Loudon Valley. Va.
July 19th 1863

Dear Wife

Not having heard from you in a great while. I did not know but what you would like to hear whether I am dead or alive I am enjoying good health at present & we have had an awful march and a terrible battle a great many of our boys were killed or wounded but I escaped without a scratch. it is a miracle that we were not all killed or wounded we were in the thickest of the fight, making a charge on the Rebs a ½ a mile through a fire of grape and Cannister. our Regt lost a 100 men in 10 minutes. our Co lost 3 killed and 14 Wounded Stephen Hunt, was all the one that you are aquainted with he was wounded in the hip. I

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have not seen him since he fell as there was no chance he was carried off to the hospital but I have understood from those that saw him that it was not a dangerous wound. Stephen was a good Soldier full of his fun we miss him. This has been the hardest Campaign the army of the Potomac ever had we have in 21 days marched considerable over 200 miles fought a 2 days battle dug rifle pits &c so forth and withal the boys feel bully. We did just clean them out nicely their loss from the time they crossed the Potomac until they recrossed was 42.000 our loss will not exceed 12000 The 3d in the afternoon was the bloodiest part of the battle. At 2 P. M. they opened on us. (On the Center where we were stationed) with over a 100 Cannon we lay flat on our faces for 2 hours, the air was filled with Shell bursting in every direction. The Battery that lay in front of us had 25 horses and 80 men killed

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At 4 P M the infantry charged on us with 3 lines of battle. we were formed in line under a heavy fire and took our position behind a slight breastwork of stones and rails. (It seemed as they advanced on us that it would be impossible to stop them) As soon as they got within range we poured into them and the Cannon opened with grape and Cannister we mowed them down in heaps. What was left broke and run, some of them raised a white flag and come into our lines. That night and the next day they retreated leaving their dead and wounded on the field. I went over the field such a sight I never wish to see again, every Conceivable wound that can be thought of was there There was so many wounded that it was impossible to attend to all of them some of them laying 48 hours in a drenching rain. It is beyond the power of man to describe a battle field

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The way we have given it to them this month will soon end the Rebellion if the Damnable Copperheads of New York City would do as they ought to. How soon it will be before we have another battle is impossible to tell. I cant say as I ever want to see another but if I am called upon I shall try and do my duty. It may be my turn next if it should take good care of little Ella for my sake. We are encamped about 3 miles South of Harpers Ferry we arrived here at 8 P.M yesterday it is now 8 A.M. and no signs of moving. We have had a good time picking blueberries there was about 30 acres covered with them we have all had our fill.
I have not had a letter from any one in almost 2 weeks. I will now close hoping you will answer soon and much oblige

D. A. Hayden

Kiss Little Ella for me and tell her she must be a good girl and I will come home by and by

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