

Oh! it was during the heat of that severe contest, that I thought how insignificant we poor worms of the dust are, and upon what a slender, slender thread our lives are hanging. Men hardy and well like myself were cut down quick as thought, and their souls launched into the broad dark ocean of eternity. Our regiment carried two hundred and eighty into action and came out with fifty eight. I came out safe and that was all. One ball struck my sword, another passed through my coat collar and another through the leg of my boot. I hate the latter as shoes are so high.

In the grand charge of Breckenridges Division upon Friday evening, our regiment having sustained such a loss and having acted so well in the former charges, was placed in the rear of the rest, in order to rally them if they fell back. We sustained our name, with but little loss. Our retreat from Murfreesboro was conducted well and our men are ready and willing to again meet the invaders and prove to their sorrow again that the "stars and bars," shall never be disgraced by Southern cowardice nor allowed to trail on Southern soil.

Tullahoma is a neat little village and used to have several very interesting ladies in it, but the immense army that we have around here, has crowded them all out of town. I say interesting young ladies; I mean to some folks, but as for myself, have no use for any person in Tennessee. I hate the state, the institutions and the people and really feel as if I am fighting for the Yankee side when I raise my arm in defense of Tennessee soil. Our army must soon be taken away from here or they will be demoralized. The Tennessee papers do nothing, but exalt their own troops, and it has caused an alienation between the troops of the Gulf and the Border States that may grow into something serious; unless the paper is torn to pieces and its types, scattered to the

four winds of Heaven. You have no idea how sincerely I wish I was in old Summerfield again; not that I love the old place, but long to see some of my old, true friends once more. Worlds would I give if I could see you one hour. What mysteries might not be explained.

I have not seen Col Montgomery. He gave your letter to a young Captain of our Regiment and told him to tell me, that the writer of that note, had grown to be one of the most beautiful girls he ever saw. I intend to call on him soon and have a full description of you in every particular. It affords such a pleasure to converse with one who knows and esteems you, but causes me to regret much some acts of the past.

I have not had an opportunity of writing to John yet. About the time I thought of sending him a volume of incidents, they sent me out in line of battle and I have not been about to find out where he is now. I will, however, write to him as soon as I can find out the bivouac of his company. These cavalry men run so when they hear a gun, that I expect a letter will be more apt to reach him in Huntsville or Chattanooga, than any other place.

In conclusion, dear friend, I beg you to excuse this letter. It is snowing very hard, my hands are cold and I have no other table to write upon except my knee. Goodbye. Write soon to

Your friend,

J. Morgan Smith

Direct to Tullahoma

Camp 32<sup>nd</sup> Reg. Ala. Vol

Tullahoma, Tenn.

January 17, 1863

Miss Katie D.

Did I not appreciate one line of your writing, more than I do a page of my own, I would be at a loss whether to write again; but your note, so unassuming, is prized more than a long letter from any one else and I feel you are justly entitled to a reply. Your gentle request "write soon," shall be complied with, and if my poor letters will afford any pleasure to my old friend, I will tire her with descriptions of camp life, as that is the only thing we know of in this world of Bragg.

We have had a large and bloody contest since I last wrote. On Sunday the 28<sup>th</sup> Dec., the news that the enemy had at last reached in two or three miles of us, caused our whole army to be placed hors-de-combat. In this position - with but few changes we remained until Tuesday morning, our pickets firing all the time. On Tues the battle commenced in earnest by the enemy attacking our left flank. They fought well, but could not overcome our stubborn resistance. Our brigade occupied the extreme right of the (unable to read). We were therefore not in the first days fight, Wednesday, however, made up for both days. There was one position of the enemy that had been changed twice by our men, but with no avail, and General Adams - (our Brigadier Gen) thinking that his brigade could "move mountains and stop streams" sent word to Gen Bragg, that if he would send another brigade to hold our position, that he would take the stronghold then held by the Yankees. Gen Bragg sent for us and we started on our mission of death. Through a shower of grape, shell and canister - so terrible that its

parallel is not known in the history of warfare – our brave little band worked steadily across on open field, while men were falling at every step. Soon we reached the place now known as the slaughter pen, when both sides turned loose with their rifles and such a fire can scarcely be imagined, much less described. Our single brigade contended against four brigades of the Yankees and seventeen pieces of artillery. Of course we could not conquer though we charged in 50 yards of them and had as thought, and their souls launched into a broad dark ocean of eternity. Our regiment carried two hundred and eighty into action and came out with fifty eight. I came out safe and that was all. One ball struck my sword, another pass through my coat collar and another through the leg of my boot. I have the latter as shoes are so high.

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I saw McLasky – (the young preacher who you recollect used to go to school with me) not long ago. He was under a strong guard and happening to see me sent for me. At first I did not know him, he was so black and dirty and I had no idea of seeing him in the condition he was. I asked him what he was under guard for and he said that he had joined our army, but in fighting for us he felt as if he was doing wrong, that it was against his conscience and he endeavored to make his escape to the Yankees but was caught by our pickets and brought back. He was to be court-martialed and in all probability will be shot. I felt very sorry for the poor fellow; told him, however, I disapproved of his conduct and though I had sworn never to aid or abet any of the enemies of my country, still as he looked so hungry and for the memory of other days, I would give him five dollars to purchase some food. His eyes filled with tears, and he only said” “God bless you and yours” and turned off. I have not heard from him since.

Atlanta Feb. 21, 1864

I remember McLasky well. He was a fine fellow at school and was studying for the ministry.

I had quite a romantic little adventure a few days ago. Mr. Abrams – a friend of mine – ran off with Miss Immel and got married. Myself, Col. Jossey and Judge Lochrane were the only witnesses. After the marriage they went to the brides mother and she received them very kindly. Come to find out they had never asked her permission except once and

then she in a laughing manner told them they were too young. After everything was reconciled at home – a disappointed and enraged lover met Abrams and soon words came to blows. Abrams shot him slightly in the side and he cut a gash in his mouth so badly he will not be able to kiss his bride in two weeks. Abrams has a book in press now. I will send you a copy in a few days. I read it in Manuscript and it is only tolerable but will do to pass a few hours away.

Aug 20, 1864

Macon Ga

Abrams – Editor of Atlanta Intelligencer