

George P. Jarvis to L. R. Jarvis and Friends at home, 18 February 1862

Bowling-Green Ky. Feb. 18th/62

Dear Friends at-home –

It has been something over a week since I wrote to you but we have been marching and running around so much that I have not had time to write to you and would not have done so tonight had it not been that one will have to start for Nashville tomorrow and the Lord only knows when I will get another opportunity. The general report here is that Bowling-Green has been taken and I have good reason to think that it is true. I am writing this letter in one of the principle houses in the town. It was a glorious but bloodless victory and gives us possession of one of the strongholds of this state in fact it is the Gibraltar of Kentucky, the rebels had at one time not less than 45000 men here that too very lately.

Wednesday evening Feb 19th/62

D. F. A. H.

I broke off earlier suddenly last night but could not well help it the boys were cooking for the expected march today and I was very tired and sleepy so I laid down and soon forgot all my troubles, in that deep sleep that those who are tired only know.

But we will go back to the victory and a grand victory it was. We started from Bacon-Creek if you remember on the date of my last letter and over Green River the same day and encamped on the Munfordville battle ground remained till Thursday and started for Bowling-Green. We marched 21 miles the first day and expected every mile to see the enemy in the shape of Hindmans Legion who we supposed was encamped near. We did not come up to his encampment till just at night and then found he had left only the day before for Bowling-Green in a terrible hurry in fact it was a perfect panic. we encamped there and next day started on our forced march after him. the 8th Brigade was ahind and the 17th in which we belong was next with Louis Battery and the 4th Regt Ohio Cavalry in the extreme front we had got to within about 12 or 15 miles of their fortifications and had halted to give Gen Mitchell a chance to get ahead and reconnoiter previous to the engagement which was expected to come off the same afternoon we had been there about three hours when here came a horseman his horse all foam with the intelligence that the enemy had made a sortie and were engaging the 8th Brigade we were certain that there was something going on for we could hear the rapid fireing of cannon and could see huge volumes of smoke rising as though the whole town was on fire

under those circumstances you may be assured that we were not long in getting ready to go and then ensued a scene of tumult and bustle that baffles description there was a battery of artillery just behind one Regt. and they were ordered forward to protect Louis and when they started over the rough pike they made noise enough to scare all the rebels in Ky – the Battery was a miserable affair for the reason that the men had not taken sufficient care of their guns and carriages they would go about a quarter of a mile and off would go a wheel with the horses at full run then when the wheel went off away would go the men into the mud heels over head to the great risk of their lives and the infinite amusement of the boys in the different Regts – well we found everything still and quiet the enemy had retreated and the firing we had heard was made for Louis to prevent their burning the town the only rebel troops that was left here when our advance arrived was two Regts. of Texan Rangers and Hindmans Legion making in all about 5 or 6000 men and as soon as we commenced firing on their train to stop them from getting their stores away they fell into a perfect panic and started off in every direction first however setting fire to the principle part of their ware houses which they destroyed with the engine house depot there was some ten or twelve engines considerably damaged by

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the fire they destroyed hundreds of tons
of provisions yet for all that we saved
enough to last our division at least two
months. there has not a single man killed
during the whole action Louis did fire on
the men he was firing on the Locomotive it
stop the train in which he succeeded. I
found quite a number of old friends in
town among who was Dan Sullivan and
family & old Mother Reardon and family
they were all well and look as natural
as ever they all send love to you all,
we did not move today but expect to tomorrow
certain. I will write to Mr Collier as soon as
possible but just now it will be impossible.
we are all well and as I have no more news
to write now I will close. So good bye to
all. You will I am sure write soon.

Your Afft Son & Brother

G. P. Jarvis