

A Letter from Home

★ ★ ★ Friendship ★ ★ ★

February 8, 1863

Nashville

My Dear A,

Here I am, safely landed in this place last evening at 7 o'clock. Our hospital is a large five stories stone building on the public square near the river and the suspension bridge. It has upwards of 300 sick and wounded soldiers. Every nurse was needed but we found that papers had been procured for only 15 ladies and none for dear Mrs. Wright the 16th in our conclave. Our baggage had been sealed upon our departure from Pennsylvania and it all had to be opened and inspected and that occupied considerable time on the second day. We thought we would find it very unpleasant to have our trunks opened but Dr. Wood the medical director advised a few of the ladies to go with Mr. Wright to the office. He said if a few women were present, the inspection would not be very strict. He was right, thank goodness and the whole thing was merely a formality in the end.

No work could be accomplished it seemed so we decided to take in Nashville with the rest of the day.

We had a pleasant time indeed. Our party appears to be very clever. We met a party of high toned Rebel ladies of the first blood who amused us with their effort to insult us. They talked in a high key of "Old Abe's failings, but there was but one feeling amongst our ladies and that was to maintain a dignified silence. This provoked them very much and all they could do was make faces. One made an expression too low to repeat - still we were silent. Don't you think that was wonderful for 16 women? It was quite an effort to seal our lips, but we felt so vastly superior, or rather our cause, that we could afford to be quiet.

After a refreshing sleep, we expected all to go to our labors that morning. But not one of us was off until nearly five o'clock when we finally reached the hospital. Of course we could do little that evening. Except pass among them to get acquainted. Please do not forget the primers and spelling books, if you can possibly send them. I met hundreds of contrabands in the wards last night and not one that I have spoken to can read or write.

Tomorrow, they will assign positions. But I must stop and cook up something for my poor soldiers. Enough for now.

I'll write more. Until then, I remain your loving servant,

Ella

