My dear Jane

At the close of my last letter I promised to send you an account of a battle, but instead of doing so I must only continue my journal. So it has been all along. Every attempt at divining the future has failed. To all appearance we must have a battle in the morning, but no such thing yet. It was a dreary dismal night when we landed. We were pretty wet and very tired. I noticed that many of the old soldiers who had kept telling us of their great marching gave up and did not march as well as we did. We slept well, and awoke refreshed. All was quiet - the rain fell occasionally in a light shower. Around in every direction the ground was covered with tents. I was lying on the straw after breakfast, contemplating the goodness of God in giving me health and strength in the midst of all these circumstances, and preserving me when many an able looking man has been left behind & sent to the hospital as Johnny stuck his head in to see how we were. He thought such a hard days work would have used up some of us - just then a great gun went bang! and we concluded the battle had opened. Bang! Bang! again and again. Johnny proposed that we should go and see the performance, so we started down to the high point where the artillery was posted, and found them firing shells across the river at a train of cars. The rebels did not return the fire, and we soon stopped. That was all we saw of it. I came back about 11 o'clock. Just then we were ordered to strike our tents and leave. As to leaving such a dirty muddy & crowded place we were not sorry, but with the prospect of a storm coming and no dinner we did not like it. We had to go a mile & a half one way to Gen. Burns and got ordered by him in a different direction to go four miles and repair a bad road. It commenced raining pitchforks etc and kept so all the way. The Roundheads did swear I am sorry to say on that occasion. Every one was wet to the skin. But after all this turned out for the best, like many other unpleasant things. The storm became so violent that we had to stop. We went into a field and pitched our tents in a drenching rain. We soon had ours up. I spied some stacks of straw, and we soon had it in our tents plenty enough to keep us out of the wet. It rained all night, but was warm. The next day it rained once in a while, but not enough to stop us from going out to work. We had to get our food from the river by this road, and since it rained the road got so bad that we can hardly get enough provisions brought down for so many men as are here. It had to be mended. We went to work at it. I am not expected to do much as you will see when I tell you that I started to the woods & gathered grapes & persimmons all day. The woods are full of wild grapes & the persimmons are now ripe & delicious. I ate as many as I could,
and brought our mess from home full. Just as I got back the Col told the officers to put the men on guard for the night who had shirked working during the day. He just then saw me coming in to my place in the company. He came down to see what I had in the pan, and helped himself very freely. That was the way I was punished. Yesterday I went along & worked. We worked the same as you see us working on our roads at home. That is no one hurts himself. Dr. Sherlock came out to see us. He told us that Burnside had summoned the Rebels to surrender Fredericksburg, and if they did not by 9 o'clock this (Sunday morning) he would shell the city. I was on guard during the night, and hearing the drums beating the reveille long before day I thought it was to call out the army for the contest. After breakfast I got a man to take my place and got a pass to go back to our old camp to see the bombardment, but was disappointed. The performance was postponed, and we can't tell when it will take place. We can see the rebel batteries on the other side of the city. Some of them have crossed over and given themselves up to us. The drums beat Early this (Monday) morning in some of the regiments, but I cannot tell why. We were aroused at the usual time. I had almost forgot to say that our whole regiment has got back from mending roads and is in the old place at the Rappahannock opposite Fredericksburg. While we were away some of the other regiments took all our straw & we had to set our tents up in the mud. We went out in the woods & cut a lot of twigs off the Cedar trees which are very plenty here and have made a very nice tent again. It smells like your big cedar chests. The mail has just arrived, bringing me a pair of gloves and a pair of stockings and also your letter of the 10th. I can hardly tell which was the most welcome. I am very much obliged for them all. Last night was the coldest one yet. It froze pretty hard, but is again pleasant enough. I have plenty of shirts. You need not send me any, nor indeed anything unless I write for it. There are a good many things you might think would be nice and convenient for us to have & we might think so too, but the least we have is the best. It makes less to carry and less to watch and take care of. If it was summer I would carry no baggage except a gum blanket. There is no prospect that I see of any promotion, and you need not care dear, as I understand my business in my present place and can get along as well as any one. I could have got detached to write for Gen. Burns. It would pay 40 c a day more, but I won't clerk for any man for 40 c a day unless compelled to. I can get more than that if I want to go into that business. I came to fight & not to copy letters & orders.

As to the Camden & A R R Stocks I am aware of the rise up of $155. per share. It is all right, and should have gone up a little higher. It will not pay to sell it. It is really no higher than when it sold for $120. I cannot perhaps explain this
to you. But you will see that gold & silver is worth 30% premium, or in other words $100 of gold will sell for $130. In papers. Now it is just the same with Camden & A. which is just as good as gold. It has gone up because it is better than paper money. If it could be sold for $155 per share and the price got in gold or silver, then it would be right to sell; but if in paper it is no use. When it was selling at $120 we could get the pay in gold or silver - now you can't. It is safer the way it is.

I would like to send a letter to the children and will if I get time, but if we march soon I shall not be able. I got a letter from Tommy that I must answer today if possible & I must write to George for tobacco & Wm Floyd for paper. These things are not to be had here even for money, and as they must come by mail, I want to get the best & strongest. You remember how I told you about Wm. Floyd marking it so good.

It is getting on towards the middle of the day and not a gun fired yet. Perhaps the rebels, will retire without a fight here, but we can't tell anything about it, except that the Roundheads are ready for their share. You will get a good deal more news about such matters from the newspaper than from me. I only know what happens just around me, and the reporters travel from camp to camp.

We are all well. When I say we you will now and hereafter understand that I include Willie, Johnny & Henderson. For this good health and many other things we cannot be enough thankful. For myself I think I feel somewhat so, and hope that. "God's mercies I will Ever sing etc." for he has dealt with me better than I deserve. I see many a stout hardy looking man go to the hospital, or sink down on the march. Others getting thin with diarrhea or dysentery, and some crippling with rheumatism from wet and cold, and here am I such an unlikely subject as well as ever you saw me and a little stronger. My appetite would astonish you. If you see Hugh tell him I ate 13 crackers from supper to bed time. I can eat any time or any thing. Then again it has been providentially arranged so that even when we thought we were enduring more hardships than the other troops we were really better off at last. I think I will or have learned to trust all my affairs to God's direction and be satisfied with his way. He gives grace first as it is needed, and I could not have laid down at home with more satisfaction or feeling of security than I do on the ground here. He may call on me at any hour to testify to my love of my country by shedding my blood for it, but I have no fear but that if he does he will give me dying grace in time so that even then I may thank him for the privilege. Darling you know we must part some time it might have and may yet be after we have run our three score and ten, but some times it must be. If it is to be now, look how gradually it is being accomplished. You
must get accustomed to look at these matters and become resigned to God's will altogether, and then whether we meet again or not let us unite in our prayers in this one petition "Thy will O Lord be done."

There is a rumor in camp now that our regiment and the 45th Pa. have been detached from this division, and will be detailed to guard the railroad from Acquile [Acquia] Landing to Fredericksburg. If so we will not get going on to Richmond. I can't say that I like this arrangement much. It is stupid work to guard a railroad - better be after the enemy. It may however not be true, but I will likely be able to tell you more in my next.

I will not close this today - may have some news to send tomorrow. My remembrance to Uncle William & Aunts. Squire Pringle, Mr. & Mrs. Bovard, Mrs. Floyd and all her folks also Harrison Elliott. Tell him it is well he did not come. It would never have agreed with him. Too much wet and cold. Don't send any more clothing unless we write for it.

Tuesday November 25. We had company last night. Johnny, Dick Holmes & I had Mr. McBride spend the evening with us. Towards tattoo we heard that there would be a mail in even at that late hour. So we agreed to sit up for it. Having been here a few days we have fired up quite stylishly. We have a splendid & fragrant carpet of cedar twigs and for a table we got an empty cracker box. We had to sit in the dark for we have not candles since we came here. However we build fires opposite the entrance of our tents and they show nearly enough light for our purposes. We thus sometimes spend a very pleasant evening, and only want a little female society to make it as nice as if we were at home. It is not the dismal uncomfortable kind of life some people imagine - The mail came - we rush to the heap of brush that we had carried from the woods in the afternoon and throw a lot on the fire to make it blaze up - You can see every face as plain as daylight - the eyes sparkling with hope & expectation. The names are called out - one gets a letter - another a paper - some two - some none - a package for Willie he had got his gloves - one for me - my nice new shirt - soft & fine - I could have kissed it for your sake dear if there had not been so many around. But don't send any more - we want for nothing of that kind - I like yours best, but will let you know in time always - Letters are read & news discussed. Johnny got one from Bessie - I must write to her one of these days, and thank her for staying so much with you. We had a good nights rest. It froze a little, but with a beautiful sunrise we have a fine day. We always see the sun rise now. We have just had dinner. How we do eat! Harvest hands are nothing. But we don't worry the women cooking for us. Cooking is all nonsense! Give me a tin cup, a spoon, a cracker, a piece of pork, and some pepper & salt and I can make you a different dish every
day for a week. We have always a kind of sauce here that makes it of little consequence how the meal is cooked. We call it hungry sauce. We are now drawing our allowance for tomorrow. We just get everything measured out day by day & can get no more. We have a better understanding here of the petition "Give us this day etc." The guns have commenced to thunder. I don't know whether they are now bombarding the city or not. Perhaps it is a salute. They had brought up the pontoons last night and were to cross today. I must hasten and get this into the mail bag, and go and see what is going on. We will get our mail more regularly as long as we remain here, as it only takes 24 hours to Washington - Henry Boozle is about dying - so the surgeon says. Inflammation of brain - a good many are going down. We are all very well. If we stay here will write often & if we go on the march you must try to be contented with a little delay. Kiss the children for me & believe me ever

your devoted husband

W Taylor

P.S. Send me 20 or 30 postage stamps the next time you write.