

Will's Quarters Chattanooga Dec 17/63

Dear Mother

I have just returned today from our long and weary march to Knoxville and take this as the very first opportunity I have had since the fight of writing to you.

We, the Eleventh Corps, left our camp in the valley on the 22nd of Nov, as usual knowing not a whisper of where we were going to or what we were to do; and halted in this place. I staid all night with Will and had rather a solemn time of it- for we could see from the tent door the Rebel fires very distinctly along the Ridge and we guessed that fight was on hand and that the position was in their favor.

At twelve oclock on Monday the movement commenced it was a grand and at the same time not a pleasing sight- to see fifty-thousand men whirl into line and file down the hill to their respective positions. The skirmishers soon were at work and the fight had commenced. I will not give you a detailed account of the battle as you have read all about it and seen better descriptions than I can give you. On Wednesday the Eleventh was ordered to support Sherman on the extreme left. On Thursday we followed up after the Rebels capturing prisoners at every stop. On Sunday we started on the march to Knoxville passing through a beautiful country and through the towns of Cleveland Charleston Athens London and Louisville; all of which are very pretty little places. We got to within twelve miles of Knoxville and were expecting to reach it on Monday when we recieved orders to about face and we marched back making the whole march about two hundred and fifty miles. We were tolerably short of rations and the men suffered very much from sickness. I knew nothing of Will all of this time and was uneasy until I reached here but found him all right having staid behind his Regt on account of sickness but is well now.

I lost a great many acquaintances in the fight. I took dinner on the first day in the 11th Ohio with Capt Curtis son of the Woolen Factory man and in less than two hours after I left him Will tells me he was shot dead. He was a very fine fellow and a good Officer.

The battle was not near so heavy as we all expected. A few Regts suffered severely. Ours lost none as we were not exposed very much but I am afraid will lose a great many by sickness as about half are sick. I must have a constitution adapted to this kind of life for I was never better.

I recieved a letter from John on the march. He seems very well satisfied and writes a very good letter.

I expect to get a letter or two from you when I reach camp. We camp in the same place in the valley. I am rather tired and will close this and write again in a few days. Will sends his love to you and all this will reach you about Christmas and we hope you will eat a big turkey for us.

Remember me to all

Your affectionate Son
R Patterson

P.S. If Breene can make me a Blouse like Will's and a pair of heavy

pants he may and send them by express or any way to this place. I wrote to you about a pair of boots. I should like to get them very much if you could have them made as it is impossible to get them at any price here. I can send you the money at any time.

Bob