

(2) F. R. GRIST TO MRS. E. H. KNOX, St. Louis.  
On the Prairie, June 7, 49.

Dear Mother:

Comfortably seated at dinner, on the ground around our mess chest. The guide brings intelligence of a traders caravan on the return route. In hopes of being able to consign to their care a line if I have time to write it, I can just let you know that all difficulties are gotten over and thus armed and equipped I am - - - with the party, - - *muddy miles* seven days out and two hundred miles from our next stopping place, Fort Kearney on the Platte. I was allowed to select from a lot of miserable, *hacks*? - the leavings of two dragoon regiments and half a dozen Santa Fe parties, and it was "small choice among rotting apples". My horse has gone lame and although at bottom a good one, as I can not use him, I exchanged him today for a mule. The Guide takes him to care and lead for a buffalo hunter and gives me in his place a choice from the three or four best mules in the train. So, if things go on agreeably I shall go mule back to the LAKE. I "have no friends here" and they are all willing enough to make a butt of me. If I find that ~~as~~ I don't hold my own, I shall leave. It is the only way. I hinted it once and IT GOT ME A HORSE. I could not make it bring a pair of pistols, so purchased a pair. I have to fight my own battled here. -

Tell Pa that Dr. Blake? is the most selfish, muddling, and ill mannered boor I ever met claiming the name and consideration of a gentleman. I find it hard to treat him respectfully. His only kindness or attention to me is in using me as a convenience when he can and in watching me to keep me from stealing his goods, - almost telling me as much. I do him no injustice. I bear no grudge against him. I treat him with careful consideration, but have to defend myself from his rudeness and his *impertinence*. The captain is *silent* and *stunted my outfit* more than that of any other one of the party - even the teamsters, but treats me politely. Mr. Gunnison is kind, generous and gentlemanly in his

feelings and manners, ~~xxx~~ an ~~honourable~~ angel compared to the rest of them, and the only one with whom I have anything like free and easy intercourse. Dr. Blake toady's the captain for the use of his liquor case, and treats Langdon and myself with the overbearing patronage of allowing us to put up his tent, which unfortunately happens to be ours also, else it would go unpitched. I should have been glad to have --- for him, but he has never given a small word <sup>of</sup> gentlemanly courtesy since we met.. I am not easy here, but as long as there is any hope of making myself so I shall hold on. I say nothing about doing my own work, although that is not usual in the OFFICERS MESS, and no one does it but Langdon and myself, but I shall not submit to be treated with gratuitous oppression.

This is another grumbling letter, but you know my dear Mother, I must tell you just how things go. Hereafter I shall doubtless have pleasanter news. I am <sup>not</sup> ? "seeing the elephant".

The captain closes his desk and time's out, so good bye.

Your son,

F. R. GRIST.