

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

ALAN  
SESSALEGO

Warrenton Junction, VA.

July 30, 1863

My Dearest Lis,

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

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.

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

Our line of Battle was in the shape of a horseshoe - with a rather 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 Ben Howard's house, on which was an old burial ground in which the "rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep", 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, <sup>and</sup> 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 occupied 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 to the base of South Mountain which encloses the Village of Gettysburg in a great 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 on the 3rd day. 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 the 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 recital of heroic deeds nobly performed "soothe the dull cold ear of death"? Or restore him to his family or friends?

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 20ft above the

valley in front. The troops were handled like chess men in the hands of skillful players. Aid was always thrown to the 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 longer.

The best description that I have seen of the Battle Of Gettysburg is on the last page of the New York Independent (Henry Ward Beecher's) paper of July 9th or 10th. Read it.

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