

26<sup>th</sup>

Princeton Mercer Co. [County] Va April 12<sup>th</sup> 64 [1864].

My Dearest Mother,

I seat myself tonight although it is quite late to write you a few lines. I wrote to you shortly after my return a hasty letter, merely to let you know of my safe return to my Reg't [regiment], which I hope you recd. [received]. In this I mentioned that my command was there under marching orders. We left the Narrows on the 5<sup>th</sup> and after an exceedingly disagreeable march through the mud reached this place on the 6<sup>th</sup>. Before I left the Narrows, I had suffered some, and my suffering was much aggravated by the march which I had no business making, but being in command of my Co. [Company] I did not like to leave it. Upon my arrival here I experienced so much pain that I was obliged to place myself upon the sick list and take up quarters at Mrs. Hall's, where I have had a room ever since. I have had a large abscess, in a most inconvenient place which prevents me from either sitting, walking or lying in any comfort. I have been confine in my bed for several days, and suffered an intense pain, until Dr. Noel lanced the abscess which relieved me a great deal. I have been applying flaxseed poultices to it. It seems to have again closed and Dr. N. [Noel] I suppose will again have to apply the lancet.

Do not be uneasy for me, for I have a good surgeon, a comfortable room, and plenty of attention. With a little careful treatment I hope to be well, and for duty in the course of a week. The object in sending us here was to erect more suitable fortifications. We have about 100 men at work daily. Our Engineer is Capt. [Captain] Jno. [John] Moncure Robinson, of the Engineer Corps, with whom you are well acquainted, as he is a nephew of Mr. J.C.R. Taylor, and lived in Jefferson many years. As soon as he learned that I was here he came in the most friendly manner, an spoke to me. His room is next to mine and we spend a good deal of our time in each others company. He was sent to Europe by our Government on business in the fall of '62 [1862], and returned in the summer or fall of '63 [1863], having travelled through Spain, France and England. He came back by way of Nova Scotia where he was met by his Father and Mother from Philadelphia. His conversation is delightful, his manners fascinating. In England he was exceedingly kindly treated. Having registered as "C.S.A." many of the Nobleman, who generally sympathise [sic, sympathize] with us formed his acquaintance being very anxious as they told him to hear about the South, and he was made a perfect "Lion", being invited to dinner parties, balls and various social meetings. Thus you see he had an opportunity of seeing something of the English Nobility – the Bon ton of the country. It was all owing, he says, to his being a Capt. [Captain] in the Conf. [Confederate] Army. The people of France do not generally sympathise [sic, sympathize] with us. The French Government does. In England just the converse is true. The large majority of the people – especially the higher class are for us. The Govt. [government] against us. The accounts that he gives of English and French life, and the incidents attending him in his travels related in his peculiar fascinating style make his company desired and sought for by everyone, who becomes acquainted with him. Excuse me for writing so much on this one subject, and do not think that I have run made over the man, for there are many things about him I do not at all admire, but I write these things knowing that you will be glad to hear from him, and because this is one of the agreeable little episodes of a soldiers life. We are reduced down now by orders of Genl. [General] B. (from Lee) to one wagon for all the officers of the Regt. [Regiment] – 50 lbs each. I left all my clothes at the Narrows except a change. The Regt. [Regiment] is encamped on a hill near this house. Most of the men have tents, many have removed the cabins, and made quarters out of them. The little battalion which was here before our arrival went to the Narrows on the 7<sup>th</sup>. The troops there are busily engaged in building an important road – 18 miles long – over an exceedingly rough and rocky country, & c. [et cetera] you see that Genl. [General] B. will not let us suffer for want of employment. We will soon have a line of telegraph to this point. I met with an old E.H.S. [Episcopal High School] mate of mine the other day Robt. [Robert]

Stringfellow who has just returned from a 7 mos. [months] confinement in Yankeedom. He belongs to Ewells body Guard of which Tom T. is a Lt. [Lieutenant]. I see also in the Churchman, the death of another old schoolmate Jno. [John] P. McCobb of Balt. [Baltimore] who was killed near Upperville. I have heard nothing since my return from either Mr. Harding or George and cannot account for the silence of either. I have plenty of books to read here, tolerably good fare, and I think I shall continue to stay, as it is such a short distance from camp. It is getting late and it is time a sick man was closing.

Believe me my Dear Mother

Your devotedly,

E.F.