Camp Opposite Fredericksburg  
Jan 12 1863

My dear Jane

I promised and expected to write you again yesterday, but was interrupted in my calculation by the arrival of Robert McKnight. He got to camp last Thursday, but did not come over here till yesterday. He attended preaching with us, and staid till after supper. He says James is somewhat better, and expects that he will be discharged sometime during this week. If so he will take him home immediately.

I have been intending to write you this letter for some time past, but was waiting to put better news in it. I send it all to yourself dear, and don't want any of the rest of the folks to know anything about it. I will send by same mail another that will tell all you need let the rest of the folks know. I always feel some restraint in writing to you knowing that our friends expect to hear also.

Yours of 5th inst. came last night after I was in bed, but I got up and lit the candle to read it, and was very glad to get it too. I would get up every night darling to get a line from you. This reminds me of one thing however that I intended saying to you, and that is that you should not sit up and lose your rest or go up and stay in town so late at night now waiting for letters while the roads are so bad and the mails so late. It may do you harm, and it will only be a few hours longer for you to wait till morning. You must not neglect your health dear, for you have more need of it now on account of our dear family. I am glad that they are so well as you report them and hope they may continue so. You never say anything about your own health dear. Do let me know if you are as well as when I left or just how you are. I cannot do anything for you, but still would like to know even if the news was unfavorable, rather than get such word from some one else.

You mentioned or asked once or twice if there was no prospect of my being promoted, and I purposely omitted answering that part of your letter. So does every one who writes to me, ask the same question. They who suppose that a man is rated in the army by his standing at home know very little about how business is done here. There are men worth half a million dollars in some of our neighboring regiments serving as privates. I have been now serving four months and from what I see have not the least anxiety for changing my position. I might be here four years as an officer and not get along near as well or be as contented. It was Col. Lesures intention that I should have a commission in this regiment, and I believe it is still, although he has never mentioned it to me. He has never spoken to me but three times since I came, once at Pleasant Valley when I arrived, again at Camp Starvation, and last the Evening we played chess together,
but at all these times we spoke only of the news in general and such matters. This company G. lost all its officers in battle except the 1st Lieut. who was badly wounded at Bull Run. Since then he has been in the hospital, and was promoted to be Captain. Before I arrived at Camp, the Col wrote to his Son to keep a vacant place in Co. G. for me, and since then has said that he will make a change in that company as soon as the Doctor gets a little more drill. This is well thought of as I needed it, and it would prevent me being ridiculed by the men if I had the command. Just after my arrival he appointed G. F. Grace 2d Lieut. and he has had command of the company ever since. This man was a low blackguard from somewhere about Oil Creek, and had neither the respect or command of our men. I have nothing to complain of about him as far as I am concerned, for he treated me well. He took sick about Christmas and had to go to the hospital. Next we heard that our Captain was discharged and sent home. I called at the hospital every day to see our Lieutenant and while there of course saw the doctor too. It may seem strange, but I think it is so, the doctor kept him sick on purpose. Also our Orderly got sick, and I think the doctor kept him sick too. The consequence was, we have no officers in our company. Dr. Sherlock said to me that it made him "mad as the devil" to see a broken physician only a private in a company under such a man, and Dr. Luddington too was working for me. Yesterday our Lieut. resigned and started home to day. This was what the doctors wanted. They are trying to get me in. Mr. Brown is trying to. Also the Major is a good friend of mine, and he has the command of the regiment now. The men in the company are divided on the subject - some of them would like it well enough, but some who have been out since the first want it themselves, and there will be a fuss in either case. How the matter will be settled I cannot Exactly tell, but expect it will be shortly. Probably I will be appointed Captain if the Col. thinks I have had enough drill. You will see how necessary it is not to write much about these matters as they are uncertainties at the best, and a report that the doctor would keep a man sick to oblige another would do no one any good. If I am to be advanced any it must be done soon, as we expect Col. Leasure to be soon made a General, and then he will have nothing to do with our regt. more than another. He has been acting as General for our Brigade all along, but really he is our Col still and does as he pleases with us, but once promoted I know not who will arrange our affairs. As far as I am concerned I do not care anything about it. I do not expect to be any happier or more contented in any higher position, and the only reason that would induce me to accept it is in my offer would be to please you and my friends. If I am appointed and we still remain here, or even go to Baltimore (as it is now reported we will) you could probably come
on to see me for a while. Perhaps in a week or two I will have something more to say about this. Some one must come and bring me some clothes. I would have drawn newer ones, but have been waiting to see the end of this matter. Creeping into our tents, and marching in mud, carrying wood & cooking has used up our clothes. You would hardly know me if you saw me. Still I am very hearty & have a splendid appetite -- never felt better in my life as far as health is concerned.

I don't think Pringle ever said what Jane Dennison reports him having said about my being tired of this. I certainly never wrote so to him or any one else. It is more like some of her lies. I have written I think three times to the Squire, and always then in answer to a letter received from him. He was the last man to bid me good bye in N. Castle, he came down there to see us off, and I could depend on him taking more trouble to oblige you or me than many of my own relations. Don't you think I should at least answer his letters when he takes the trouble to write to me? That is more than Joe Kirk or Uncle William has done. Ann did write & last week I got one from Uncle William. They would both have been answered & will be in their turn. I answer in rotation Except you, and yours are always attended to first, no matter what else comes. I know the Squires habit of telling every thing and only send him general news and camp jokes to give him something to laugh about.

Well darling my sheet is filling up and I am sorry for it. I intended saying a good deal of such things, but have forgotten much and much when I go to write appears too trifling. I must not write everything dear, or I will have nothing left to tell you when I go home, and then you would think me very uninteresting indeed.

With much love Your affectionate

William