

Swann House
Parkersburg, Va
March 31. 1863

My dear Jane

Since I wrote you yesterday we have been a little busy by reason of the quartermaster getting barges to ship his wagons and baggage on. He assigned me to see to the shipment of it, and I have got everything on, had my dinner and shipped back to Baltimore my carpet bag of citizens clothes, as well as send a box of clothes and splints for you directed to John Haworth. The box contains my old trowsers, a blouse, a pair of woolen stockings and one of my white woolen shirts that I won't need now since you made me the new one. I have lightened my knapsack that much. The splints are a lot that I saved from being left at Newport News by the Surgeon of the 2d Michigan, and may find them useful at some future time. As there are but few boats running up the river now, it may be a good while before they get to Pittsburg, and you need not wait for the box as it contains nothing of very much importance. I have written John about it.

We had news early this morning, probably a rumor for so I regarded it, of the town of Point Pleasant on the river a hundred miles below here being occupied by guerrillas and their Endeavoring to prevent our passing down. This was rather confirmed by an order by telegraph from Gen. Burnside directing us to remain here for the present. Shortly afterwards he ordered us to ship our horses and mules across the river to Marietta, and send them from thence by railroad which we have done. We were still surmising which route we were to take ourselves, when we were directed to send all the men that we had here with the barges in which our wagons were, and have the men armed. Whether I am to go that way or not I don't know yet.

Here I am sitting in the hotel at a comfortable fire, while it is raining out of doors, my work is all done, my knapsack is packed and I am ready to go in any direction Uncle Sam chooses to designate. But with nothing to do I always have recourse to my inkstand. I have acquired the habit from being obliged to take such chances for writing, and now I get at it without thinking of what I have to write about. While doing nothing now I can think of the many little things I forgot to tell you and ask you about last Saturday, and perhaps if I would not try to write about them I would forget again. But I shall not try, I will just go on and let it be sense or nonsense say whatever come to me the same as if you were sitting at the other side of the table dear. With such kind of writing it is easy to guess how Mr. Brown can send his wife a letter every day, and I would do the same now, only I don't want to bother you too much.

In this place the people still marry and are given in

marriage. The great feature of the week was a wedding last night, of a very young couple. The bridegroom had not been able to raise a moustache, but he felt able to support a wife. I missed the fun, by being engaged in reading the paper. Johnny & Norman Maxwell went up town with the crowd and saw the whole performance. The wedding took place in the Methodist Church, which was crowded to overflowing. There were seven bridesmen & seven bridesmaids etc etc after the most approved and lately imported English fashions L'Alexandra. But if I missed the Parkersburg wedding I spent the time reading the account of Prince Alfred's in the Cincinnati paper which contained a full history of it. As it is very interesting I have mailed it to you, and you can read it too.

We had an arrival of convalescent soldiers, numbering about Eighty. They were mostly drunk. There are some of them the worse for their journey. Our surgeons are away with the regiment, and no one here to attend to these men. I prescribed for some of them today. I took a walk out beyond the village or city or whatever they call it to see what it looks like. It is a faint attempt at an imitation of Pittsburg. It has two rivers the Ohio and Little Kanawha but fails in the bridge business, having only one poor one over the Kanawaha, and for fear of losing that one it is guarded by Soldiers. I also visited the ruins of the late conflagration. The smoke was still curling up from a number of places and piles of furniture lay here and there in the streets. In one place I saw the camera of a conflagrated ambrotyprint. There was a sickening smell from the roasted hair and bones of a number of horses that had been burned in a stable adjoining the hotel. The postmaster was running around like a crazy man. Beside being postmaster he is a storekeeper, and wonderful was his stock of articles. They appeared to dip a little into all kinds of trade, but the fire had made a little more confusion then usual among his notions. He told me he had saved the mail, but did not know where his stamps were. The building was not much injured, but his goods won't be benefitted any by the shaking up they got. There is a military guard all around the burnt district protecting the exposed property. Every little while poor M. Gibson walks past my window. He looks very disconsolate. He got left behind by going to Philad. to see his family or wife or something. I didn't know why such an old fellow should want to see his wife - he is near sixty - you wouldn't want to see me if I were that old, would you? He is anxious to get up to his regiment, but can't start till we do.

The view from this hotel down the river is very fine, being one of the few good views on the Ohio. From here we can see a good distance, and discern boats depending or descending, a good while before they reach us. Our hotel is becoming very full now, since the other one is burned down. Tis an ill wind blow nobody

good. Most of our guests are connected with the army - the majority of the remainder who are citizens are in the oil business up the Kanawha, and around the stove you hear little else than "barrels" or "oil, oil." There certainly is oil up there for I see numerous flats which have come down loaded with that precious article, and the landing is ornamental with many a row of the beautiful barrels, and our noses are also made cognizant of its presence by its delightful flavor.

One of the strangest things about the hotel is the absence of women. There are only two or three at the table. The ladies appear to have left Virginia Entirely.

Well now dear if you have read this far you are pretty well tired, and I shall not bore you any longer, but if I had anything better to write I would have done it. I am expecting Lieut. Justice back every moment with orders about leaving & I shall hasten and close this so as to get it into the Post Office before we leave.

With much love and many kisses

Yours ever
William