

Camp of 3d. Brigade
Milldale, Miss.
June 25. 1863

My dear Jane

It is now four days since I have written you, and I can hardly realize it, the time passes so quickly. I have been making the most of our stay in getting our old business affairs written up and have succeeded so well that I got them all finished to day. Consequently I shall have a comparative rest until the end of the month when I will have to commence the Commissary papers.

We have not changed our position since I wrote you on Sabbath, although by the heading we appear to be at Milldale. That is the name of the place we are at although it is not a town. We found out its name since. I enclose you a sketch as I have seen the neighborhood. I made it from my own view of the places and it may not be geographically correct. The situation though in the main are correct. The little ^^^^ are our camps and you will see that there are two lines of them all around the city. The fighting is all down by the inner line. We are in the outer line at the place marked by a flag and our business is to take care of the approach of Johnson or any one else to relieve the besieged. We had a rumor of his approach, but he has not come. Outside of both these lines we have lines of pickets, and beyond that numbers of cavalry scouting in all directions, so that the approach of any enemy from that direction can not be unexpected. Then our defenses appear to me to be very complete, and even without any artificial defenses the ground is naturally adapted to repel any invasion. Our regiment has been out digging rifle pits along the crest of the hills, for a few days, and felling timber to give them a good view and obstruct the approach of any one. Besides in numbers we have more than is generally supposed. You have no idea of the perfect security composure and ease with which we take matters here. There is nothing like war to be seen around us except our arms. In the inner line it is somewhat different, our batteries never cease. Yesterday morning just before daylight, hundreds of heavy cannon woke us up, and the musketry went like a hail storm. The rebels were trying to get out. But out they could not get. Even if they had broke through that line they would have to fight us afresh. Their chances are poor for escape. In fact they have none, unless they get the wings of a bird to fly away with. A week or two more will settle it. Grant is taking it easy, trusting to time and his big guns, and not wishing to make any sacrifice of his mens lives by an assault. He has sapped the principal rebel works outside the city and is nearly ready to blow them up. This he will soon do. Those who have visited the inner line report our men to be taking it very

cooly there. In the saps within 20 feet of the rebel batteries they are perfectly safe and the wagons drive along under the very guns, issuing clothing and rations every day. Our sharpshooters line the ridges opposite and not a gunner can approach their cannon without getting a few dozen balls through him. The consequence is that their guns are silent. This afternoon our guns were more than usually active and I suppose they were trying to get out again. Tomorrow Lieut. Justice and I are going round to see what is going on in this inner line and get a closer view of these works, besides we have a kind of notion that the blowing up may take place, and we want to be about when it is finished. We will start early. It is 13 miles round the outer line and 3 1/2 round the inner ones. We have a good days work before us. It is as hot as ever. I am getting that tetter on my hands again. It is not bad yet. And I have also a rash or crop of pusticles just like the ones that Snyder called to see me about. They make one very uncomfotable when they itch. Most of the soldiers are getting that way. I think it is owing to the affect of the heat on our livers.

Since Sunday your long missing letter came. Better late than never, and it explains the difficulty with Abbott etc. etc. It is as good as new; besides I don't to want to lose any of them. The stockings you sent have also come, and I'm very much obliged for your thoughtfulness dear. The ones George sent have not come. I also received a letter from John Haworth with some fish hooks so I know that he is living yet. Dick Holmes has not got back although his time is up. The difficulties of coming up or down the river are increasing, and the rebels are firing on our boats more every day. The Alice Dean on which we came down, was fired on on her return and six holes made in her and one man killed. Few boats pass without being injured more or less. We have word to day of one being sunk altogether, and our mail captured. I hope none of your letters were in it. The object no doubt is to bother us and lead us away up the river after these guerrillas lest we might have our supplies cut off as we get them down that way. I have no fears of their succeeding in either design. We would rather live on half rations than give this up now. I will be able to give you a better description of affairs here in my next, after tomorrow's ride. As to what is going on elsewhere I cannot learn. We get no news from the rest of the world. A rumor has reached us that Bank's has taken Port Hudson & that Farragut's gun boats will be up to help us soon. However we can do without them. I think we have plenty of them and men too. It only wants time and patience and down comes Vicksburg strong as it is.

If the river is so dangerous to navigate I shall expect very few mails, but will still send you a letter occasionally to let you know at least how we all are. All well at present.

I hope you are too dear. Remember me to the folks & with my
love to the children and a double portion for yourself.

I am still

Yours affectionately

William