

about it here, & don't mention the thing outside of the office, for it would not do to let them know how near they did come.

I sent you \$25 the other day by Express which I hope you received safely. There was a letter with it which I believe tells you everything which has happened lately.

I think I shall send you some sugar cane if you would like it enough to pay the Expressage. I sometimes see it in the market & it looks very nice. What little I have got from time to time has been very nice & fresh. I have been quite well since I wrote & I admire this kind of weather for January. Soft, warm, pleasant winds, when one has to have the window open all the time. The steamer has been due now for three days so I hope she won't fail tomorrow. I want both letters & papers from home, to know what you all have been doing. Please give my love to father, Grandmother, Russ & Ed, always keeping a sufficient quantity for yourself.

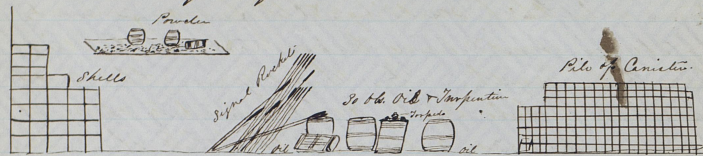
Your loving Son
Appleton

Tuesday eve. Jan. 6th 1863.

I think I must add a few more words to tell you how near we came to being blown up here last night. It will only prove the truth of what I have said. This morning one of the Ordnance men came up & told me that there was a plot to destroy the city &c. &c. &c. He was rather scared than otherwise & I could not make much out of him, so I went down to the storehouse to see what was up. We have a lot of turpentine & oil there in one corner, & I found one of the heads of one of the latter barrels knocked in & the barrel upset, & the oil of course all over the floor. In the center of it stood a barrel of turpentine, & on the top thereof some eight pounds of loose powder, & in the center of the powder a small torpedo. To this was attached a slow match which had been lighted, & which had burned to less than one inch of the torpedo. Why it did not go off I can not conceive, but it had gone out, & so the thing failed.

On looking further I found in one corner covered with some boards, a lot of signal Rock etc with the slow match of each pulled out, & on a little shelf above several kegs of powder which had been opened, & spilled along towards

Some cases of inflammable shells.



The Torped was something like this as it lay on top of the barrel. I don't say there is an exact piece here but it is near enough. It is made of some composition, which when once on fire is very hard to put out, mixed with sulphur and a little powder. The whole covered with Cord wound tight around it, & the entire ball steeped in tar. We have in the building between four & five millions of ball cartridges for Enfield Rifles, some three million of Case & Cartridge shot, a large number of loaded shells, and quite a quantity of powder, besides other Ordnance stores to the value of nearly a million dollars. If the explosion had taken place it would have shaken the whole city, & I don't think there would have been a house left standing for two blocks around.

The plan was a good one, for all the Am-

munition we have here, with but little exception, is in that building, & that once gone we of course would have to wait for supplies from the North. In that time what could not the rebels do? However tried to blow us up must have calculated that it would be at least three weeks before we could send for & receive supplies - not knowing that we have over seven millions now on the way here.

There must have been several parties engaged in the affair, & they must have had some time to get things ready, so of course it must have been with the knowledge of the watchman. He dismissed him to-day, & have set several detectives at work to find out the authors. If we catch them it will go hard with them.

I am going to dismiss every man of the old set tomorrow, & put our own men in their places, & make a total change.

I told the Lieut. before that it ought to be done, & he is beginning to find out that I am right.

We have got a guard stationed there now & shall have three soldiers there all the time.

I should like to have caught the man lighting the match, - I don't think I should have thought twice about putting a ball through his head. Of course we keep perfectly quiet

to hang a few of the scoundrels. I shouldn't be surprised to wake up any morning & find this place in the hands of the Confederates.

I acknowledge it makes one mad to see things go on in this way, with nothing bright to look ahead to. There is a rumor here today that the Alabama has taken the Spaulding with Gen. Butler & Cliff on board. That would be a haul for her. It is not believed of course for it comes from Southern sources which are not the most trustworthy in the world. I hope when Gen. Banks goes up the river that he will take St. Hill along.

I should like to see the fight at Port Hudson & Vicksburg, & have another chance to act as Aid to Col. Chickering. I won't close this till tomorrow or next day, for there is no mail goes till Wednesday, & I may have something more to add. At any rate it is quite a respectable letter as it is and very nearly as long as my last. I expect to get letters from home tomorrow & I hope I shall not be disappointed.

Affectionately App.

5.
He says it was more like Hell than any thing he ever saw or imagined. All the time the Westfield was aground. The sailing Master was in charge when the fight began & he ran her ashore while turning her. When Commodore Renshaw came on deck & saw how things were, he turned to this officer - "If the Harriet Lane is taken sir, my death & the death of every man there, is upon your head!" He tried for some time to get her off but in vain, & when he saw the Lane overpowered he sent his crew on board the Mary Boardman telling them he should blow his vessel up. He opened the doors of the magazine, thrust a fire upon the deck, & then ordered two pounds of oil to be poured over the whole.

In less than one minute - the explosion took place, & Commodore Renshaw, his first officer, Chief Engineer, & several other officers & men perished. His boat was under the guard at the time, & all the rest were in her care Renshaw. He was upon the quarter deck. From several things which occurred it is supposed that he intended to blow himself up, & had ordered the boat to leave him, which they refused to do. He said to one of the officers

who was saved, "I shall never go on shore alive again," & told some of the sailors not to move his chest as he should not need it again. When the old sailor on board the Boardman saw their ship blown up they burst right into tears, calling out, "God have mercy on your souls - there goes the old man & Engineer Green, & Mr Holdcom."

They got a rope to hang the sailing masts & had only escaped by locking himself into his cabin with his pistols. They all say the Harriet Lane did splendidly & for two hours fought the rebel boats by herself. To sum up as near as possible; we lost the

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Harriet Lane, | Captured. |
| Westfield | blown up. |
| Two barks | Captured |
| One mortar schooner | do |
| One small tug boat | do |
| 241 men of the 42 ^d Mass. Vol. | |
| 125 " Crew of the Harriet Lane. | |
| 12 " " " Westfield. | |

Also Commodore Renshaw & Capt. Wainwright & several other officers whose names we do not know. We can only guess the rebel loss but it must have been close upon 3000 men. The Fam does not seem to have

done anything but look on & fire a few shots. She moved down towards the Westfield at one time, but seeing the Boardman just by her, kept posted the latter to be a gunboat, & so went back.

The Brooklyn & several other gunboats went down yesterday morning, & I hope they will shell the place & burn it to the ground without mercy.

We left the swasses there to watch for the Lane & prevent her getting to sea, but I think myself they the rebels will run her down to Indianola some twelve or fifteen miles below, & take her out that way. She will never belong to our navy again at any rate. Don't you they will try the same game on the Mississippi, now that it has succeeded so well once, & if they do, fifty to one that they succeed. We only hold this city by means of our gunboats, & if they should be taken away we could not hold our own here for one day. If they were not afraid of being shelled out, the people here would show us down in the streets. You have no idea how bad they are getting. When boys sing in the street "We'll hang Abe Lincoln to a sour apple tree" & when men pass by their Headquarters, talking loudly about the "Demanded Northern Yankees." I think it is about time to stop conciliating &

the time she got down to the "Lane" however it was too late, that vessel had been overpowered.

The *Ovaseo* lay at the end of one of the streets trying to protect the soldiers on the dock. She was opposite the main body of rebels, & for three hours threw grape & canister among them. The slaughter must have been awful, for she worked her nine inch guns at short rifle range. The soldiers on the dock tore up a few planks between them & the shore & used them as a barrier.

They fired for some time but soon found it was useless, & sent word that they would surrender. The reply came back that no quarter would be given. It is not known what became of the rest of them, but it is supposed that every man of the 240 was killed.

My informant told me that he saw men hanging on to the string pieces of the dock, for nothing human could stand before the hail of lead which the rebels poured upon them. From the open street, from the shore, & from the houses the Texans were firing upon the soldiers & gunboat.

J.B. There is a look at Millers to be bound. Ricks & Co. January. It should have been some a month ago.
Adjutant General's Office
Headquarters Dept. of the Gulf.
New Orleans, Jan 5th, 1863

Dear Mother

It is but a few days since I wrote to you but I think I shall favor you with another epistle tonight although it will not be as long as the last.

There is nothing especially new here save the fight at Galveston, & knowing how many different stories you will hear about it from the newspapers, I think I shall give you the true account, as I heard it from one of the officers of the Clifton. We are all feeling blue at the news, for it seems that we are getting beaten all over just at present. If we are defeated again at Vicksburg & Port Hudson, (and there are about ten chances to one that we shall be!) I think they may as well call us home for the present. If the old & disciplined troops under Burnside are beaten so badly on the Rappahannock, what can we do here with hardly one fifteenth of the number, of raw fresh troops? They are fighting at Port Hudson now, - at least that was the news this afternoon from up the river, but what the result will be there is no guessing. I have been quite near enough to the place to know

that if not as strong as Vicksburg, it comes very near to it. The Southerners here say that they can throw 15,000 men into the place within six hours after it is attacked, & everything goes to show that they are not far wrong. It is going to be no child's play to advance those sixteen miles beyond Baton Rouge. But to go to Galveston. We heard the news here yesterday (Sunday) morning, & in the afternoon I went down on the Leave & on board the Mary Boardman. She was there, & from her engineer, & the first officer of the Clifton I got the story.

There were in the harbor at the time four of our gunboats, the Clifton, Harriet Lane, Onasco, & Westfield, - several transports, among them the Mary Boardman, & two or three tow boats. In the afternoon part of the 42^d Mass. Vol. - 241 men in all, had been landed on the wharf. They had not gone ashore but were encamped on the end of the dock.

At 2 A.M. on New Year's morning the rebels under Gen Joe E. Johnston attacked the place, & at the same time came down the river from Buffalo Bayou, with three steamboats piled up with cotton, & one iron clad ram. They were close upon the gunboats before they were

seen & it was a complete surprise. They bore down on the Harriet Lane first, - she ran into one of them & sunk her, & then got entangled in the wreck, & both of them went ashore. Before she could get clear the two others ran down one on each side of her, & poured down a terrific fire. Being piled with cotton bales they were very much higher than the Lane, & so shot down every soul who appeared upon her decks.

They had no large guns, nothing but rifles, but they had things pretty much their own way.

As soon as they got close enough they boarded her altogether, & then drove the rest of the crew into the water. Capt. Wainwright was shot through the side, but drew his revolver & killed three of them after he fell, he was firing again when one of the rebels placed his rifle to his head & blew out his brains. Out of the entire crew - one hundred & twenty odd, but nine men were left alive. In the mean time the Clifton was engaged with a battery on the point above, which had opened upon her.

She silenced that, & then ran down along the shore, throwing grape & canister into the rebel troops on the beach. They were crowded all along, & it is said fell by hundreds. By