

Wednesday May 7th. (1862)

My dear father & mother;

It is with a trembling hand that I try to write you. I was on picket duty from last Saturday noon till Sunday noon and the word come that we was to make an advance so we had to go about a mile to get rations & marched on. We found great strongholds evacuated. We pushed on till night & camped down. It was a rainy night & having nothing but my rubber I could not get much sleep. In the morning we was ordered back after our baggage & I was taken with a terrible disentery & did not get to camp for an hour after the rest did. I had to fall into bead & a painful sleepless night I had. Yesterday morning I had some water got & washed off but my strength was 2/3 gone. I have not eaten anything for most 3 days only a couple of ~~oranges~~ ^{oranges}. I must ly down a while. I have got a little rest & I will try & scribble a little more. The news has just come that there is 40 teams coming to take us off to a hospital. I don't know where. Those who cant march on to the regt have got to the hospital. There is dan tarbell, W. Barrett, Almon Tower, John Martin & myself. I am the only one that was violently attacked. Whitmore is pretty bad off. Dan Tower died last night. He was taken about 8 days ago & lost his sensis. My bowels move just as his did. Green as gold & thin as water. I have got & fix for going. Dont know as I shall ever have a chance to send it for my envelopes & stamps are all gone. Dont know when I shall have a chance to buy any. The officers will have a little to answer for keeping so many thousand sick men here. to die when if they would send them to their homes they would recover. The reason of their doing so is they think if they go that way to work that they will have the men all sick. So we have to submit to our fate. My chance of life is very small. I dont hear of any recoverys. After they go to the hospital. If I had no near or dear friends to mourn I should not dread death but that is what makes my heart ache.----
(The following in a different hand)

Johnathan has failed since yesterday that he isnt able to write and he requested me to write a few lines to finish out his letter. He is pretty sick has got a high fever. He says that what passes his bowels is thinner than his urine. He stays here close by me and I will write now just what he tells me. O what would I give that I could only be spared to meet with you all at home again - but the Lord only knows whether we shall or not. You have not but a few years at the longest to stay on this earth and I hope and pray that when we die we shall meet in the world above. If I thought I should burn in the lake of fire and brimstone I should be an unhappy creature but I cant make it seem so. I no that I have never kept gods commandments and have no reason to expect to be saved. I have been so happy ever since the fall that i came home from Manchester that it has seemed as though I had not long to stay on this earth.

(J.H.Wells.)