Camp of 3d. Brigade 1 st. Divis. 9th A.C.
Columbia Ky
May 26. 1863

My dear Jane,

I mailed you a letter yesterday with account of where we were and what had happened amongst us during the previous twenty four hours. We stopped at a very nice place, in the forks of a crossroad, but at the time I wrote, I did not know exactly where we were. Before long we ascertained that we were just half a mile from Neatsville. One of the roads went there and the other to Columbia. We are getting short of forage. Our forage master went out and found a stack of hay which he brought in. We pay $12 a ton for it. The country is very bare of all kinds of fodder. Towards evening I went down a little creek or run and had a good wash. The quartermaster went along. It felt very invigorating to get the dust washed off after such a warm days work. We also took leave of our Company of Cavalry. They have been ordered away to serve somewhere else.

When the wagons came up with the hay Willie got a good armful of it to put under our blankets. It makes a better bed than feathers. We got a bag of oats for a pillow, and went to bed rather earlier than usual, it having been intimated to us that we would likely make an early start this morning. It happened very well that we did, for the reveille beat at half past two this morning. We had to light a candle to see how to pack up and get our breakfast.

We got ready as soon as we could, but did not start finally, till four o’clock. The 27th Michigan started first, and our regiment behind them. It was not very clear then. I went with the regiment as usual. About a mile out we came up to our pickets, who fell in as we came along. Johnny was waiting on the road for us with his men. He looked very sleepy, and just like a man who had been on a spree for a week. He is none the worse of it however, for I saw him again several times during the day, and also though it is acknowledged that we made a very hard march, he looked better when we came in than when we started. The 27th imagined that we had run them yesterday, and thought they would show us how to march today. They went along very briskly for an hour or two, and finding us still at their heels, their Colonel asked Col. Leasure if he might not go a little faster as his men wanted to get as far as they could before the sun became too high. Col. L. told him to let them go as fast as they liked. Then there were two hours of good fast walking. But it was no use. By this time we understood what they were at & we were only sorry that we had not 30 or 40 miles to go instead of fifteen, so that we could show them something. As it was they got pretty sick of their contract. Their men could not keep it up, and their Colonel and
several other officers kept to the rear driving the stragglers on out of our way. The 36th Mass. were behind us and did not feel like being left behind. They kept close up too, and altogether we made a fine trip. It is not a few hours that decide the marching powers of a set of men. They can all generally do it for a while, but let them march for ten or twelve hours and then it will be seen who can hold out best. We had come fifteen miles and were in camp at half past nine o'clock. The wagons did well too. Our baggage was up with us in half an hour. The brigade is encamped in a piece of woods about half a mile north of Columbia, and we are encamped in a knoll on the opposite side of the road. At the foot of our lot a creek runs past that empties into the Green river. After pitching our tent the quartermaster and I went down to it and had a good wash. I also washed my stockings. They were very dirty. They had not been washed since I left Camp Dick Robinson. I could stand it no longer. I have been expecting two new pairs by mail for a good while. I wrote George to send them. I showed him the kind when he was at Newport News. I have only one pair. But so far I have not got them, nor any word from Phila. since I came to Kentucky. We have had our dinner, and as we expected to remain here several days, and it being now near the end of the month I set up my desk to go to work. I am writing, sitting in my bare feet waiting for my stockings to dry. We are going down to the Creek in the evening to take another wash and change our - linen I was going to say - but should say woolen.

I find however that our calculations are likely not to come out right. We were about starting our forage master out for more hay or corn or whatever he could find, but he cannot get off. No one is allowed to go out of camp. The quartermaster went to see about it and found a report at Headquarters of a large force of rebels within four miles of us and advancing rapidly. I now notice that the regiments have not put up their tents and are sitting in line of battle in the woods with their guns stacked. I also have seen officers of the Highlanders and 17th Michigan riding past. These are fighting regiments and I am glad they are here if we are to have a fight. Since I heard of this state of affairs I have been examining the neighborhood as far as I can see it from our tent a little more closely than I did before. I see the white tents of another camp on the hills among the trees on the other side of the creek. Probably our whole division is gathered here. This is as warm a day as yesterday was, but we do not suffer so much from heat, being sheltered by the woods. If the rebels were advancing rapidly as reported, they should have been here before this time. I guess the report is somewhat in advance of them. We'll see. I hear no firing. Our battery is ready, and is camped on the top of the knoll where we are.

I have now given you another days sketch. I do it
remembering Hugh's regret at losing his diary. If mine is lost I will be able to make it up again from my letters, or rather I post my diary in this form and send it to you. This will account for my putting so many apparently trifling things in it.

Willie is rather lame today. He has a bile coming on his ankle. It is a small one but is getting very sore. He could not ride today, as it hurt him more to let it hang down from the horse than to walk. Consequently he walked. It can't be helped he must keep along with us, but that is all. He has nothing to do when we are in camp. He is detailed as an assistant clerk, but I can do all the work and more myself. It was a scheme of Johnny's and mine to get him here and relieve your mother from so much anxiety about him. He is useful too. He does our errands when we have any with the other quartermasters, and if I ever get too much to do, he will be useful in helping me.

I don't know when we will get any mail now, or when this will get off. We have to send by a different route. Your map will surely have Columbia on it. The nearest place to railroad now is Lebanon about 35 miles off.

I hope to hear from you soon and that you are improving too. With kind remembrances to the children I will close. I might write a little bit of love letter to you too, but too much of that would not be good for you, and I will do it some other time. In the meantime I must content myself with wishing you all manner of happiness and assuring you once more that I am still your loving husband.

William