

Flower Hill Churchyard  
Warren Co. Miss  
June 30, 1863

My dear Jane

Yesterday we moved again. We were ordered to break up camp just after breakfast. The order came rather suddenly and unexpectedly. We did not all leave however for want of transportation. We could not get more than one wagon to take our commissary stores, and had to leave most of them behind. Willie was left to take care of them. If we get teams he will be up today. We had a very dusty warm and irregular march, and the men were much distressed for want of water. The day was very warm and the roads uncommonly dusty. There was only one place on the whole road that we could get a drop of water, and there in a few minutes it became so fouled by the crowds of men and horses around it that it was not fit for hogs to drink.

I rode ahead and was one of the few fortunate ones who got a canteen full of clean water. I did not however drink much of it, but I struck into the woods occasionally and ate blackberries. They quench thirst better than water. We advanced about ten miles towards the Big Black, but as the way was a winding one we are about the same distance from Vicksburg yet that we were when we started. I judge so from the sound of the cannonading, which continues as usual. We are eight miles from the Big Black. There are other troops out beyond us, and more passed out today going the same way. It appears that as Johnston don't see fit to come to us, we are going to him.

If we only had water our camp would be a nice one. We have to go a mile to the nearest spring, and the water is not good even then. We are encamped on both sides of the Vicksburg and Yazoo road. Our quarters are in a church yard. The Colonel occupies the part of the church and we have our provisions in the main body of the church. The seats have all been gone some time. They were taken out by troops that were here before us. We slept on the ground in the graveyard - among the tombs, but I saw no ghosts.

It is a Baptist church. I can't imagine where they get water enough to immerse their converts unless they take them down to the Mississippi. I found several certificates on the floor of the church. I enclose some of the them to you as specimens of Southern Church literature. One of them is that of Rev. S. W. Seaton the father of the lady Mrs. Pender I wrote you about visiting last week. I also see a tombstone over one of her children in the graveyard. This is a muster day. We have to muster on the last day of every other month. The ranks look thin today, so many men fell out during the march yesterday and have not caught up yet. Many were sunstruck, and I hear that some have died. One was reported from our regiment, but I have not heard

his name. We are ordered to keep close in camp and be ready to move at a moments notice. We cannot be moved much farther from the landing unless we get teams, as it is impossible to go any farther and feed the men without the means of hauling provisions to them.

We got a kind of a mail today - a few dozen letters. None for any of our folks however. I have just returned from the regiment after answering to my name and having nothing to do, borrowed a sheet of paper to write to you. My desk and fixtures were all left behind and will not be up here till the evening. My letter paper is all done anyhow, and I will have to write to you on foolscap for a while till I get more. I sent up to St. Louis for some by Chess M'Bride, but he will not likely be back for two weeks. He has a clerkship with Capt. Hirstand. He says he came on to Pittsburg with Tommy. Dick Holmes has got back but has brought no news of any account. He looks just the same as ever. If we rest quiet in camp for a few days I shall be busy settling up the commissary accounts of this month - if not I shall be idle. It appears that I shall not get back to my company anymore. Col. Leasure wants me to clerk for him, but I would rather stay with Lt. Justice. The Colonel says he don't want to part us, but if I should leave him, he wants me to come there. Capt. Curtin also wants me to go with him to division headquarters, but I have no fancy for such a place. I shall not leave Lt. Justice now as long as he is satisfied. I did not expect to find such men as him in the army. They are very scarce anywhere. Such a quiet unpretending man I never saw, and when we were out at the front the other day he was just the same under fire as in his own tent, except that he got very anxious to have a shot back at them, and regretted not bringing our little rifle along.

I hope to hear from you some of these days, dear, and then I shall know also if our letters are sent on. We know or hear very little from the rest of the world. I am very well, and quite hearty. Notwithstanding the heat, I weigh 138 pounds. I have not been troubled with diarrhea like the others, and feel first rate every way except a bad attack of laziness. I had been troubled with it a good deal before I left home, but it is getting no better. Can you give me a cure for it dear? Johnny is in camp and well. He stood the march finely. Willie was well when we left yesterday. Give my respects to all the folks. I close with much love to yourself darling - the thoughts of you keep me up many a time - I would not consider myself worth half so much without such a woman at home - you see how much use you are to me even at such a distance - may it be always so - good bye love.

Yours affectionately,

William