

last letter you speak of the
 Major being looking so well
 never miss Rhode when
 I am home again I into
 some different from what
 I see before. But I am afraid
 my new suit is lost as I
 can hear nothing of it. Capt.
 Winter came left yesterday from
 below and reports that the
 Col. has been
 not seeing it.
 he and all the
 rest left there
 are on their way
 home and I will
 hear soon. I will
 about it. My
 word is all
 things and these
 reports have about
 were and are
 gay as war
 you say Mother
 thinks he ought
 to be brought home
 what is just
 what I wish
 to do with him.
 I am peace him
 on the list of
 relieve & order day

Miles above Knoxville, Tenn.
 Dec. 24th 1863.

Once more I am going to try to write to
 you under difficulties as usual. I wish dear
 Rhode you could only realize the circumstances
 under which I had to write. Then I know you would
 surely not wonder I don't write better and oftener.
 I have no nice table &c. to sit down to. but just
 have to snatch a moment away on the ground
 by our main camp fire. with the buzzing crowd of
 soldiers around me. Sometimes I do wish I could
 once more find a quiet retired spot where un-
 disturbed I might rest myself and concentrate
 my wandering thoughts and put my thoughts on paper
 just as I would love to tell them to you if I were
 by your side in capacity of speaker and you the
 listener. but it is seldom I can find such a time
 and such a place. I have written to you a number
 of times since I arrived in this department. but

generally it has only been a few scattered pencil
marks to assure you of my welfare, and some-
times off in a hurry without any assurance that even
they would ever reach you, such is the looseness
of the mail arrangement and every other arrange-
ment in this department, that we have all long since
lost the army of the Ohio with head quarters at
Piquette. we grand humbug - but here we are and
in the patience of hope we will possess our souls until
something turns up to relieve us. One thing I have been
very fortunate in, that is I have all your letters up to
Dec. 18th about a week ago. The first mail we received, I
got three letters and O such good nice kind ones, they
covered all the ground necessary to my satisfaction
and I went to bed after reading and re-reading them
feeling happy and perfectly contented so far as the
soldier's content can go where away, far away from
those he holds so dear, and then yesterday Dr. Stewart
came up from Chattanooga with another mail and I
received still another of Dec. 18th. You complain a little
that I don't write about ^{what} you say in your letters, O don't
blame me my dear, for just now while I am trying
to write with the Adjutant's pen, & borrowed sheet

of his paper he is hurrying me to write himself as the
orderly goes with the mail in a few minutes,
and forty things are to be said and done, I wish I
could only get you to understand what difficulties
I labor under and then you would not blame me.
It is not like we used to have it when in a regular
camp. Then we could have some conveniences, but
here we have none at all. The Col. Adjutant and
I have been eating off the same plate nearly ever
since we left Chat, and a part of the time drinking
out of the same tin cup of coffee, I twice all over
Knoxville to buy a plate, or cup or increase any
kind of cooking utensils, could get nothing, not
even a water bucket, nor even an old waste
tin can - no nothing, I don't mention these things
my dear with any spirit of complaint or murmur,
but only to show you the utter absence of every convenience
in the army, while on an expedition of this kind.
We got some army blankets the other day so that
we are not now suffering from cold, and we have
enough to eat, by foraging a little, and eating a good
deal of dirt, we have been stamping camp every
few days, it isn't much trouble to move, and when

we burn all this timber out of one piece of woods, and
chump to another and whack away again. I throw
up shelters of brush wood to keep the storms off. build
large fires. talk, laugh, tell stories &c. and be
just as happy as the circumstances will permit. I send
in trying to get the regiment to enlist as veterans and believe
nearly all will go into it if they can get a furby home,
but not having been in two years, we are not admissible
unless the look for veterans, unless we can get a special
permit from the war dept. which he has gone to Knoxville
to try to get by telegraph, I don't think he will succeed ^{but} I am
perfectly well, and that will ensure us a furby home
for 30 days to recruit and you know how these
furby homes hold out. I would be willing to
serve another year for the sake of getting home to
stay until the first of April, would it not Rhoda be
but I don't think it would increase our term of
service at all for I believe the thing will be wound up
before our original three years expires any how, in fact
I am anxious to almost ^{any} terms upon which I can get home,
not that I am discontented in the army but that I want to see my
dear nestling, and the mother bird, and if possible to procure them
a more comfortable home, I intimate in a late letter that I would
like to buy the Glessnes house, if the little brick would be turned in
as fast as they, what do you think of the proposition I made you good
I am sure you spoken to Glessnes about it? now I don't care anything
about remaining in Cambridge I would rather go to the west, but
there are a number of things to be considered, the most important
is the cost, should that word, we would then go right to
the west at once, but if it should be of long continuance it would
be well to think of it, for I could not think of leaving you away
there while I would be in the army, and then I don't want
you to spend another winter in that cold house, I want to
get a property that will be convenient and comfortable and
that can be improved to advantage, I think that one can be,
it is convenient to Church, and would not be too far from
the business part of town, since to have my saw office in the corner
lot, would it not be pleasant? but if you have come to the
little conclusion to go to the west and everything works well
why are right I am perfectly agree, we will begin the work soon
I hope with a little more capital, and be able to start among
a new community with the advantages of experience and take
a direction that will lead us to a social position suited to
our ambition, you know I plead guilty to a little weakness
on the score of ambition, and I think my partner is not entirely

that mine first, because dear our father's name
must close without leaving any half that I wanted
and since the argument is all out of patience, I
must find a new one. — I have my father's
new shirt, I don't know what it is good for
your great and respectable & kind you got it
I am about to buy a little more in real privacy
little piece, but the lord has got his big eyes on her and
says he wants her so I fear I will have to give her up
but no matter. By the way you want to know what I want,
I bring with him for me, I want a trial, I wrote to him to
get. Bill McDonald to make me one, for fear he may
not get my letter, I wish you would tell him to get me
one made there, if he will have time before the operation
of his leave, he knows what kind I want. I don't think
you need send those old pants I have plenty of
fatigue pants and I can get those when I come
home. I am under obligations to mother and yourself
both for your thoughtfulness, you may send her
more pair of socks. Those you sent me were very
nice. I only got a taste of your cherries and had
to leave the balance behind, the box sent to
Hunter's company has not arrived at Chat. when
he left. but little or nothing is coming through that way
it provokes me so. as for sending anything merely
him you can use your pleasure, you know I
don't want to bother people to bring things. I don't

really need anything, it is true I am out of
decent clothes but have enough to keep me
warm and could it keep anything decent
safe here if I had it, so I want to wear out
what I have this winter and begin anew
in the spring in the clothing line, what I have
is good enough to wallow in East Tennessee
mud in, I think it so strange that you
are so hoarse yet, can't you get it cured some
way? I infer from your last letter that Mother's
health is better, I do hope it is, I don't think
you much Joe Vance's regiment was with Sherman's
Crops that were up here, I had no opportunity
of asking about him as I saw but one
Division of them and then I just passed
them on the march, I heard however that
they were still down about Hickory Creek.
I have no objections whatever for Mother to
read my letters, I only fear she will not
have a very high opinion of my ability in that
line, from the specimens I am compelled to
send sometimes, you spoke of sending me
some chewing tobacco, I would be much obliged
indeed, if you get it, get fine natural leaf

I would quit it, but I get so stupid and dull
without it, there is some very fine smoking tobacco in
Knoxville, I would get some of it and send to Papa
if there was ever a chance to send anything home,
Ned Leaff. Roseman call as he went through? I
told the Major to take him up there, he is a very
fine little fellow, good looking, has a beautiful
girl in Cincinnati that he intimates he is going
to marry, it was funny to hear him talk about
his wound. It was a flesh wound on the posterior
part of the hip, he was going to stop in Cincinnati
to see his girl but regretted that owing to the
location of it he could not get his girl to dress it.
I received another letter from Clark the other day,
he says Jimmy is still away with a company
at Sandusky but I suppose it must be a mistake.
I was much interested in your description
of Sis's talk, her defence of her Pa &c. per dear
little thing. I wonder if she will know me when
I get home? and will she be so partial to
it. Seems so funny to think I have a little
daughter that can talk thus and spar about
me. You don't whip her as you say?

you seemed so much interested about me after the
battle, and seem fearful that I will unnecessarily
expose myself - and want I should think of my
wife and little child &c. my dear I did think
of you both even while the battle was raging and
earnestly prayed that I might be spared to you
while at the same time I thought I would rather
have been brought home to you wounded or
dead than to have come in your brand with
covardice! I think I never felt a greater
sense of security at any time since I have
been in this war than I did then and not
the least bit frightened! Did the Chaplain write
anything about me in the Times? if he did and
gave me any kind of credit you will preserve
it won't you darling. Did you ever get the
scraps of letters I sent you from Chattanooga?
if you want to preserve them I will get you
a nice scrap book when I come.
I have been thinking a great deal about
the time of present I shall bring, one thing I
want to get you is a fine parlor bound
family bible, would you like it? I don't
know what kind of dress goods to get, but you
just get what you want at home dear and
don't be afraid I will think you extravagant
your expenses have not been any more than
I could have expected, anyhow I don't want
you to deprive yourselves of anything to make you
comfortable. I was much relieved to hear of
the safe arrival of my last draft and am
well satisfied with your disposition of it.
it was an experiment and I felt a little
thawing about it. I procured a photograph of