My dear Jane

It is some days now since I wrote last, but things are so quiet here that I have nothing new to write you. We expected to go on picket duty on Friday, and in fact were notified the evening before to be ready that morning, but when the hour arrived we were notified that we were not wanted. But the next day we were. It was a great advantage to us however to get off even for one day, as the weather was good while we were out. The snow had melted off in a great many places. We were held as a reserve and got laying down at night. It was a pretty cold day, but we got wood to make a good fire. The men who felt like it had a good time snowballing. They divided off into parties and attacked one another in great style, using all the terms and phrases in use in military tactics. It was very amusing to look at them and hear their orders, and I think some of them went to bed tired that night. We also had a real fight in our camp the night before. It appears that some men must have fighting somehow; and when they don't get it with the rebels they fight among themselves. A party of the 29th Mass. came down to the camp of the 45th Pa. that night and made a disturbance. They were either drunk or let on to be, but from the way they run at last I think they were sober. The 45th got rid of them at last without fighting suffering they were from our regt. and did not want to quarrel with us. They watched to see to what company they belonged, and saw them come up to our quarters. When they came to our tent they took our mess pan at the door and we heard them say to each other "Now let us pitch into the first man we meet." They only went a few tents till they met one and they knocked him down with the pan and broke it. His messmates came out, and in fact we all turned out and the fight became general. Our little piles of firewood came very handy and in a few minutes the first fight was over, and all the 29th gone off badly licked except one who was not able. As soon as they got to camp a lot more came up to revenge them, and then we had another. The Major came out and called the guard and by his interference and Mr. Brown's the riot was stopped. The last time Co. G. had their hands full, but we soon had help. Capt. Bentley was out bareheaded and in shirt sleeves, ready to begin, but the Major's presence prevented any of the officers from taking a hand except our Lieutenant. Since then Col. Welsh has put on a Brigade guard.

We are all still in good health. After standing the heat, the cold the wet and the various changes it is likely we shall be able to stand anything now, and we have no opportunity of committing any indiscretion in our diet. Perhaps we may over eat ourselves when your keg comes, if it does. I have heard nothing
farther from it since. Lieut. Justice sent down to Aquia Creek yesterday to see if there was anything there but he found nothing for our regiment. I am afraid a few days more will spoil the turkey. I suppose none of the other things will spoil. Capt. Hamilton has arrived. He called at our tent to see us the other evening. He said he would have gone up to see you before leaving if he had had time. He looks as usual.

We are in a fog as to what is to be done here next. No one knows. Time alone will tell. For our part we are pretty contented as it is. It has commenced raining again, since I began this letter. I pity the poor fellows who are on picket today - they will have a hard night of it. We will not have to go on so often now as formerly. Some regiments have been moved down and encamped near the river as a permanent reserve & that saves us sending so many men each time.

Hoping to hear soon from you and that you and the children are all well I am

Yours affectionately
William