

Camp near Nashville, Tennessee

Thursday, December 18, 1864

My dear wife,
I have just news for you -
I have been very busy
writing you lately.

I have barely a chance to say "I am safe" after the fight yesterday with Hood at Franklin, one of the most terrific little engagements of the war, we had been falling back slowly to this place for some days, yesterday while we were getting our trains across the river at Franklin he came upon us with his whole army, and attacked us with most furious desperation, we were compelled to fall back from our first, or outer line, into the main line of works, where our terrified and disorganized battalions were rallied and defended the works with the energy of despair, I have never seen quite so fierce an attack, nor a more gallant defence in all my experience in this war, and while we were compelled to evacuate the place, we did it at our leisure after punishing the enemy most severely, our loss is small, theirs is counted by the thousands. The fight was kept up for six hours when they drove off, at 12 o'clock last night we moved out and reached here at noon today. I am entirely exhausted for want of sleep and rest, I went sound asleep to day riding along the road, otherwise I am quite well. I have been in command of the regiment for some days back. Col. Loane of the Brigade.

I can hardly imagine how I escaped.
Surely it is the work of that Great Mercy Hand,
that has so mercifully sheltered me heretofore,
& how thankful I feel, I was very much
exposed at one time, but did not realize it
until afterwards, when we got into our main
line of works we were sheltered from the fire very
much. Well, my love I am so tired and need
rest so badly I must ask you to pardon a very
short note. Our campaign thus far has been
exciting and pretty rough but I have no reason
to complain. Our forces are concentrating here
in such numbers as to preclude the probability
of Hood coming here, we all want him to, or to
pass us and go north. We will destroy him
utterly if he does. I will enclose a list of the boys
from the two Bureau Co. companies who were killed
or missing, which may interest their friends if they
care to enquire. Your dear good first letter from
"at home" was read, but I will answer it and write
more fully in a day or two. Let me go to sleep dearest.
I want you & I have lots of things to say next time.
Preparations seem to indicate that we will rest,
rearrange and reorganize here for awhile.

Thine dear good bye and a sweet
good night to all the "families"
your own Dickson.