sup>th</sup> was again badly  
cut up. - Gen. Gibbons (our Div. Gen.) was wounded  
in the wrist; Capt. Hart (aid to Gen. Taylor) was shot  
in the breast, after having one horse shot under  
him. Many other officers were wounded, & killed.  
You will soon get the reports in the papers. - Our men  
fought with great bravery, & the officers (with two  
exceptions) behaved heroically; brandishing their  
swords, & cheering on the men, regardless of per-  
sonal exposure. It was a gallant fight.  
It seemed hard to retreat, & to follow.



line, cheering & encouraging the men, & whenever  
the line wavered & broke, or there was any  
fluttering, rallying them again. When he came  
out, there were four bullet holes in his pants,  
& three or four in his overcoat, & the bullets  
proof most that he wore, exhibited the dent of  
a bullet, which might have proved fatal, but  
for that. - Lt. Col. Spofford also displayed the  
most exalted courage & fearlessness, his countenance  
expanded, as if every danger, & yet, incredible as  
it seemed, he escaped without a scratch.  
Alexander acted like the brave old veteran that  
he is, showing apparently not the slightest con-  
cern, or fear of the danger, <sup>the first bullet hole in his lower extremity, & the second above,</sup> when the fighting  
was hottest. - You have heard it said that the  
almost invariable experience of those who go  
into a battle, <sup>that they</sup> at first have a feeling of almost  
mortal fear, which is soon over, & gives place  
to more recklessness & disregard of danger. But,  
my feelings are not much different from  
what they are now, except that I was  
somewhat excited, as was natural.  
A battle-field, & a fight, like that of Sat. pre-  
sents a most wonderful & imposing sight, to  
one who may never have witnessed such a scene  
before. The swaying lines of men, advancing  
upon a double quick, the killed & wounded  
drapping along the way, dotting the field all  
over, in the rear; the waving standards,  
the advancing battalions constantly moving  
away; the roar of the cannon, the  
rattle of the musketry, the cheering of the  
officers, - all conspired to render, at  
occasions & most <sup>exciting</sup> & imposing  
little fighting to day (Monday), though some  
at Kinross & Camanachy. More

Terrible fighting must soon take place. - The rebels have a strongly fortified position, which can only be carried by heavy sacrifices on our side. It is said that Sigel has gone down on the other side of the river, with 40000 men, & is to cross & out flank the rebels. - A rebel Sergt told one of the officers of our Reg. today, that Gen. Jackson was wounded in the fight of Sat. in the breast & he thought must be dead by this time. - Our Brigade moved some distance further to the left, yesterday morning before daylight, where we still remain supporting a Battery. - Rec'd a welcome mail this afternoon, including a letter from Father, containing \$10 & letters from Ella & Grandmother, also one from Eliza, dated 9<sup>th</sup>.

also papers. Letter brought much  
encouragement to <sup>good</sup> cheer. Sent a couple  
of papers to Gustavus, who is at a Hospital  
till across the river, & tonight or tomorrow  
will send the letters. - I think  
Gustavus is exceedingly fortunate. If  
I escape with no worse wounds, I shall  
consider myself very lucky; - I would be  
glad to take his chances now. - Dr. Little  
is a worthy witness. Dr. Little says that  
the bullet did not go through his book,  
but made a bad bruise, & caused it  
to bleed some. The other went through  
the calf of his right leg, the place where  
it came out being about three inches  
from where it entered. - He is doing first  
rate & in fine spirits, - will soon be sent  
to Washington, with the rest of the wounded,  
& will have another chance to visit  
home. Dr. Little says it will be at  
least a week before his wound will heal  
so that he has probably escaped a visit  
of the battles for the town of Richmond,  
I must close. I am quite well & in  
good spirits. - Take the enclosed let-  
ter to Mrs. Sandford, for publication.  
As to the battle, I will prepare another  
letter in a day or two, for the Citizen. The  
acc't I have written to you, is not care-  
fully ~~prepared~~ <sup>prepared</sup> Love to all - write often,  
& I will embrace every opportunity to do  
the same. Affectionately yours  
Rush P. Condy.