Camp of 3d. Brigade 1st  
Division 9th A.C.  
Middleburg, Ky  
May 21. 1863

My dear Jane

I feel as though it would be unpardonable for me to not write you a few lines when I have so much time, and yet at the same time I am without materials to write about. Our life here is so devoid of interest to ourselves that it will require more imagination than I am possessed of to make matters of interest out of them for others. I am absolutely without anything to do to day. I have got through part of it by taking a sleep, but you know that one cannot sleep both day and night. I have read at Les Miserables till I can enjoy it no more. I have smoked and loafed round and round, and somehow I come always to the conclusion that I ought to write to you. I don't know why, but I always feel happy when I am writing to you, so that you see darling it is selfishness that causes me to do it after all.

There are three styles of letter writing - three grand styles and I have never paid enough attention to know which kind I am addicted to, but probably I will have to adopt a little of each kind.

First, there is the style of the ant, that gathers up everything indiscriminately that comes in its way, without being at all particular what it is so that it answers its purpose and fills up. Secondly, there is the style of the spider, that spins from its own body its thread. This represents the people who make from then own brain, both their facts and their remarks, without much reference to the world around them, and tinge everything with their own peculiar opinions and prejudice.

Then there is the style of the bees. That is the collecting from all that is pleasant and suitable, digesting and arranging facts opinions and observations into an agreeable and pleasant form, presenting them as they really are and changed only enough to let it appear that they have come through your instrumentality.

Now if I have to resort to the ant or spider style to day, you will have to act the part of the bee for me, and let my scribble pass through the digestive process of your clear sense and good taste, and after a little more practice I may by degrees get to save you that trouble.

I have collected but few incidents since I wrote you last. But lest I forget it, let me now state that what I said about our title being changed from the 9th Army Corps to the Army of Ohio is not correct. It is not so. We are still the 3d Brigade, 1st Division 9th A.C. It was the Colonel's clerk that informed me of the change, but it appears that he was too fast. He was mistaken.
A squad of Wolford's cavalry came in last night from a scouting expedition. They report finding fifty or sixty of Morgan's men on this side of the Cumberland, stealing horses etc. They only had eight men in the party and felt too weak to attack them.

Rev. Mr. Brown started for home today. He has been waiting for his leave of absence for several days, but not receiving it he started to meet it or urge its issue from Genl. Burnside. He has been receiving bad news from home for the last two weeks. His two youngest children have been very ill. Their lives were despaired for when he applied for leave of absence. His last letters stated that they were still very low. They have had Scarlet Fever, Measles and Lung fever, ending now he supposes in Typhoid. Lt. Justice has not had his leave of absence returned yet, nor has he quite had time to, but of it being granted him there is no doubt. To a soldier time given is called a furlough to an officer it is called leave of absence, but they are really the same thing.

It is very warm today. The men are lying about their quarters as near naked as they dare go. It makes one sweat so to climb the hill to our quarters that we have very few visitors. A while ago two women came up. They had with them in a basket some geese and ducks. They were cooked & stuffed. Our cook was away and only the quartermaster and myself in. They made us buy two geese and a duck. Geese cost 50 cents a piece; the duck 25 cents. One of the women was pretty, the only pretty one I have seen in Kentucky. She was a widow too. She came on purpose to see the quartermaster. She had heard a good deal about him. She is rich - has nine hundred acres of land, two children and twenty five "niggers." She sold us a stack of hay, and says we can have one of her meadows & cut in the shares.

Dick Holmes has come up to kill time and have a smoke. Old Jones too paid us a visit. He says it is getting unhealthy - that one of his niggers is very sick. Only two of our men are sick now, and one of them is able to walk about.

The men have got a few fiddles and banjos and are enjoying themselves pretty well. They get up cotillions and polkas every evening but they don't go so well without the ladies.

Now dear I have told you all that I know, and it didn't amount to a great deal after all.

To night I expect a letter if the mail comes. It comes too late at night now to get the letters till the morning. But they are very welcome come when they will. They come like drops of rain on the thirsty earth, or food to the hungry man. The longer delayed the more acceptable, and more eagerly devoured. I am sorry that I have burned your letters dear. I feel so secure here that I shall not burn any more. I will keep them until we move into some more threatened locality & perhaps before that I may
have an opportunity of sending them home, or even you might happen
to pay us a visit during the summer. We will think of it. Norman
Maxwell will probably get a leave of absence next. He is entitled
to it as much as any of the rest.

I have no news from any where since I wrote you last.

The fewer letters I get from elsewhere give me opportunity to
write the more to you, and if you permit me I will continue to do
so as much as I have opportunity. Don't you begin to get tired of
my trifling scribbles? I can't feel serious nor do I feel very
jolly either. You are the one that is wanting to fill up the
empty place in my life. Things look different without you. I
never knew how much color you gave to the picture of life. Half
its charm is gone without you. Now dear I have confessed, and you
will know the reason why I want you to be careful of your health.
If you won't do it for your own sake, won't you do it for mine? I
hope you will be well as ever soon. But let me know how you are,
don't make it better than it really is. Give my love to the
children. I can't tell you how much to appropriate to yourself,
but I think I can spare you a great deal, for every time I think
of you darling I feel running over with it, so that you must make
room for a great deal of it, but you can not exhaust the supply
for it is from

Your affectionate husband and lover
William