

Chattanooga Nov. 12, 1863

Dear Brother,

Your affectionate letter of the 26th Oct. last, I received yesterday. When the word "mail" was sounded in my ears, I began to wonder if I would not get a letter from Nathaniel or David, and in accordance with my expectations, the letter came, and heartily did I receive it, and eagerly did I read it.

Now, in answer I can say, and thankful I am too – that my health is good, and has been for the last three or four months. We have been very short of provisions since we came here, more so than any place we have been yet. Now since General Hooker, and others, have been to our assistance, we are getting along some better. The river is being opened for boats again, clothing is coming to us, as well as provisions, and Chattanooga is beginning to open the way for Union troops.

The Rebels are in front of us, fortified to the teeth, and we see, and can converse with them every day. Deserters come over frequently, and tell some yarn that no one will believe. The two big guns, on the point of Lookout Mountain, once in awhile throws a shell into the town, but to no effect. We have a battery of siege guns here now, that answers them now, and I guess e're long they will get their fill of it.

You wished to know positively, how I did get through that great battle, without receiving a scratch or mark on my person. Nathaniel, you know you, when you was a little boy, could go through a horse collar double, and skin a cat, and all such things. Now, I might compare this to such peculiar circumstances of life and strife, but it would not do, for the very fact that there was Supreme Power and Protection displayed, instead of earthly... And here is where mystery lays: I was in the great battle both days, done my duty nearest I knew how. Now I am at Chattanooga, enjoying the blessings of health and strength, as usual.

God was my Protector, my Life, my All, and I'm here to praise His Holy Name, for thus sparing my ill-fated life, at such trying hours. I hope I may ever feel grateful, and acknowledge Him as my Supreme Ruler, from now henceforth and forever, having my whole Christian Armor on, and be ever worshipful, that when The Lord comes I may enter with Him into the Parts of Peace.

Nathaniel, time and paper won't allow me to give you an account of the terrible scenes witnessed by me, on those two days. Trusting in God, I believe I will be able to talk to you with breath-force, in less than a year, and then you shall never hear the end of it, and it will never go old.

I was much pleased to hear how well your corn stood. I was fearful all along that your corn crop was destroyed, and you and David left again without any hope. Is these 2,000 bushels, as you say, all yours? And has David as much? If so, then never mind the fingers! God helps them that helps themselves. And if He spares my life, I will be with you, to lend you some help.

I got news, of the death of the dear little girl, through Mr. Parks first. It makes me feel sad whenever I think of it, knowing she was such a good child, a pet of the family. His wife wrote that she talked of dying, while in such pain, saying she was going to be an angel in the Heaven & C. With the assurance that she triumphed, and is now singing praises to God & The Lamb. We must so live and act, that we may happily meet her there. I've no other desire greater than this.

There is being a great work here in the Church. Nearly every night that I can be there, I witness no less than twelve or fifteen souls asking for prayers. There is preaching every night. Shoulder straps and all, are engaged in the work. Catholic as well as Protestant, Negro and White Man.

Cannonading is going on pretty rapidly between (at this moment) the Rebel siege guns on Point Lookout, going on the river, and our siege guns, just got into position. Some more or less firing every day.

I hear Ezra is going to get married. How is it? Nathaniel, write again and give me the news. I hope these few lines will find you enjoying the blessings of health and strength. Excuse all the mistakes. I haven't time now to correct them. If I fail to give you all you wish to hear, please let me know.

I sent to New York, two dollars for the Independent – and it will come to Father first, then after it is read I wish it sent to me, as it won't cost but two cents. Then, if I'm called away, you will have the benefit of the paper. I'm also going to take a Nashville paper, of which I will send copies to you.

Tell Ezra not to be taken up too much with that girl, or them mules, that he forgets to write to me.

We will be paid off now soon, and I think some of sending money to Joseph. He says he will lay it out to a good advantage for me, and if I return, if not done satisfactory, will return the same. If any one of you stand much in need of it, you are welcome to use it.

I might possibly write some more, but there are no lines here, and it bothers me.

Mr. Parks was over to see me. He is well, and enjoying good health. Mr. P. has acted the perfect gentleman with me all along, the neighborhood may say what it pleases.

When you write, let me know about the Draft, your farming affairs, the health and state of the neighborhood. You cannot write too much.

Give my love to all.
Your affectionate Brother,
Edward L. Tabler

Directions:
Edward L. Tabler
51st Regt. Ill. V.L
Co. K. Chattanooga
Tennessee

1998 Transcription by William E. Henry of a Civil War Letter
(all bold underlining added by transcriber)

**THE LETTER IS WRITTEN IN INK, ON TWO SHEETS OF UNLINED PAPER
MEASURING APPROXIMATELY 15 1/2"x 9 3/4", WHICH ARE FOLDED ONCE
TO APPROXIMATELY 7 3/4"x 9 3/4" STATIONERY.
THE FIRST PAGE IS EMBOSSED WITH A LOZENGE-SHAPED DEVICE
AND THE ENCLOSED INITIALS "L.L.B. & Co."
THE HANDWRITING IS ELEGANT.**

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