

On board Steamer Geo. Washington
Chesapeake Bay
Wednesday, March 25. 1863

My dear Jane

I wrote you a letter on Monday and sent it by George to mail from Baltimore or the first place he had an opportunity so that you might be apprized of our latest movements. George left Fortress Monroe in the mail boat on the evening of Monday. I went to Newport News with him to see him off, and at the time did not suppose it would be likely that I would also leave the same day, but so it was. As soon as I returned we were ordered to start to Hampton with wagons, mules and horses and embark from there. We got everything ready and Johnny & I started on foot in advance of the train, as I knew the road. This march for us was not a compulsory one, for we could have rode in the wagons, but we took the walk for the benefit of our health and to see the country. Hampton is a village about two miles from Fortress Monroe just across the York river, which is crossed by a draw bridge. It was a nice place, but on account of harboring rebel troops who annoyed our men, Gen. Butler attacked them and burned it between them, so that now it is a field of ruins. We reached there in the Evening, and waited for the wagons. We camped in a large lot in the outskirts of the village. Johnny & I took a stroll through the village in the morning and amused ourselves reading the inscriptions on the tombstones in the churchyards. There are here the ruins of four churches, which have been burned or battered down. I found on some of the graves a vine just beginning to blossom. I enclose some of the flowers, but don't know what they are called. While here we fared very well. We got plenty of oysters etc.. The population is almost entirely of negroes. During the morning Lieut. Justice procured transportation, and we started for the Fortress. Johnny & I and the Lieuts. servant. We reached the boat and got our baggage on board, but the Quartermaster of the Second Brigade came along and by some misrepresentation got his mules stuck on board, and we had to clear out. When our Q. M. returned he tried to get them off, but could not, so we had to look for some other conveyance. During the afternoon he got the boat we are now on, the Geo. Washington that used to run on the Delaware, the one that ran over me once in the small boat. We got 40 mules on, and the other 100 on a Schooner which we are towing along. We did not get all loaded till late at night, and then did not get off till this morning. However we are now ahead of the other Q. M. who took our other boat, and will take care to keep ahead too if steam will do it.

We are having a very nice passage up this time. The Quartermaster, Johnny and I have the whole cabin to ourselves. There is a pleasant feeling connected with the idea of steaming

homewards, allowed only by the idea of going as far from it in an other direction. We have not heard from the regiment since it left and probably shall not. I will not be able to get any more letters till I overtake it. Where that will be I cannot conjecture. If it takes us so long to load up the wagons and mules at every place, we will be a good way behind. I have heard nothing farther about a furlough for the regiment, but presume they did not get it. At any rate I would hardly get the benefit, for I am for the time being considered out of it. If you had time to spare to come in to Pitts. I could see you there as we go through. I suppose we will be along about Friday or Saturday. And perhaps we will be sent by the Balt & Ohio road to Wheeling to avoid Pittsburg. I am told that it will keep both roads busy to take the whole corps out, and our regiment might be sent that way. At any rate I think it is very probable that I will make a mistake and go through Pennsylvania. It will be only by compulsion that I will go by Wheeling. I will mail this as soon as I get to Baltimore, and I don't expect to get time or opportunity to write to you again till we have gone west, as there is no chance for writing in the cars. Even in the boat it shakes considerably and I can't keep the words on the line. Johnny says you will think I am tight, and if you saw us walking you would think so. The bay is not stormy but still rather rough, and the schooner we are towing pulls and tugs us about a good deal.

With regards to all the folks and much love to yourself.

I am yours affectionately

William