

Camp Nelson, KY

Aug. 16, 1863

My dear Jane

It is already four days since I wrote you last, and I hardly have thought it one, so rapidly has the time passed. We have been very busy in getting here and setting up, and have done but little after all. When I wrote from Covington on the 12th, I did not know how long we might stay there. Col. Leasure remained on the Cincinnati side and I heard or saw nothing, but just remained at the Magnolia house waiting for orders. The next day towards the middle of the afternoon I felt sleepy and went to bed. While asleep orders came for us to start and no one could find me. Towards evening Johnny came up to the room to wash and found me fast asleep. I was up time enough after all, as the train did not get off till ten o'clock at night. I hardly expected we would have gone so soon as the paymaster had come over and paid one regiment and we expected the others would be paid too. However he has followed us and is paying us today. We got started in the usual cattle cars, behind a wheezy old locomotive that got to Cynthiana at seven o'clock the next morning, a distance of about 40 miles only. There it gave out altogether and they telegraphed to Covington for another one. We remained five hours in Cynthiana, and I had the pleasure of eating the meanest breakfast there that I ever got. I inquired about Thomas Rover while there and found that he has changed his business again, and is living in the woods about fourteen miles from there, and is engaged in making lumber-has a saw mill I suppose. He was in Cynthiana the day before I got there. When we got our new locomotive we got along a good deal faster and got into Nicholasville about five o'clock. Here we were informed that we must disembark, as the cars could go no farther. This was a great disappointment to me, as I had been told that the railroad was completed all the way to the camp but that is not so. It is likely our brigade will be employed in building it if we stay here. We camped out on a lawn during the night, and started on up the turnpike for the camp the next day. I started before the troops, so as to have rations drawn and ready to give them when they arrived. About half way to camp I overtook Col. L. and staff who were selecting a site for a camp by ourselves. They selected a place about halfway between Nicholasville and Camp Nelson. However I had to go on to Camp Nelson to the post and get the rations and send them back. It took me till dark, and I could not have got through them if Johnny had not sent eight wagons up to help the ones I had borrowed. We have a nice location about two miles and a half below Nicholasville on the turnpike. You can see it on the map, or about where it is, just half way between Nicholasville and the Kentucky River. The stage passes every afternoon and we get our

mail regularly everyday. Letters come from New Castle and Pittsburg in two days. I received yours and Tommy's of 10th Aug. yesterday, which was the first I have had now for a good while.

I will answer Tom as soon as I get time. I am glad you have received my letters at last, for I hardly expected you would ever get the half of them from the way business was conducted down there. The same day I got your No. 29 of 6th Aug. I see by number that there are two missing ones yet, for the last I got was No. 26. Probably they have gone down to Vicksburg and will be back in a week or two. No. 29 Mr. Brown got at Memphis and brought along with him and of course I did not get it till I overtook the regiment. They had a pretty hard time of it. When I was going out to Camp Nelson I met them coming back from there. They had gone on ahead of us the day before and camped there one night and now had to come back here. I suppose all the encampment around is Camp Nelson. Out at the camp proper it is entrenched and fortified and numerous buildings going up.

Gen. Burnside is out here himself superintending affairs. He appears to be organizing an expedition for somewhere, but he can't take us this time unless he gives a rest, which I believe he intends doing. The men are still breaking down, and some of the men who had good health all the time in Mississippi are very ill now. They take ill suddenly. I suppose you saw that Gen. Welsh died in Cincinnati last week. Dr. Ludington is lying there to, not expected to live. It is the effects of the Mississippi Malaria showing itself now. Our present camp is high and healthy. The water is not as plenty as we would like, but of that we should not complain. We expected to be near the river. None of our men have died since we came here, but some did on the way up. One was drowned and one was killed on the cars. The sick were brought to Cincinnati instead of St. Louis as they expected. Since Gen. Welsh's death Col. Leasure has command of the division, but he is going home tomorrow, so is his son the adjutant, and several other officers. They are also granting furloughs of ten days to the soldiers. Col. Leasure has the power to grant them now, but he will be gone tomorrow. Still I could not get off under the circumstances as it would not be treating Lt. Justice right. I have to look to his interests while he is gone. The officers have never paid him yet for their stores since he was commissioner and they are settling now since they have been paid. I have all the accounts and no one else could attend to it; besides he is depending on me to do it instead of getting an officer appointed in his place. I have taken in \$500 today (Sunday). It would not be right either to apply for a furlough when so many in our company want one and have been away from home two years. They only grant five from each company. I believe N. Maxwell starts tomorrow, also Saint George and Chambers Weakley. They may not

get their papers signed, but they are expecting it to be done tonight, and if so, they will start in the morning. If they get off then they will be home on Tuesday night, before you get this. Of course I would like to go home, and perhaps I can get off in time to go home with you. But everything about the army is so changeable and uncertain that you can be sure of nothing till it happens. Col. L. is not well-he is broken down a good deal-so is his son. Capt. Hamilton goes home too-he is down to a skeleton. Our men are all very weak, even the stoutest of them. Generally we have lost twenty pounds in weight since we left Kentucky. That is what Willie and I have lost. Willie and Johnny are as well as ever, but look thin. I suppose I would too, but my beard has grown so long it hides it all. I am as well as ever, and can ride again. It is true dear I have not yet advised you to come, but it was because I did not know where we would be or how we would be fixed. Since coming here I like it better. I have got your tent pitched in a good place-a better and more private place than I expected to find. We are close to a large cornfield, and a number of shade trees around. When I get time in a day or two I will fix it a little inside. Still if Lt. Justice advises you not to come, it will be best to take his advice. If otherwise then you may come. But don't come with Mrs. Banks, Sq. Gilfillan or any other man or woman or have anything to do with them in coming - better to come alone. Mrs. Banks must be crazy-Where does she expect to stop? This is the first time I could get accommodations for you, and I can not nor will not for any one else. It is impossible. There are not three wall tents in the 100th Regt. and the officers could not accommodate a woman if they wanted to. How would she like to undress, and sleep in an open tent, only a roof. As to the privates, they have one shelter tent to three men and one woman with hoops could not get into one of them. Still they might expect to get accommodations at some of the farm houses. It is too late. They are full already. Officers, wives, and visitors are here in flocks already. Besides a woman could hardly get along on army rations. Be sure and bring no neighbors along-they would expect me of course to do something for them and particularly a woman would expect a share of your tent. But it can't be done. The tent is not mine and it could not be had for any one else but you, and no one else shall have it. It goes back to the owner as soon as you are done with it. A woman has no business and could not live in camp and I could not ask you to come if I was in it. We are always at some distances from camp or the main body of troops, and in this instance in Lt. Justice absence I had the selection of the place I pitched as far away even from headquarters as I dared. We have no word of moving yet-but the drum might beat before I finish this page. However, it does not look so, and I think is not to be so or the men and

officers would not get going home. We might get shifted a few miles from here towards the river or some other directions, but as to going far for a month or two I don't think it can be done, as half of the men are not able to go. They are getting new clothes and begin to look as they used to. We had a storm today and the weather is refreshingly cool, just like home. The lightning struck near our oat stack and made a hole in the ground. I read your letter to Willie and Johnny about your harvesting and Willie laughed more at it than he did at anything since he left home. He said he would have given a months pay to have seen you all at your haymaking. We have pretty good times now in the evening. Henderson George is with me helping me till Lt. Justice comes back. Johnny's tent is next to ours and he has Chambers Weakley and Johnny Glenn. We mostly spend the evenings together, and it is not unlike home if there were only some women and girls with us. Let me hear from you as soon as you can after you get this, and try to let me know what day you will be here so that I can have a conveyance at the depot. It is two miles and a half off and too far to walk on a dusty road. I can get an ambulance, or at all events a wagon for Johnny has the control of them. If Dr. Ludington was well and here I know he would give me an ambulance, but I don't know who has charge of them now, but will find out, and probably get one, as I am very lucky getting things my own way anyhow.

I must close now dear-it is a good while after taps and I must get up early. Johnny has just left me to go to bed. I have been ever since dinner time writing this. I was interrupted so often with the officers coming in to pay their bills that I hardly know what I have written, and if it is disjointed you will pardon me this time. I did not get to church this afternoon.

Well late as it is I have another visitor attracted by the light.

Yours affectionately  
William