9th A.C.

Columbia Ky

June 2d. 1863

My dear Jane,

I have a little leisure to day while they are pitching tents etc to send you a few lines. The order regarding the change of brigades was carried out and the 36th Mass. left last evening. We handed over our wagons, horses, mules and everything and ceased to be a quartermasters establishment any more. We were left alone with the Roundheads. Orders came also directing us officers and all to reduce our baggage to as small a compress and as lightweight as possible. Gen. Burnside has himself taken the field with only thirty pounds of baggage and the other officers are following his example. An army train is to be sent back to Kentucky bridge with all surplus baggage for storage, and I see wagon loads of it going to the rear. The orders [are for] the troops also to take eight days cooked rations along with them; three days in their haversacks and five days in their knapsacks. This will leave them very little room for anything else. I packed up to be sent back, my overcoat, a pair of pants, blouse and vest, also a knapsack. I do not expect to ever see them again. Still they may as well be lost now as any other time. The supposition is that we are bound for East Tennessee, but not having seen a newspaper for a good while I cannot tell anything about it, but merely guess. It was amusing to see the men deliberating on what they would give up, and to witness the confusion attending on the operation of packing etc. We had to give up our extra tent at last, and now have only one for both office and bedroom.

Lt. Justice has been appointed Brigade Commissary, and Willie and I go with him. This is the department that gives the men their food. We get it in large quantities, by wagon loads and give out to the regiments their share. There is a commissary in each regiment who gives each company its share, and a man in each company that gives each man his. It is a new kind of business to me and I know nothing about it. It is the accounts that I will have to keep, and I suppose I will learn it in a few days. I don't like the change much as I was just beginning to be useful in my old place, and could have carried on the business by myself long enough to let the Lieutenant go home. But now he cannot go. His leave of absence has not however come and perhaps before it does I can get along at this. He understands the business very well, as he was at the same thing once before in South Carolina.

We broke up camp early this morning and crossed the Sulphur Creek, passing through Columbia and camped here outside the town on the east of it, about the same distance from it that we were
before. We relieved the old commissary at once and took possession of all the provisions, tools etc on hand and have commenced business. But we still have our old Quartermaster business to settle up and that will take a good while to do. Our new camp is a very nice one. I cannot tell how long we will stay in it, but I expect it will not be a great while. From the direction we have taken coming through Columbia I suppose our course will be towards East Tennessee. The lightening of the baggage also indicates that that country is hilly and difficult to transport through.

I do not feel like writing much this evening dear. I have a violent head ache, occasioned by eating too much and taking too little exercise. I am going over to the regiment to get some blue moss & then I'll lie down, and probably it will be all over in the morning.

I have nothing by mail yet. I think there was no mail to day. We will be so busy for a while now that I will probably have no time to write, and you need not feel uneasy if you do not hear again for a week.

Please excuse my brevity this time & believe me still
Yours affectionately
William