

Princeton Decr. 14th 1862.

My dear Parents,

In the paper of December 4th (Richmond Dispatch) I see a letter from some one in Winchester calling himself "Rebel", who gives an account of the occupation of Winchester by the Yankees & the evacuation on the 2nd ultimore. It states that they came through by Charlestown and Berryville. I conclude that when they retreated they left you to yourselves again. I write this with a small hope of it's reaching you. We are still stationed at Princeton as the heading of this letter indicates, engaged in drilling principally. The order in regard to the examination of officers has set them all to work studying & I hope will cause them to take some interest in drilling & discipling their companies, & thus rendering back to their country some recompence for the high wages they are receiving. As for adding to the good of the service by promoting order &c, [et cetera] it is the last thing they think of their own case being the first. I hope this order & the fear of being reduced to ranks as Conscripts will have a favorable effect upon them by causing them to learn their duty. I have subscribed for the Lynchburg Virginian, for 3 Mos [months] in addition to the Examiner, of which though I forwarded the money for 6 months, a month ago, I have not yet recd. [received] a copy. A society, of the secret order, has been commenced, by some of the officers of the 60th and 36th at Mr. Hall's. The meetings are held every Friday night. I have requested Capt. [Captain] Gillian to propose my name at the next meeting. It is a literary society & I am sure, will be beneficial, by reason of the men who have it in charge – our Surgeon Dr. Noel, an accomplished gentleman from Essex Co. [County] being President. They have subscribed for about a dozen papers intending to have a reading room connected with it. 6 of our Cos. [companies] were expecting to get a furlough, but Genl. [General] Jones wrote on today that news which he had received prevented g his giving it at present. My Co. [company] is not one of those expecting a furlough. I received a letter from Brudge yesterday evening. It was very short, closing with the customary excuse of Business. I hear that the hill South of this place & commanding all the country around Col. [Colonel] McCausland returned from a visit to the Narrows the other day & says that the army there is a perfect mob, out of 4,000 men only 1700 being present. He says our troops here are by far the best disciplined he has seen. Capt. [Captain] Dews having been detailed to hire negroes as wagoners [sic, waggoners]. I am now in command of "C" Co. [Company]. My men are very fond of the boy Lieut. [Lieutenant] & I am devoted to them. I go out & play ball with them when not on duty & treat them kindly, but when they are on duty they have to behave themselves like soldiers when I have charge. The Col. [Colonel] has charged me with the examination of the officers of two Companies, & I believe (in fact know, without the least conceit) [letter continued sideways on page 4 overtop of other writing] thinks me the best drilled officer in the Regt. [regiment].

We have a company of the officers which Lieut. Col. [Lieutenant Colonel] Summers drills & they have elected me Lieut. [Lieutenant]. I drilled them once when the Col. [Colonel] was absent. Don't think I say this through any conceitedness, for I believe that this is a characteristic that is but little engrafted into my nature. At least in frequently thinking over this matter I believe it to be the case. From Genl. [General] Jones letter we are lead to believe that the Yankees meditate some offensive movement, & this corresponds with the rumors that we constantly hear. We had an excellent sermon this evening from our chaplain Mr. Bibb. The day was well fitted for out of door service, reminding me exceedingly of the weather we had in December of last year in So. Carolina. Kiss Meg & Miss Ella too, if you want to for me, & receive the best love of your devoted son,

Eugene F. Cordell

[Writing on sides of page 1] Brudge fears that Genl [General] Rosencranz will pay a visit to Columbus in order to get some of the valuables articles stored away in the arsenal there.

[Writing over top of writing on page 2] We bought a pair of venison hams yesterday evening the two costing us \$10.00 being 20 cts. [cents] & a half a piece per pound. At the present rate of prices my wages are just sufficient for me to get along comfortably. The news from the Rappahannock is very interesting. We have just heard of the attempt of the enemy to cross the Rappahannock at 3 places, in which they were repulsed in two but succeeded in the third.

[On the side of page 3] I still have hopes of getting a furlough.