My dearest,

Why I’ve neglected to write is already known to you. I thank God that I [was] still spared through the perils of battle to [commune] with her, to me on earth most dear. The ten days just elapsed have been days of hardship and bitter, bitter, trial. The battle fought has been bloody. The victory won to our cause most glorious and triumphant I feel truly grateful that He has covered my head in the day of battle, and that of the many who face the leaders hail I am still in the land of the living. The bloody contest just closed resulted most gloriously to our […] and the self-inflated hero, Hooker, has been most [finally] defeated. The battle of Chancellorsville, as facts become known, evinces the peerless generalship of Lee and the matchless courage of his Army. Outnumbered two to one, the rebels attacked the fighting column; (the demonstration at Fredericksburg being a feint), of the enemy, one drove them with immense slaughter from strong positions admirably fortified and well selected to a ford in the River, where a Merciful Providence stayed the effusion of blood. But for the rain many many more households would now be […] in sorrow, and uttering the lamentations of grief. The main outlines and general results are already known to you, but the part our Brigade and Reg. took in that frightful contest, I must relate. We were startled by the heavy cannonade on the river on Wednesday of last week. Couriers were galloping to and fro and old soldiers well knew that “something was on.” The alarm was sounded and we hurried at a double quick for miles to the place where the enemy had […]. Preparations were made for battle, and our brigade was placed in the ditches. There we remained for 30 hours. In the meantime Lee had rec’d such intelligence as confirmed his previous belief that the demonstration at Fredericksburg was a feint to cover more important movements, and that […] the enemy had [amassed] a considerable force to the south side of the Rappahannock at Kelly’s and Ely’s Fords. Then came one of Stonewall’s inimitable movements. The Yankee must be caught in his own trap. On Friday morning at day-dawn, the 2nd Army Corps was on the march, Marching 16 miles, it halted at 11 o’clock AM, & formed a line of battle. There was considerable skirmishing in the after-noon by the divisions that had preceded us, but no fighting of any consequence. The enemy fell back to a stronger position. The ruse was apparent to old Jackson. His troops remained still until morning, when we were again ordered to march. The march was to reach a point on the enemy’s right flank and rather in his rear 2 miles, but the route selected 16 miles. The march was a forced one, uninterrupted save by an attempt of the enemy to capture our Wagon train, which was easily checked. At dusk we arrived at a point where Rhodes’ Division had begun the fight. The enemy had been attacked by Rhodes who drove him back, for some distance. The usual evidences of a battle were seen here. Dead & wounded horses and men, blankets, clothing, captured artillery &c., covered the thoroughfare. Prisoners were hurrying to the rear, and the shouts of our victorious legions cheered us amidst these scenes of bloodshed and death. Jackson and A.P. Hill had been wounded in the afternoon, and the Cavalier Stuart commanded us. He led us where grape and canister were [riddling?] the
woods, shell were shrieking and musketry was rattling. It was 12 P.M. when we went into action. The clouded Heavens frowned with the wrath of a displeased God. The continued volleys of musketry and the terrible grape and shell illumined the Heavens, yet no one faltered, no one hesitated, for our enemy was in front and our brothers were engaged with him in the bloody death grapple. Five batteries belched forth their tones of thunder, the grape fell thick around us, yet there was no craven heart to falter. Gen. Stuart himself led us into position. We took the place assigned us silently within 300 yards of the enemy, the sound of whose axes was heard all night in creating breastworks for protection. At day-dawn we were aroused by the command Attention! Take Arms! Shoulder Arms! Charge Bayonets! Forward Double Quick! and in 15 minutes we were in possession of the breastworks and pursuing the enemy. The time elapsed so quick I hardly know how it was done. Suffice it to say the material results were most favorable for us. Our Reg’t of 350 men captured 200, killed and wounded twice that number. Every man acted gallantly in our company, which was always in the advance. The enemy we fought was the Brigade of the famous Sickles. Our Regiment was highly complimented. Gen. Stuart remarked that it was the “best fighting he ever saw”. On the following day we were assigned a post of honor, but no attack was made to our lines. There was fighting on the left. The results of this greatest battle of the war may be roughly estimated as (on the part of the enemy) 1000 prisoners & 10,000 killed and wounded- the 12th Ga […] its [TOO FADED TO READ] Thomas’ Brigade. The loss in our company was 3 slightly wounded. None were disabled. Thank God!

Oh! My love, how I’ve longed to see you; how many many earnest thoughts have I had in regard to you. Not a day, aye, nor an hour, has escaped unless I’ve thought of that gentle being whose heart throbs with my own, whose very existence is wrapped with my own. Let us pray for a time when our separation will be no more, and our plighted vows be fulfilled in the consummation of our love.

I am in tolerable health only. Write soon

& oblige

Yours truly

E.S.M.