

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 wallowd. 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
 "don't 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
 Rosseau'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. Weirick, 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

... tomorrow morning at 7. P.M. in command of my own
... Regt., 38 Ills back 8 ms on the road. We came yesterday
... 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
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 Captn [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 Captn. 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 Captn. 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 Captn. 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.