

Camp 1st. Division 9th A.C.  
Bealton Station, Va.  
May 1. 1864

My dear Jane

After another long interval I am at last able to write you once more. I do not know that you will receive this however as I learn that all communications from the Army of the Potomac have been forbidden for sixty days. Whether we are in that Army or not I do not exactly know, but we are so near it that another days march would take us there, and then I am afraid you will get no more word till the impending fight is over. The last time I wrote was the night before we left Annapolis and at that time I had no idea where we were going. We have been constantly on the move ever since, and I have been so busy that I could not even write a note to Hugh from Alexandria. We halted here last night, and at the request of Lt. Justice I have gone back to help him for a week or so. I feel quite at home again, and it being Sabbath he has suspended work, although he has a great deal of it on hand. I cannot let the time slip without writing you, for it may be a good while before I have another opportunity. Although we cannot get letters sent away from here we can still receive them. Newspapers also come every day by the railroad.

On last Saturday week we left our camp at Annapolis, and marched about twelve miles to the Bladenburg road. The way was very warm, and the destruction of clothing was immense. Probably two hundred thousand dollars worth of surplus clothing was thrown away. New overcoats by the hundreds were strewn on the road. About this time last year I wrote you of the destination of clothing when we left Camp Dick Robinson, but that was nothing to the present march. During Saturday night it rained, making the roads bad, and on resuming our march on Sabbath morning our wagons got along very slowly. The day was oppressively warm and the men threw away everything they could spare to make their loads lighter. Towards midnight I got into camp with the train at the Agriculture College near Bladensburg. One of our waggons was left behind. We now began to see that our march was bringing us to the Army of the Potomac. On Monday morning I had to take back a squad of men five miles to where the wagon was left and got it started. By this performance I was during the whole day, several miles behind the troops, and missed the review as they passed through Washington. I passed there towards evening and got lost among the swamps behind Alexandria in the dark, and finally camped in the road at midnight, not finding our regiment till the next morning. That day we reorganized, cut down all baggage and stored it in Alexandria. I took that from our regiment down to the store house. As I lost all my clothing last year by this storing arrangement, this time I did not trust it. I sent my valise and

all my clothes except an extra shirt, drawers, and one pair stockings by Express to Hugh at Washington. I was so pressed for time that I could not even write to him what to do with them, but met a young man formerly in my company who is in Alex. and he promised to do so for me. Hugh is to keep them there till I send him word what to do with them. So now I am disencumbered of anything that I can't carry. I have a buffalo skin for a bed. Robert M'Bride arrived this evening and went to Capt. Curtin. I have not seen him since, and as matters are now arranged it is not likely that I will for a good while. Capt Curtin is Q.M. of the 4th Division of the Corps, while we are in the 1st Divis. On the next day we started off again and camped at Fairfax. Next day on again passing the famous field of Bull Run, through Centreville and camped at Bristow Station on the rail road. Next day on again and camped at Warrenton Junction. Our men now understood where we were. So did I. This ground we have been over before. Everything began to look familiar. On our way to Fredericksburg we passed these places. Leaving the Junction we went on to Bealton Station, and here we are yet. From here we are almost in sight of our old Camp Starvation or Homing hollow. Our men are strung out for a few miles guarding the rail road. All along this rail road our Corps has been left, commencing with the 4th Divis. at Bristow, and just as we took position on the R.R. the troops that we relieved went on to the front. So after all the fuss about our Special Service it appears that that service is guarding the rail road. This is rather a come down from our expectations. This service is very severe and keeps the men on duty almost every other day. Mosby's guerillas are hovering round, shooting at pickets, so that we cannot go half a mile from camp. One of our pickets was shot at his post yesterday. It is of the utmost importance that this road shall be kept in good order. There are numerous bridges along this road, and the rebels have burnt them several times. By this road all the supplies for the Army of the Potomac come. If it was damaged the army would starve out in a few days and have to fall back. We have plenty of rations here. Trains are passing all day. Soldiers are moving by hundreds. Sutlers are leaving. Artillery is passing on, battery after battery, and yet "All is quiet on the Potomac." All is quiet yet. But it is only the stillness befor the storm. What is coming can only be surmised, but it is evident that a master is commanding. At Washington they know not what is going on, neither can the newspapers tell you. Yet the preparations told us. Our constant three days cooked rations on hand, our extra hundred rounds of cartridges tell us that our railroad guarding may cease at any moment and we may go forward to take part in the fray. It will be the fight of the war. All is staked on its result. We have no doubt who will win. The uncertainty is who will live to see the

victory. I do not expect that our corps will go on to the front with the main body. We are at the forks of the road by which we went to Fredericksburg, and as soon as Grant engages Lee, we will likely be sent to Fredericksburg again to make a flank movement.

Col. Leasure and Johnny have both arrived. They came all the way by railroad. Willie was taken away from us. He had to go to the Brigade Commissary again.

I have heard nothing further from Harrisburg. That matter remains as it was so far as I know.

You will excuse me dear for writing such a desultory letter under the circumstances. I cannot get time. I am trying to attend to the business of Lt. Justice and my own regiment too, and as they are at a little distance from each other I cannot do as well as I like.

My health is very good. Willie is well too. He stood the marching very well. I cannot get a horse. Our new Divis. Q.M. won't give me one. He is a Yankee. We are the only regiment in the 1st Division that ever was in it before. The rest are all Yankees. Direct to Care of Quartermaster, 100th, Penn. Vet. Vols, 2d Brigade 1st Divis. 9th A.C. Washington. To be forwarded.

Hoping to hear from you soon I will write as often as I have opportunity, and though it may be a good while before I can reach you. I shall ever remain

Your affectionate husband  
William