

Camp Douglas Chicago

Tuesday Evg. Jan 24/62

My dear friend Annie

I have not found time before this to answer your letter received last week and even now I cannot do so as fully as I could wish. I have to write surrounded by an indefinite number with more or less of talking and business going on at the same time. But though I have so little time and such poor facilities for writing I feel that I have no right to delay the matter any longer. The letter you forwarded from Mr Bell I read with a great deal of pleasure. Both yourself & school must be very fortunate in having such an excellent man for a friend & superintendent. You must regard his counsels very highly and I have no doubt they will prove highly beneficial to you.

I agree with you Annie that our correspondence lately has not been characterized so largely by the introduction of spiritual topics as formerly. I have seriously felt sometimes as though I was really on the decline in spiritual matters. Ever since I have been engaged in these war matters my mind has seemed to be in a kind of unnatural excited state unfavorable for meditation or reflection. I don't think this ought to be but how can I help it? I feel that I really need divine aid to sustain me more than ever before, and still I do not enjoy the presence of Gods Spirit as I should like I am deprived of the ordinary privileges for one thing there is no place in camp for anything like secret prayer I don't know of any place within the limits of Camp Douglas to which a person may retire and find himself alone. We have

prayer meetings in camp which I attend
and some of these are very interesting
but this is not enough to keep our spiritual
armor bright. Still I feel that Religion
ought not to depend on times or seasons
for its growth and development and I
feel that it does not I believe it is good
for a man at all times and in all places
And how I wish I could continually enjoy
the presence of Christ as a well spring of
life to my soul I read the lives of such men
as Healy, Fieus and long to realize something
of their experience But it seems to me I
never shall attain to it. and so it goes
I am not satisfied with my life - I am not
satisfied with myself even and then when
I feel like this I know it is all wrong
It is just as much a Christians duty to
be cheerful & happy & contented as it is
to observe the more common traits of

Christian Character. On the whole I think
I don't think I feel in a very happy frame
of mind to night Perhaps some other time
I should write a different kind of sentiment

Yesterday I was duly mustered into the service
of the U States as First Lieut. of Co K 51st Regt,
Ill. Vol. If the announcement affects you as
little as the event did me it will not be very
startling In fact it had been something of a question
with me whether I had better take the position
or not. If I knew my own heart I never exhibited
my services in this cause with any thought or
desire to obtain office I had twice before this
put my name on different militia Rolls as private
but the companies were soon filled At the
time this Regt^y was started I was about making
arrangements to go to Cairo and join an Artillery
Co that went from this City But Capt Rose
with whom I am associated proposed going
into this Regt^y and was very anxious to have
me join him and help to train a company

Having no conception of the obstacles to be
surmounted, I consented to do so and entered
upon the work with the strongest hopes of
speedy success. But alas for human expectations
The trials and sufferings and heart sicknings and
trials long long long deferred that I had expected
during the last four months I would not go
through again for all the offices that ever
were created since Adams fell Nothing but
my pride ever carried me through I hated to
have it said that I had undertaken anything
and had to back out So I kept on trying
and hoping and waiting till I had finally
come into a sort of state of indifference as to results
and didn't much care whether the thing went up
or down So you can understand why I was not a
subject for very hearty congratulations

Wednesday Evening - I was not able
to finish my letter last evening & thought
I would do so this morning but I have
found no time until this evening. This
afternoon we had a grand review of all
the troops in camp by Gen. Jim Lane
He expects to take three Regiments from this
camp for his great South Western Expedition
I almost wish we were to be of the number
for though he is a very rough and profane
man he seems to seem to comprehend
the true issue better than any General
that has been tried yet

Our Regiment is still incomplete
There are only Eight companies organized
except the Artillery and there are not
all full We had expected an addition
of four full companies but I just
now learn that this arrangement will not

succeed and Gen Heald has ordered
us to go on and fill our Reg^{ts}
by recruiting Our own company only lasts
Six or eight of the minimum number
I presume it will fall to my lot to
go out recruiting again but I had
rather almost anything else

It is perfectly useless to think any
more about going East for the present
for if we were full now we should
get our marching orders at once and
as we can not of course it will
require all the force we have
to fill up I have not time to
write any more now Annie and I
hope next time I shall have something
more cheering to write

I am as Ever

Your Friend

Otis W.