

never in the world could have whipped us from that field. But it is probable that our Generals did not know the full amount of the rebel force. If they had, perhaps, they might have fallen back without being attacked—though I pretend to know nothing of such matters.

Nobody pretends to say that Prentiss' division did not fight well. I never even heard anybody whose opinion was good authority say that he was too far to the front and thus precipitated the engagement, though that is certainly the general impression. But every one acknowledges, nay, insists, that both he and his men covered themselves with glory. As I have always understood it, his whole division was cut entirely off early in the forenoon. They then cut their way to the rear through the enemy and rallied and formed again, when they fought until they were again partially surrounded and cut off. Such conduct is almost unprecedented and ought to be glory enough. Major Stone says that Gen. Prentiss received no orders while on the field. He might have received them if he had wanted to, for he was in communication with Gen. Grant. Col. Webster told me himself that he saw Gen. Prentiss at about two o'clock in the afternoon, and asked him if he could hold the position, and Prentiss told him he thought he could. When he was captured, it seems from the final returns that only about 500 men were taken with him; so he was not so badly outflanked after all.

Mr. Editor, I went to Pittsburg Landing just after the battle as correspondent of an Eastern newspaper. I was almost entirely unacquainted in the army; I had no constituency to tickle, no State's runaway troops to find a scape goat for, no politico-military friends to write up, and no aspirations for a staff appointment. Consequently I looked through my own eyes, and found myself differing very materially from the correspondents who sent out those first reports, and who looked through other people's spectacles. I feel convinced that every General on that field has been wickedly, wilfully and maliciously slandered, and that General Grant and General Sherman have had more than their share of abuse. I feel convinced, too, that they were by far the most able men on that field; that through their admirable generalship, an attack of double our force was successfully resisted, and that in all they did they scarcely made a mistake or did anything which they now wish had been done differently. I further believe that it will be just about one generation before justice will be done either of them, and that, for serving their country as brilliantly and efficiently as few other men yet have in this hour of trial, they will enjoy the sweet reward of universal popular execration while they live, and—posthumous honors.

J. A. W.

### Major Davis and Gen. Prentiss.

CHICAGO, June 14, 1862.

Editors Chicago Tribune:

I have read the *ex parte* statement of Major Stone, and others, of Gen. Prentiss' staff, concerning the battle of Shiloh, which appears in your Washington correspondence of to-day's issue. If the statements were your correspondents, I presume you would not let me say a word about it, but as it is distinctly based on the authority of Major Stone, I hope you will allow a few words of correction.

Major Stone says "so far from Gen. Prentiss being surprised, he was the only one who was not surprised." Among all fair men who have taken any pains to examine the subject, this question of surprise has long ago been settled. It is well understood that *all* our pickets were out a mile and a quarter. As to Gen. Prentiss, no one knew for certain, and only his statement was wanting to settle the fact that our whole line was that morning effectually secured against surprise. I am glad to have the confirmation of what everybody knows must be a fact, but sorry to see that Major Stone, or anybody else, is willing to blame Gen. Sherman for a matter about which he necessarily could know nothing—the posting of his pickets. I should think that all those generals had suffered enough from the repetition of that ineffably silly story to prevent them from flinging it at each other. The posting of pickets is such an invariable matter of routine that it seems incredible that any one of ordinary sense should accuse a military man of not doing it, unless he had the highest and most positive evidence to sustain the accusation.

The next remarkable statement is the grand stroke for which that about the pickets was the foundation—that "Hardee's corps was moved to within 300 yards of Sherman's camp, and there bivouacked Saturday night, and that rebel officers said they could distinctly hear conversation in Sherman's camp. If they did say so they lied—that's all about that. Go out some stormy night and stand on the corner of State and Lake streets and hold a conversation, won't you, and see how it works! Gen. Sherman's pickets *were* out—if the rebels heard any talking it was those pickets. Every regiment of Gen. Sherman's, as well as of every other division, was formed in front of its camp in line of battle before it was attacked, and notwithstanding some of them behaved disgracefully, others fought well, and held their ground until long after noon. Many say that it was this very fighting that saved the day, but that is a mere matter of opinion. How does Major Stone know that some of Sherman's men were "bayoneted in their tents?" Did he see them? That foolish lie started on the sole authority of the froggadocia of rebel prisoners, and now we find Major Stone as easily humbugged as were our common soldiers.

Again. How does Major Stone know that General Grant didn't know that Johnston's army was advancing? Does he reason that because he did not tell Gen. Prentiss he did not know it? *Non Sequitur*. Good generals are not in the habit of telling all they know. General Grant did know it, so did General Sherman, so did General Halleck, who, nevertheless, ordered Grant repeatedly during every day, to do nothing that would bring on an engagement. He could not believe that the enemy could be so insane as to attack us in the position which we held—flanked by two impassable creeks, which ran convergently to the river. The result shows the sagacity of the conclusion. The enemy did attack, and were most soundly beaten. They