Camp opposite Fredericksburg
November 27, 1862

My dear Jane

Another mail. Just as I closed we received another mail, with your letter of 13th & 17th. I am glad you had got mine as you appear too anxious about my health. You must just take my statements as I send them. I will tell you when I am sick & when I am well. You would not have known I was sick at Waterford if I had not sent you word. I will not deceive you. I am as well now as ever I was in my life. I wish I could say so for all our regiment. Henry Boosel died just after I wrote you last. John got over to see him a little before he died. Johnny was over at the 134th. Yesterday I saw Jim Knight, Jas. Nelson, Oliver Breckenridge & all the folks. They are within 3 miles of us. It is described as a poor wretched low spirited regt. So are nearly all the new ones. The old ones have got used to such things as discourages new men & take them as matters of course. Besides all their other fatigues they have to drill. We don't. I have only drilled twice since I joined the regt. Hez Lightner came over to see us from the 5th. I half promised to go over to see their people, but I don't care to do it. I didn't like to ask for a pass, or to be away from my quarters on my own business, at a time when we may be called on to do something. A good soldier should be always in his place and ready. The weather is a little colder, just like our old springs. Pleasant enough with an overcoat all day but freezes a little at night. We sleep warm enough. It makes the camp very muddy. We have cut enough cedar twigs to carpet the street our tents are on, and that keeps us from carrying much mud into the tents. Yesterday our Brigade was reviewed by Gen. Sumner. [Edwin Vose Sumner] I could not get out in time to be in it. I had never had my boots off since I was at Waterford, a month ago. I was afraid I could not get them on. The night before they hurt me so I could not sleep well & I got them off with some trouble. During the night my feet swelled so that I could not get the boots on in the morning, so I was a prisoner in my tent or must go barefoot. I gave them a good greasing & put the new stockings on that you sent and during the afternoon got the boots on again. They came off last night pretty easy. After review we got a pork barrel & sawed part off it & made a tub. They boiled water & Willie was washwoman. I could not wash for a boil on my wrist & Henderson has a very sore finger, so he carried water & Willie washed till late at night. We did not need the washing as much as the clothes needed scalding. About a week ago Willie got lousy & soon they got on Henderson & me. I Kept them down pretty well by slapping & killing every day but the only way we can get them entirely off is with scalding water. We start on the new again. There is not a man in the regt. that escapes long.
Johnny tells me that he went to the Colonels tent the other day & found him with his shirt off cracking away. It is so common a thing no one minds it. When let alone a while they almost carry one off. The folks were wondering how we escaped so long. I put clean under clothes on entirely. I put on your new shirt. It fits Elegantly & feels so soft and nice I almost think it is yourself. I will send for the other as soon as I want it. Could you not send one for Johnny? He would like to have such a one. The one you have would perhaps do, except the sleeves. They would be too long and for the army we want a pocket in our shirts. About twice the size of a watch pocket on one side about the nipples. I wish you could send Johnny one. He deserves it, as he has been of more use to us than any one else since we came. He carries a good many of our things in his desk & when we get short of any thing he slips us enough, so that when on a march if our company is short of crackers or any other food we have plenty. He also slips us rice & beans at times when others can't get them. This is a fine day and our clothes are out drying on a pole we set up. All is quiet in camp. The rebel pickets & ours are near enough to talk to each other. Some of our regt. were detailed to day to act as litter bearers for the wounded. Some think this denotes a battle soon. I have almost forgotten to answer your letter dear.

Willie says to send him no shirts now. We will always write when we want anything. We don't care much about M'Clellans removal. Burnside is a good general too & will do us well enough. Still I would rather they had let Mac alone & perhaps the country will too some day. Changing often does no good. Haworth does not send me a paper, but I told him to not. A few days ago I wrote him to send a Chronicle occasionally. George sends me a Philad. Inquirer every day & I see the news sooner that way.

Robert did call at Harrisburg to see me, but they told him I was gone - guess he did not look very closely. Better say nothing to Ann or any one else. He is not of any account or use to me and never was, still he must be treated civilly. He might have served me to some purpose if he had done as I told him, but he did not. However, such matters are all better let alone.

You can tell Mrs. Gealy that John is as well as when he started, and perhaps a little better. He stands it very well so far. He tells me that his brother has been discharged and gone home. I don't see him much, as he went into another company. Johnny received your mother's letter and answered it. I believe this answers all the question in your last letter, but I can hardly tell as I was I was very suddenly interrupted yesterday while writing. I marked the place where I stopped in the middle of a sentence by marking a *. The drum beat to strike tents and every one jumped. We had our washing out to day and were in a
great scrape. However go we must - we might take them or leave them, that was our affair. Well from the fact that the litter bearers had been appointed that morning we thought we must now have a fight. That was the general impression. You would be surprized to see the difference between our regiment and the others on such occasions. They fix up and start as cooley as you would go to the post office. I cant do it yet. Perhaps they don't notice it, but my blood runs faster then, and I don't feel the cold or notice the mud. We were in line in a very short time, and off we started to the rear of the Brigade our fifes & drums playing the Boyne Water. The Brigade then moved and where do you suppose we went - only 1/4 mile - but what a change. We left our mud hole and encamped in a beautiful cedar grove. A lot of about 600 Acres grown full of Cedar and Pine bushes large & small, and carpeted with a coarse long grass peculiar to this climate. This grass is bleached & turned to hay. The pines & cedars shelter us & we now need no fires except one to each company to cook by. I cannot describe the beauty of the situation - if I had to make a place for a camp I could not contrive a better one. We had to leave the old one as every one was getting sick. We are fixed up and living in splendor & luxury in our new place. Our tent is fixed fast to a small cedar for a support at one end, and the tree rises up above it. We can lie down & listen to the wind sighing through the branches & I can fancy that I hear many a familiar voice speaking to me through it. We have had a name for all our camps, according to the most striking features of our stay. For instance, Camp Misery, Camp Fatigue, Camp Starvation, & Camp Homing, but to this one we voted the name of Paradise. We can from our tent door see the white steeples of Fredericksburg & the rebel tents on the heights beyond. This (Friday) is a delightful day. We have our clothes out drying again, and they will soon be ready to take in. I will not go over to see the 57th & 134th. If I had gone yesterday I would have been away when the move was made & it would have looked bad and worse still if there had been a fight. If any one in those regts. want to see me they can come over to ours. The days are too short for visiting. When I cook my breakfast. (We have a cook, but he only boils our coffee and beans) and wash, help to carry wood, clean up my gun, then dinner time comes & after that I have time to write a little or run over to see Johnny & Dick Holmes. Sam George, Lt. Luddingham or Mr. Brown before supper, which we always have too early, but that is so as to be ready for dress parade near sunset. We must all stop everything for dress parade. So it is not very convenient to go 3 or 4 miles on a visit for nothing. Our Evenings now are spent in our tents only when very warm, otherwise we gather around fires that we make till 7 1/2 o'clock when the drum beats for Evening worship. After that some sit up & some go to bed just as they
please. Willie would write often I know if he had more time. He has not quite as much as I have, as he does many little jobs just to save me from it, for instance if it is my turn to go for water and he sees me writing he goes, and such things take time.

I can hardly help writing in every line to day how nice we feel, & how pleasantly we are situated. Fairmount park is not to be compared to this field - the day also is fine and every one appears happy. Still we may leave here before night for all we know, and many of the cheerful voices I hear singing & whistling around me may be silent forever.

I will write from here to the children if we stay another day, but to day have not time. Tell them that I have not forgotten them and will send them a great long letter.

Don't think I am sending you false returns about my health for I am as well as ever you saw me & hoping you are so too I am Ever yours, William