Camp of 3d. Brigade 1st Divis.

9th A.C.

Columbia Ky

May 27. 1863

My dear Jane

There is very little change in the state of affairs here since yesterday. The troops remained ready to start at a moments notice and still are ready, but they have also to day commenced to clean up the camp, and make it look nice. They have gathered up all the dead wood and leaves into heaps, and cut out all the underbrush making large heaps of them and setting them on fire. It was quite warm enough without that. It has raised a great smoke, and made it very unhealthy for mosquitos. The boys have had a good deal of fun too in seeing the heat make the snakes skedaddle. A good many were brought to light in that way, and were killed. I saw a black snake to day trying to make his escape. Some rattlesnakes were seen yesterday, but no one has discovered any Copperheads yet. They keep away from the soldiers. There are plenty of lizards here too. One climbed up on my desk to day. They get into the mens tents. It is a great affliction in the Irish. But last evening I saw for the first time since I left home, your great enemy, the Bat. He flew round our tent and among the trees several times. The whole brigade is here now, once more together on the same ground. In the evening the 1st brigade moved off a few miles. The enemy that were said to be advancing so rapidly yesterday, have not come in sight yet. I have learned that the 1st brigade has been here for three weeks under command of Col. Morrison. Day before yesterday he had advice of the approach of the enemy in force too large for him, and decided on a retreat. Dr. Ludington happened to pay him a visit, and found everything packed up and the men commencing to fall back. The Dr. told him that our brigade was within fifteen miles. He sent for us - hence our night march. The people commenced flocking in to Columbia with their goods and cattle for the protection of them from the rebels who were near. But Col. M. depending on our speedy arrival postponed his retreat and told the people that he just wished the rebels to come now. They probably got word of our arrival and did not come, but Col. M. has gone after them. He left late in the afternoon without tents or baggage. We are having another very warm day. We have been greatly favored in our late movements, by the absence of rain. We have not had any. What has been to our advantage may have been a loss to others. I think a rain would benefit the farmers. But such farmers as I see here are not of much account. They still use the old clumsy wooden pitchfork, and all other things in proportion.

It now appears that I have been mistaken all along in my
naming the stream that we were on at Middleburg, the Green River.
It's proper name was Carpenter's Creek. It is only a branch of
Green river. The stream that passes our Camp here is Sulphur
Creek, and farther west of this they join together and then the
stream is named Green river. So much for having a poor map. I
have sent for a good one, and will keep better posted if it ever
comes. Nothing appears to find its way to me in Kentucky, except
your letters, but while they come I will not complain about
anything else. We have not received any papers or mails since
arriving here, and I expect there will be a few days delay with
the letters on the way for us. They will have to be sent back to
Cincinnati and from thence to Louisville. That is the route by
which our mail will come hereafter and I should have mentioned it
when I wrote you yesterday. Instead of directing via Cincinnati
you will hereafter make it via Louisville, Ky. I will notify you
from time to time if any change is necessary.

It is getting now so near the end of the month that it is
likely that I will be pretty busy if we remain at rest, and then
probably I will not write you quite as often as I have done
lately. If I don't you will know the reason. I got some invoices
and receipts made out and distributed this morning, and might have
done more, but both the quartermaster and I have concluded it is
too warm to work, and have commenced to write letters. I don't
know who he is writing to, but it is not to his wife. I hope he
will have as good a one as I have to write to some day. I know he
will write a nice letter, and he deserves a good wife. His leave
of absence has not come yet. I still think however that it will,
and he can get home sooner from here than he could have done from
Middleburg. None of our men have gone since Mr. Brown did. That
looks as though the leaves of absence were stopped, but a few days
will decide that matter.

I suppose the 134th regt has returned by this time. You must
not forget to let me know if James Nelson has got home safely. I
have not heard from him since I left Fredericksburg. We have
official information through the War dept. of the fall of
Vicksburg. That may change the position of things have for us.

Johnny is well. Willie is all right except his ankle. It
makes me laugh to see him walking. He goes like an old man. He
will be well as soon as it breaks. In the meantime he has nothing
to do, and if we have to move he will have a horse. He is lying
sleeping alongside of where I am writing.

I don't think there is anything else going on here that you
would care about knowing - if you think there is please tell me
and you shall hear about it. I hope you have not had quite so dry
a spell of weather as we have. If you had you will have a sore
back again from carrying water for your garden. You must get some
one to do that for you. Tommy will soon be home and make him help
you more than anything else. I suppose Siss will be all browned with the sun by this time if she runs out as much as usual. Is she getting any bigger? You can tell by her dresses if you don't notice it any other way. If she is big enough you might put boys clothes on her and send her back for a drummer boy. She would make a good soldier, wouldn't she? Has Willie given up all idea of the army yet? You can tell him that we have no powder monkeys here. Every man has to carry his own powder.

There has been one case of small pox in the 36th Mass. regt.. On the march the ambulances were pretty full of sick men, but there were only two of our regiment in them, and they were only too weak to walk. The ambulances were too full to hold the nurses who had to walk. One poor girl I pitied - she had had a hard walk of it that last days march.

I have concluded not to answer Pringle's letter. I will have nothing to do with the Copperheads. I don't hate him or want to quarrel with him, but I don't think it is right to hold correspondence with the enemy, and the man who opposes the war and administration is nothing but an enemy. If I wrote to him at all it would not be very complimentary to him, and everything considered it had better be let alone.

I hope you won't turn Copperhead too with so many of them around you, so that I shall have to treat you that way too. Are they not getting a little quieter lately? Tomorrow is the day your letter should be here, and would if we have not moved. It may be a day or two later, but that will only make it the better dear. Give my respects to your father and mother - my love to yourself and the children and believe me still

Yours affectionately
William