

Harpers Ferry Va.

Dec 30 1862

Dear Father

Since writing to last I have been kept tolerably busy at the bridge which is not finished yet no doubt to your surprise but nothing under the sun is more uncertain than operations conducted on a military basis. For instance when General Stoen's command was here I had a force of 50 good men at work, he left suddenly on the 7th of this month and of course took all my men with him. An interregnum of nearly a week took place then, during which next to

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nothing was done. Next
General Kintz came with a
Maryland brigade. This
General has very queer ideas
about bridges, considering
that they are merely avenues
by which the rebels might
get after him and are
therefore very dangerous
structures. At that time about
three fourths of the floor beams were
suspended; I represented to
him that it would be very
unsafe to leave the structure
in that position; he finally
consented to let me have a
few men to work and put
the bridge in a safe condition
but that no planks were to be
put upon the bridge, not even
a gangway for the men to
walk on. As none of my

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men could fly I was com-
pelled to lay down a track of
two planks side upon which
to jack out the stringers. This
fact came to the ears of the
General, some days since; I
was sent for in hot haste,
received a great lecture upon
the enormity of the crime com-
mitted etc. etc. and was ordered to
remove every plank that night
yet. and received the injunction
that any planks or gangway
that I might find necessary
to put down was to be taken
up every night and laid down
every morning. Well to
work in this style was perfect
murder and I had determined
to leave the bridge and go
to Washington for new orders to-
day. This morning however