Camp of 3d Brigade 1st Division
Middleburg Ky
May 11. 1863

My dear Jane

You will see by the heading of this that we are back at our old Camp again. Yesterday afternoon the 100th was ordered to cross the river and take the place of the 45th, and the 45th to proceed back to Houstonville. They left in about half an hour. We did not then intend to move our headquarters as there were still two regiments with us, but after our own was gone it left us so lonely that the Colonel decided to move over too, so as to be near them. We deferred our movement till this morning. After breakfast we packed and in an hour were back on the old spot where we spent a few days before. The river has fallen again and was easily crossed at the fording place. When we pitched we put up our extra tent that I wrote about, and we now have one for an office and one to sleep in. From all appearances we will stay here a while. If that is so we will spoil for want of something to do. Today I have nothing in the world to do except write this letter, and I feel so lazy that I can't see now how I am to get it done. It is very warm. Everybody appears to be troubled with the same complaint that I am although they don't all like to own up to it. There is nothing here in sight, and from our hill we have a good view. There is a Court Martial being held near us for the trial of all the delinquencies that have come to light lately. They are getting along slowly. To kill the time I commenced reading Victor Hugo's, Les Miserables but after reading a few pages it put me asleep. We usually lay down inside or outside the tent; whichever we think the coolest, and read or sleep as we can. This comes from not having guard, picket or drill to do. This is all the advantages of our situation in the Quartermaster department. I should not say all either, for we can go to bed when we please and get up when we please, have no roll call to answer, and if we choose to keep a light burning at night, are not obliged to put it out at "taps" like the rest of the regiment. Willie is lying snoring while I write, in one corner of the tent. He went over while carrying the paper and it has fallen from his hand. I don't often take a nap during the day, but I sleep very sound during the night. Although not obliged to get up early as formerly, I am still a pretty early riser. I am unusually up first, and have my boots blackened by the time the others get moving. I don't feel like lying long in the mornings any more. I don't know the reason why. Perhaps if I was at home I might do as I used to and give you as much trouble as ever to get me up in time for breakfast, and on the other hand it may have cured me of that bad habit. You'll see when I get back. I have nothing more to write about now, and if I was not too lazy to get up and go to
the fire for a light I would take a smoke. I have not quit smoking, and you need not expect I will be likely to do it here, where the tobacco is growing all around me. I don't smoke such a great deal however. John Haworth sent me a pound of tobacco at Newport News, and George brought me a pound when he came. It has kept Willie and me in smoking ever since, and is not more than half done. This is not considered heavy smoking here. Dick Holmes would smoke twice that much himself in the same time. Poor Dick! He is in trouble. His wife was very much disappointed that he did not come by the way of Pittsburg, and more especially when she saw that I did. She wrote to him to try to get a furlough, but there were none granted then. When we were lately informed that they would be granted he applied for one, but the first lot have come in and his is not amongst them. Finding that he was not coming, she came down to Cincinnati with some relative, and wrote to him that she was there. That letter he got the day that we left Camp Dick Robinson. She then crossed over to Covington and telegraphed to him from there to "Come." But he can't come. His furlough has not come, and we make a good many jokes at his expense. The excuse he gave in applying for leave of absence was that he had business to attend to at the "Orphan's Court." We attached a different meaning to the town, and now it is all over camp. You can guess what the "orphans court" is. I will not be surprised if Tish makes her appearance here in camp one of these days. Lieutenant Justice will get home if he wants to go without any trouble. He did not even ask to go, but Col. Leusure told him that his turn came next, and he might go if he chose. He will go sometime next month. He can get anything within the bounds of means from Col. Leasure, even when anyone else fails. The Col. told me that he respects Jeff. Justice more than any other man living. I believe he deserves it though, for there are not many men living like him in these days. The mail has come along and the papers do not confirm the taking of Richmond, so that it appears that we have had our celebration all for nothing. Well we had our fun anyhow. We burnt about twenty-five hundred candles. It was all very nice while it lasted, but it made a good days work for the boys to clean the grease out of their guns and off their clothes the next day. I wrote Bob a description of it all but the close of the performance. After parading before head quarters with their candles, the Roundheads were dismissed by Col. Dawson. Someone called out "A speech from headquarters," and all hands broke across the lot in the dark for the Col's tent. They gathered all around, chambered up into the trees above it and compelled the Colonel to come out and make a speech. He is a very good speaker, but was taken rather suddenly. However, he got along pretty well. They then gave three cheers for the flag, three cheers for the Colonel, and would have gone on cheering for
the half of the night if they had been permitted, but he ordered them to go to bed, and when he gives an order they have found by experience that the best thing they can then do is to obey it. They soon had quiet. I hope Hooker may take it yet. Hard times they will have there first. How strange it is that we have been taken away, and escaped having part in that contest. It was not our doing, and we are not grumbling about it. We may have harder work to do here, but in our usual camp phrase "We can't see it."

Well dear I am astonished that I have got along so well with filling up this sheet, in spite of the hot weather and all the other difficulties in the way. There must be some charm about it, because it is to you. There lies Pringle’s letter to write yet, and the one for Barnes, and I have not the energy to begin either of them, and if I did I don’t know what to say to them. They must wait a little longer. But to you it is different. I feel a little as though I was talking to you love, and don’t care what I say, knowing that it won't be criticized or misunderstood. I hope the weather is getting fine with you too, and that your health is improving darling. Always let me know just how you are, even if you write nothing else in your letters, and don’t tire yourself writing to me either. I shall not expect you to do so darling. Anything else you can make the boys write, but you must take it as easy as possible. I don't know how our mail gets along. Perhaps you will only get my letter once a week, but I will try to send you word often enough that you shall know where we are and what we are doing if you only get half of them.

With my respects to all friends at home, and much love to yourself I remain.

Your affectionate husband

William