

Warrenton Junction, Va.
July 30, 1863

21

My dearest Lis,

I have just received yours of the 23rd inst. and you can't tell how glad I was to hear from you and home and to hear that you were all well.

We are just laying here as we were when I last wrote you and I think there is no prospect of an immediate move. What I say of future movements or quietude of the army is all "guessing" as everything in relation to such matters is kept a profound secret. There are no "leaves of absence" granted yet--as soon as there are I shall make a strong push for one.

The boys in the army here think dreadful little of the idea of standing a wall of fire in front of the "rebs" to save such traitors and miscreants as the rioters of New York City or their sympathizers in Cattaraugus!

Prop. of Pavilion Ctr. Antique Shop
You ask me if I was in as much danger at Gettysburg as at Chancellorsville. I think I was not--although a part of the time I was where the minnie balls were plenty--and all the while the shells were frequent and familiar visitors.

Pavilion - 7-4.

There were five horses killed by shells right about the hospital--two men wounded--and several horses wounded.

Our line of battle was in shape of a horseshoe--with rather a sharper turn than a circle at the toe of the shoe which was (the toe) directly south of Gettysburg and almost in the suburbs of the village. The key of our position--the toe of the shoe was on a height about like the hill east of Howard's house which was an old burial ground in which the "rude forefathers of the hamlet sleeps" a little east of the old burial ground and right in the very toe of the shoe modern taste had built a very beautiful cemetery--"Evergreen Cemetery"--among the trees the monuments sacred to the memory of the dead on those three eventful days were planted those huge Batteries that defended the position and decided the events of the issue after that long terrible struggle. The cemetery occupies the highest point in the semi-circle or crest of high ground--before and in front of which was a broad plain sown with wheat or meadowland--this plain running up the base of South Mountain which encloses the Village of Gettysburg in a perfect amphitheatre--along the base of the mountain in a dense forest in which the rebel army were concealed from sight except when the battle was raging. I will make a rough diagram of the field.

The situation of our hospital was such that the shells that passed over our line of battle either in front or right or left would fall in the hollow of the shoe, and, as on the 2nd and 3rd day, the great struggle was to break through our left. Shells, consequently, fell very thickly about our Hospital, especially so on the 3rd crest. For a while, from 1 to 3 or 4 o'clock it was a perfect shower. Henry Fuller was in the 2nd Corps and his division and Brigade was just where the figure 2nd is in the rough diagram. Alas poor boy "foremost fighting" he fell there. He was really the "bravest of the brave". In his short life he won a name and established a character that any man of hoary years might well be proud of!! But will the bauble fame or the recital of heroic deeds nobly performed "soothe the dull cold ear of death"? or restore him to his family or friends?

Dep of Pav. Ltv - Antique Shop

In the hollow of the shoe 300 pieces of Reserve artillery was placed, which could be sent to any spot needed in 20 minutes between the heels of the shoe were stationed as a reserve the 6th Corps--a part of the 5th Corps volunteers and Sykes regulars--during the contest if our line was weakened at any point some of these reserve troops were sent to their aid. The line of battle was well chosen and a strong one, being the crest of a gentle elevation--say some 20 ft. above the valley front. The troops were handled like chess men in the hands of skilled players. Aid was always thrown to right spot in the right time. Our line of battle from heel to heel of shoe was about 6 miles in length--the reb line being on the outside was consequently best description that I have seen of the Battle of Gettysburg is on the last page of the New York Independent (Henry Ward Beechers) paper of July 9th or 10th. Read it.

Pavilion - N.Y.

The weather is intensely hot and what with the heat the flies, the mosquitoes, the bugs and the pismires and bad water, camping here is anything but agreeable. Write me often for I am so glad to get a letter from home, and I think they will reach me here regularly as we now have a mail every day. With love and kisses for yourself and children and kindest regards to all who may care to know about me.

I am your affectionate

Henry

P.S. I enclose the organization of the Medical Staff of the 11th Corps. You will see that my duties do not require me to go on the battlefield with the Regiment. My duties are as Brigade Surgeon and as detailed in order to go with ambulance in the first place to select wounded for hospital. When there are patients at Hospital requiring operations to perform them. I have operated largely. My heart is sick contemplating the mutilations. I am more generally selected by the surgeons to examine wounds closely to diagnose cases requiring operations which is much more agreeable to me than to do the operating.