Camp Opposite Fredericksburg  
Thursday Jany 29. 1863

My dear Jane

If we are kept here in the way we are now I shall probably be able to do as I promised a year ago, when you would not let me go, that is; write to you every day. I have lately had more time than ever, yet. The weather is such that we have not drills or dress parade, and in fact we have been doing nothing but picket duty since the middle of this month. We have not even had roll call since our new officer took command. The only exercise our new officer took command. The only exercise we now have is getting wood, and that is as much as we want. It is getting so scarce now that we must move away somewhere. At first we thought that there could be no end to it, for we could see nothing but woods all around us, but now when we have cut away for half a mile or so, we meet the men from another camp who have been coming cutting in our direction, and so it goes that between us we have cut down all the trees and burnt all the fences.

The weather is fine to day. The snow has cleared and at sunrise was about a foot deep. It is melting away very fast, and the soldiers are enjoying themselves with snow balling and sham battles. The roads are getting worse if such a thing is possible. It is not the roads alone that makes it hard to wagon here, for as the fences are all gone the teams go where they please, generally taking the short cuts, but the soil everywhere is of a kind that sinks like a quicksand, and a days wheeling anywhere ruins it for the next days work. It makes marching a great labor also. We have rumors to day that M'Clellan has again been made commander in chief. The soldiers feel better. They have confidence in him generally, and expect the war to be ended much sooner under his administration than any other. Burnside we hear is assigned to his old command. Whether that means the department of North Carolina or the 9th Army Corps we don't know. If he takes charge of this Corps and M'Clellan at Washington in Chief Command all will be satisfied here. The soldiers like Burnside, but doubt his capacity to manage a large army, but for a corps or division they would work under him better than any one else. These report may not be true: I cannot trace them up to any very good authority, but have no doubt there is a change of some kind. I only send you a few of these reports or the rumors that fly round camp. To send you all that is circulating here would take a short hand writer going all day. It is so seldom there is any truth in camp reports that I doubt them all.

Rev. Bowman that used to preach at your school house sometimes is here on a visit.
We escaped being on picket to day, but must take it tomorrow. It was arranged so that our turn came once in nine days, but since
this last attempt at attacking the rebels they have to strengthen
the posts and reserves so that we have to go once to twice a week.
After things get quieted down again it will probably go back to
the old way. If the weather keeps dry, we feel no inconvenience
from being out twenty four hours. That long in the open air only
gives one an appetite, and even when we have been in the wet had
done no harm. My buttons have burst off again, and I must get at
my sewing this evening. I wait till five or six are to be served
on before I begin at all. Willie is very fat. He weighed 159 the
last time he was up at the scales. I am fatter and stouter than
ever I was in my life. Henderson too looks like the full moon
about the face.

Johnny was in a little while ago and played a game of
checkers with Sam George. Yesterday there was no visiting an
account of the storm, and the boys are going round to day to see
their friends, especially those whom they know keep a good fire.

We expect a large mail to night - there were not more than a
dozen letters last night. I expect to hear about the key. Dick
Holmes will also be on the look out at Aguia Creek when it comes
for he is expecting a box from Pittsburg.

Hoping this will find you well & happy. I am your
affectionately.

William