

[Mary J. Chittenden to John H. Wheeler]

Yorkshire Dec 7th 1861

Dear Brother

I recd your welcome letter last friday & was very happy to hear you still continued in good health for I was rather fearful that it might be otherwise with you. We are quite well here except myself I have been having the toothache the past week (which you know is anything but agreeable) and yesterday my throat began to be sore and it is rather worse to day than yesterday There is a great many cases of the Diptheria around us & a great many deaths Mr Peery at Arcade buried two children last sabbath Death is all around us taking one here & another there & how soon our turn may come we know not but if we are only ready it matters but little when or how; whether at home nursed by loving gentle hands, or upon the battle field or camp-ground far away if prepared our souls released from this body will fly away to be forever with the loved & lost who have gone before. Mother heard thursday of Aund Mindwell's death she was the only own sister she had—O my dear brother how soon shall we have to say as she does if we should live No father nor mother living & now her only sister has gone to that bourne from whence no traveler returns John my hope is this, & it is a comfort to me that is we meet no more here to enjoy each others society we shall meet in another & better world an unbroken family; and let us breathe frequent & fervent prayers to "Him who ruleth over all" that He will keep & preserve us & bring us all to His Eden above where we shall know no more parting forever but I feel quite in faith that you will return to us before long too I have quite a strong belief that our war is fast drawing to a close but still we do not know but we must be prepared for the worst & hope for the best. I have been knitting a pair of gloves for you this week with Olivia's help so if you receive them accept them from your sisters Olivia & Mary; it was but little I could do for you but I hope you will excuse me I have been to the society twice & worked what I could— I am afraid your gloves will be too large but I did not hardly know how to knit them Mother will write in this the articles designed for you for they are packing the box today at Mr Nourse's this is the reason why I did not answer your letter before Sunday morning; It is rainy here to day but quite warm Edgar just came here & said there had come a round about story concerning a fight between the rebels & your Regiment & it resulted in cutting the E Reg all up & that there were thirteen missing from Co. H. (So perhaps the eyes that this is intended for may never behold it) George has not returned from the river yet. He has given up the idea of going to war; Newton Chittenden & Wm. Card have enlisted in the Arcade company & have been sworn in; they start for Buffalo next tuesday; Halsey, Mr Hall Henry Gale Alfred Hall are going from this neighborhood I thank you for your poetry which you enclosed in your last and I will say in answer I think of you often; each hour of the day brings the absent one to mind & my best wishes for his welfare are often very often breathed from the lips of your sister Mary I should have written to you just as soon as I rec'd yours had it not been for waiting until the box was packed so as

[December 7, 1861, continued]

to let you know what was designed for you & I want you to write without an hour's delay, if possible for we shall feel very anxious until we hear from you

From your affectionate
Brother and sister
M J Chittenden
Wm F Chittenden

Brother dear brother where art thou to day
Where dost thou wander so far far away
From the scenes of thy childhood & kind friends so dear
Who sheddeth in silence for thee the sad tear
Who anxiously waiteth for thee to return
With thy presence to join the home circle again
O tell who ardently wait thee to say
Brother dear brother where art thou to day

Do those with whom day unto day thou dost meet
Prove true & with kind words thy presence e'es greet
To day is some kind heart near thee to beguile
Thy soul from its sadness & cause thee to smile
Does health with her rosy wings rest on thy brow
Or by fell disease is thy body laid low
O tell us for fain we would fain hear thee say
Brother dear brother where art thou today

Mary

Camp Brown Aug 31 1862

Mary

as opportunity presents itself I will converse with you with the pencil we arrived at Jamestown the night of the day we left & went into camp the next morning nothing of importance occurred on our way here. I am well but feel sad on account of some trifles that occurred before & on leaving home I said trifles but if you could look into my heart this morning you would see the mistake do not think me selfish for I know your heart was deeply wounded but it was not my intention I appreciate your kindness I know your motives were prompted by pure love for me & this has made me feel so but Mary my chosen companion through life's trials and triumphs will you forgive him who has wronged you so deeply for I feel penitent and it is my sincere desire that I may become a better man. I have been reading the two last chapters of Rev—which so beautifully describes the new Jerusalem the home of the just where I hope we shall all meet at last if not again on earth my eyes are wet with tears and when I look at that lovely and familiar home picture which I may never behold face to face again on earth my desire is strengthened to meet you in heaven for one I feel weary of life's pilgrimage and if prepared would rather meet where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. I will close for a short time for they are collecting for divine service for as I feel now it seems to be a great privilege. Sunday Two O'clock we have been privileged with an excellent Sermon from Ecclesiastes 11>13 the preacher enumerated the vices incident to camp life and amongst them all ranked profane language as being the most sinful in the sight of our creator and without an apology. he urged us all to secure an interest in that blood that washes from sin & uncleanness that the soldiers was the most liable of all men to be summoned to the immediate presence of the great I AM that the christian soldier was more truly brave feeling that their Captain had suffered death the just for the unjust and such is frequently the case in war. I was deeply impressed as was many others how I wish you could have been here and spent this holy Sabbath day with one who loves you better than any earthly being although at times you may think otherwise the future to me looks dark on account of my wicked heart and unpleasant circumstances connected with home not that I have one hard feeling toward any one much less your self but I feel that you have misapprehended me at times I know that my life has been very inconsistent but trust that should I ever return we may live in a more agreeable way life's pathway is strewn with roses and thorns we have shared of both I fear that I shall not be able to interest you but Mary this may be the only way that we shall have of conversing with each other and to me a letter will ever be a wellcome messenger this is the reason of my taking an extra sheet

as to our future destination we know nothing certainly there are reports that we shall be sent to Minnesota to quell the indian quarrel but it needs confirmation it looks rather inconsistent that we should be called west while so many troops nearer are sent south it matters little to me where we are sent if it is

[August 31, 1862, continued]

where we are most needed what I can do I feel willing and anxious to do and the quicker the better you may think by the way I have written that I am tired with my new life but I like it as well as I expected I did not expect a life of pleasure in the army but I feel more than ever that it is my duty to serve my country with my life if necessary was liberty worth bleeding and dying for in 76 should we not feel it to be our duty to transmit to our descendents the priceless heritage unimpaired and as we received it from our Fathers we have heard of no important war news since we arrived at Camp our Company is nearly full 95 mustered into the service and enough to fill it the captain thinks we shall probably get our uniform in a few days but in all probability shall not leave camp until our regiment is full the Chattaque Co regiment is the nearest full and will probably receive marching orders first our company will commence standing on guard to morrow morning 14 will be detailed each day and so on through the company prayer meeting is appointed at four o'clock and I will write some more after that dont be discouraged Mary

Sunday 6 O clock PM

we have just been to supper our fare is better than it has been as good as we could expect there are a few sick in our company E Stringham was quite sick but slight better today another Chattaque company has just arrived which as I understand completes their Regiment they had excellent music to cheer their spirits and now dear wife I shall have to close I have just taken a look at the ones I love best on earth and what feelings due you think are swelling the bosom of a companion & Father would that I could embrace you all kiss Clyde and Hiram as their Father would were he there keep up good courage & hope for the best good Night all it is dark

Direct to W. F. Chittenden Camp Brown Jamestown Chattaque Co N.Y
in care of Captain Cheney

[on stationery illustrated with "The Girl I Left Behind Me."]

Camp Brown Sept 6, 1862

My Dear Companion

I have just received your letter so full of tender affection and hasten to respond to it I was very glad to hear that you wer all as well as you are and hope when this reaches you that Clyde and Hiram as well as yourself will be in the full enjoyment of what is termed lifes greatest blessing, but the privilege of enjoying the comforts of home are so closely allied that at times I think the latter is to be prefered. You will say when you read this that Wm. is homesick but I do not mean to be understood so although some things are different from what I expected our fare is all most intolerable Thursday noon I ate but little and we waited till nine O clock for supper when the most of us went to bed after we had been to bed a short time the bell rang for supper but as I did not feel very well I did not go; yesterday morning I felt quite sick but was better before night and to day feel perfectly well our fare last night and this morning was better we had supper last night after nine O clock and between 10 & 11 wer marched out by our captain for watter to drink to be deprived of that which flows so freely for all of Gods creatures is something we are unused to but I hope when the Chatauque Regiment leaves we shall fare better that is to march on Monday at 11 P.M. the time when we shall leave Camp or our destination is unknown to us however we shall not leave untill the Regiment is full how many there is I do not know I have since heard there wer 750 mustered into the service In regard to the sow and pigs I intended to let Mr Stillman have the youngest and told G Burdic to tell him so he was to take them away Saturday or monday last if he got word to the effect perhaps George forgot to tell Fred or he might have bought of some one else if you could sell the pigs without much trouble it might be as well to fat both Hogs but I should not advise you to winter more than two dispose of the others with as little trouble as possible in regard to other matters you must rely upon your judgement and the advice of Friends. It is however my wishes that you may arrange so as to make your times as easy as possible you can judge to a great extent of the care you will be to by the past and it will increase ten fold as Winter approaches my heart aches when I think of the hardships you will be subject to and at times I think I have wandered from the path of duty by leaving my family to serve my country. but Mary I hope that Providence which has ever been so kind to us will continue to smile upon us who are united by the strongest earthly ties and due not let your pathway be darkened by anticipating coming trouble dark and stormy hours may be ahead of us and and it will be wisdom in us to be prepared for the worst by putting our trust in an arm stronger than that of flesh. it is a great pleasure that we have two loving little ones to to be company for you and I hope and pray that they may be spared to be a comfort and if nessessary

it is 15 minutes to three and we have just returned from dinner every thing in season

Camp Brown Sept 9th 1862

Dear Mary

I will commence another letter for you for I feel that there is no way that I can enjoy myself as well as in conversing with you although it be through the medium of the pen this is a privilege that I hope may not be deprived us. I am quite well to day yesterday and last night stood on guard the weather was more favorable than I expected it would be and we got along quite well there is a large crowd of citizens in camp every day taking leave of their friends some perhaps forever I wish you could be here and see them here is a young soldier with his sweet heart perhaps the one chosen to share lifes joys and sorrows. here another with his young wife by his side and in his arms he carries a little one another picture shows a family group the father and Mother leading the little ones entrusted to their care and Brothers and Sisters and in fact all with some present for the loved ones shortly to leave them perhaps forever. Do you remember a Mr Hess who used to attend Meetings at the Red Schoolhouse when Rev Follet Langmade held his revival meetings he has enlisted and is in camp his wife has been here for two or three days with their two little ones. he seems to be as devoted as ever and attends the meetings with great promptness last Sabbath evening at the prayer meeting there were three Soldiers arose for the Prayer of christians that they might become true followers of the savior who died for sinners the meeting was an interesting one and to my great Pleasure I find many of the Soldiers have enlisted under the blood stained banner of Emanuel I hope they may be faithful and never turn from their country or their God. There is to be a prayer meeting to night and though somewhat tired shall attend for though unworthy of the salvation purchased by the blood of christ yet I can enjoy myself in a religious meeting. I see by looking at the Bible that the text last Sabbath afternoon was in second Timothy second chapter 3 verse instead of as I wrote I have been looking for a letter with full as much anxiety as you have watched for tidings from loved ones Wednesday Sep 10 Mary I had an opportunity to go down Town last night and found a letter for me on the way to camp and I assure you it was a wellcome messenger from home I was very glad to hear that you were well and the children better I have felt very anxious to hear from you and feel thankful that the news are so favorable I know that your time must be pretty well occupied in attending to out door chores and your own work but I do not want you to feel that you cannot take time to rest for if you go beyond your strength your health will become impaired and you can see that in a pecuniary point of view we shall be the looser for to have a competent director will be of more value than what work you can do do not feel that I want you to do the out door work at all hire all that is necessary in regard to your disposal of the calf you have my hearty approbation I should have advised you to that effect in my last letter had I not thought that you wanted to fat it. it will save you a great deal of care and that is the way I want you to manage it will you will see be for our interest

Camp Brown Sept 19th 1862

Mary I have met with another disappointment in regard to going home the pay master has not yet arrived and the Colonel has refused to sign any furlows till after we are payed of which will probably be Monday next it was my intention to start for home to day pay or no pay but can not do it in an honorable way and think it best to wait awhile longer but shall come before going off if I had known when Whit Langmade left how things would turn I should have written for you to come out here so as to been here to morrow and till I could go home and if you get this to morrow in season and the children are well enough to leave I would like to have you meet me at Great valley at Uncle Abner with horse and Buggy if Johan can come with you if he cannot try and get one of Fathers if you dare drive it if I can I shall start for home on monday use your own judgement and do not be disapointed for I am well and shall home soon I shall send this by S Langmade

Good bye Dearest

W. F. Chittenden

Washington Oct. 2nd 1862

Mary contrary to expectations we left Baltimore last night about 9 O clock for Washington we reached the capitol about eight oclock this morning the cars which we rode on wer of the poorest class old cattle and hog cars and one of the two assigned to Co D was so old and rotten as to be unsafe but by running slow we reached the city in safety I understand that we shall leave today for harpers ferry which is the place where the most of the new troops are sent there wer over 10 regiments sent there yesterday from this point I feel quite well though tired for I have not rested much since last saturday night my cold has left a bad cough but but I think _____ I wish I had not brought so much clothing with me for it is burdensome the weather seems to be much warmer than at home though it was cloudy yesterday and to day which is as I expected it is surprising to see how particular some of the boys are about their accomodations when we left Elmira we changed cars and from there to Baltimore it was rather hard riding and worse to washington but I did expect to find cushioned seats and downy pillows to rest upon when weary I think I have stood it as well so far as any but maybe the first to fall out by the way however I hope to see you all in in safety I wish I could rest myself to night with you at home but that is desiring pleasures which are denied to the Soldier but though far from the chosen one and with the little which we have gathered around us yet I do enjoy myself as well as I expected to while while writing I have been thinking you might say I wish William would write better but our conveniences are poor but prehaps you can read this I will write no more at present so good bye my loved ones each one & all

Camp Seward virginia Oct 3 1862

My Dearly Beloved companion

We left the ground where we lay yesterday and marched through the city to camp Seward which is five north west of the capitol situated on an eminance which overlooks the city and the Potomac which we crossed by the long bridge of which you have heard so much and from where I am writing Sail boats an steamboats and camps on every hill as far as we can see some of the boys who have been in camp sometime say there are over Eighty Thousand men here and some estimate still higher there wer about 15 thousand left this camp yesterday I feel perfectly wel except verry tired and worn out though I rested well last night it is verry warm to day for the sun shines hot I think it is warmer than the warmest weather we see at home and verry dry we got some very good water at washington yesterday but when we got here last night we wer tired and verry thirsty and could get none as good as a cattaraugus mud puddle I filled my canteen before we started but so many wanted to drink that I had none left for myself but we have got some verry good this morning but it is not such as we get at home nor could we expect it our rations are scanty consisting of a piece of bread and a piece of meat about as much as one man could eat at home at one meal but I think we shall fare better when we cook our own food

Camp Seward Virginia Oct. 5 1862

Dear Mary I have just closed a letter to Fathers folks and though quite dark will by the light of the moon and amid the solitude which surrounds me write a few lines to the one who is ever present in my mind my own loved Mary it is the close of a beautiful Sabbath day which I have spent mostly in reading we have had no meeting to day the reason why I do not know I feel a good deal better to day and think if we could have a plenty to eat would get along quite well but in place of poor food which we frequently got there we get none at all prehaps I find two much fault but I am not the onely one and it is hard to go hungry but we shall fare better soon I have been over to the signal fort and looked around the grounds but could not go into the fort it is mounted by some heavy guns which can command the Potomac the troops garrisoning the fort say that we shall have no fighting to do

Tuesday morning Oct. 7th. Mary yesterday we went out on brigade drill and review we passed fort Albany and went down near the Potomac there were five regts and an artillery regt on drill it is quite a curiosity to see them perform the horses seem to understand the sound of the bugle as well as the men we wer reviewed by General Casey and staff he is an old man to old I should think to serve in the field but he has fought some successful battles 3 PM Mary we have live better to day many of the boys who found so much fault with camp Brown fare wish they wer back there but I think we shall fare better after a few days the days are very warm and the nights cool I have complied with your request and got my likeness taken but it is a poor picture and had I known how it would have looked should not have had it taken but you could expect any thing nice and will not be disapointed I cannot write any more on account of sending it I am well and will soon W.F.C.

Yorkshire Oct 6th 1862

Dear William

It is evening & I am seated in our old home by the table trying to prepare a little missive to send to the absent loved one so far, far away. I am usually well but rather tired to night for I have been doing almost all kinds of work to day. Father & Wyman have been here & I have been helping them about the carrots in the forenoon & in the P.M. helped pull beans We have got all the carrots & potatoes dug above the barn & the corn & beans & the fence is built so that cattle can run down in the lot before the house which makes it much easier for me about milking----Now about our journey home---We came direct to Salamanca where we had to wait nearly two hours for the cars to take us to Great Valley station & from there we started for Uncles on foot--we tried to hire a horse & buggy to take us to Uncles but there was none to be had but we overtook a man with a double buggy & he gave us a ride for a little more than a mile. the man's name was Keith a brother to mother's stepmother so you see we came very near finding relatives among strangers---we arrived at Uncles about 8 oclock he had gone to bed & Aunt was just getting ready for bed I slept in the bed in that little room where we sat together & chatted awhile the night of November 18th 1857 I should rather have occupied the same little bed room just for memory's sake but Aunt had calculated the room for John & so I had to give it up we staid to uncles all night & then went to Uncle Henly's and staid there & to Uncle Ben's till the next day when we started for home we got home about 10 oclock at night & you may as well believe Mary was well nigh used up but I am quite well now Hiram is some better of his cough but Clyde is worse but I hope he will soon be better Do not worry about them for I will do all I can for them. Good night for it is getting late & I am so sleepy that I cannot write O how I wish you were here to stay with me to night Good night again Jennie

Thursday morning Oct 9th I will try & write a little more this morning about our business at home how much are you owing Charles Shirline he has been here duning for the shingle & wants the money on them shall I pay him the money or not---how much are you owing T. Dunlap & how shall I pay him How much did you tell Wyman he could have that old wagon for tell me in your next Now for what Mr Bailey said about the furlow I will tell you all about his actions & see what you think I saw him coming down the road & I thought it was you & I watched him till I saw him turn up to the bars I faely clapped my hands for joy and run into the other room but Olivia soon told me it was Mr Bailey & my joy was turned to tears & it was quite a while before I could come out & speak to him & when I did he never as much as looked up at me I asked him why Wm. did not come home & he said that after you had sent your furlow to be signed by the Colonel that you come to him & Nat & says "now I have got my furlow you go and try to get you one and go home too" and he "Mr Bailey" got a furlow made out and went to the Colonel and he told him he would not sign it unless the Lieutenant brought it & so he got him the Lieutenant to carry it to the Colonel

MJC [October 9, 1862, continued]

and he signed it & when he got back you had found out that your furlow had been torn to pieces by some of the boys who were mad because the Colonel did not sign their furlows and then you got another made out as soon as possible but the Colonel had closed his office and gone to town before you got there and so you had to wait till morning but he said he would not be afraid to bet 10 dollars that you would be at home that night—and you know the rest write & tell me if this be all true or not. tell me how you sent those books & if I can do any thing to get them I have not heard from them yet. they say Mrs Quint claimed your boots and I do not want to make a fuss about them I am very sorry about those books for I should have prized them very highly if I had have got them but I shall try and give them up a resigned as possible. the children are no better & I am afraid the whooping cough is going to use them rather hard O Wm. how I wish you were at home the future looks dark to me the war will continue until all our friends are killed I fear. I hear that you have had a skirmish & took some prisoners. O Wm. be careful for my sake be careful of your health & life lest your Mary lays low with a broken heart may God speed the happy day when you with others shall return to the arms of the loved ones left behind John left for the scenes of war again yesterday he felt much worse than when he left at first write soon and often E. J. is here waiting to take this to the office so you must excuse me this time Good Bye.

[October 9, 1862]

2 o clock PM

I am at liberty for the time being and will improve it in the way most pleasant the weather is much warmer than the hottest weather in Cattaraugus but I think it will not be long before the weather will be cooler which would add greatly to the health and comfort of the troops. last night two artillery companies & two Cavalry left about midnight for harpers Ferry and many have left it is said for the vicinity of Centerville important movements are expected in that vicinity the war news are meager but we may have stiring scenes before long it is however an expensive and destructive business in which our country is engaged thousands of well to do citizens will be made penniless promising young men will have their morrals ruined for it is a school where vicious seeds are sown with a lavish hand and Mary if I should never return to my home & should you be spared to see our boys arrive at manhood I want you to impress these things upon their mind as the council of their father who desires their best good if a man has a comfortable home with loved and tender ones by his side he little knows how great a sacrifice he is making by leaving them for a soldiers life nor are the hardships and dangers to which he is exposed the greatest sacrifice he has to make all this I could endure for my country without much complaint but the greatest trial is to be deprived of your society and the childrens. I was never calculated for a wanderer and the farther I go from home & the kindnesses I have received for over five years from your hands and though many times I have been unkind to you and wished our paths wer separate yet it was an evil spirit that prompted those unkind words and now in all the (my sentences are broken but you must imply) cincerity of my heart I ask your forgiveness for each and every unkind word and act & if I ever come home will show by deeds as well as words that I am in earnest every time I lay down to rest myself I think of the one by whose side I have so often reposed and when sick has so kindly attended to my wants & often think it has been for the last time. but I will go no farther and confess I have been looking to much on the dark side of the future which is my way when discouraged or unwell you must not let any one see my letters for they are intended for you. I do not think the climate will agree with me but may be mistaken the change in that as well as diet has made many a sick soldier but hope for the best and be prepared for the worst should be our motto I feel very anxious about you all I hope you have some one to lighten your cares for if the children are verry sick they will require a great many attentions do not neglect yourself or them to save hiring I am in hopes they will get over their cough before cold and stormy weather commences and not have as hard a time as Pa did be verry careful about their taking cold but the caution is unnessary I think of you all oftener than you may think if you have any one to work for you and you think best have the brush heaps and old logs burnt of if there is no danger of fire but be careful for it is a hard matter by burning them off and sowing grass seed the pasture might be increased it will be best to have the Hogs and yearling fattening as fast as possible while it is warm so as to be

[October 9, 1862, continued]

able to get such work done before it is cold and stormy but do as you think best with the yearling and all other things I am willing to trust your judgement I will write no more to night but will try and send it by tomorrows mail good night and may health and contentment be with you

Oct 10th Mary I think I feel better but George is worse I went for the surgeon last night at 1 he is some better now and will be taken care of as well as we can I will write soon & do the same

W F Chittenden

Camp Seward Va. 10th 8 P.M.

Kindly remembered friends at home

by the light of the candle I will write a few lines before the roll call I have been quite busy to day having to cook and attend to the sick for George has been quite sick but I think he is some better to night I went out on battalion drill this afternoon but felt quite used up before dismissed I have been troubled with the dysenterry and it makes me feel quite weak but do not apprehend much trouble we have just got news which makes the heavens reacho with the shouts of our men we are to march soon for Fairfax but do not know the exact time. it may be soon contradicted but I think push along keep moving would be a good motto but it is suposed that our Generals understand their business it is said that we are to join General Sigel I hope it is so for he has the confidence of his superiors as well as the people we want a true and brave man and it would be better to were out than die in camp from inaction good night to you my dear family W. F. Chittenden

Saturday Oct. 11 not very well but you will think it is nothing but complaints it rained quite hard last night and is quite lowry today but it is said that there has been no rain since July and it is very dry the rain will be greatly conducive to the health of the troops. clouds of dust fill the air when the wind blew and it is impossible to keep our cloths clean I do not know as you will like the plan of my writing as much with a pencil but I do it generally when I can not write with the pen. I am now lying in my tent covered with my blanket and overcoat for I am cold and shivering having got wet while getting breakfast and washing the dishes there are 10 in our mess and Nat Eason & myself have to do the most of the work but we must bare it without complaining do not mention it. five Regts of infantry and one or two companies of cavalry & artillery marched by our camp this morning quite early but I have not learned their destination we have orders to prepare two days rations and be ready to march at 7 P.M. there are however a good many who who will be unable to march with their napsacks and some not at all but I shall not give up untill obliged to I hope that after we become acclimated our health will be better I have heard many say that on the first coming here they wer sickly but soon regained their health I think George is better to day I shall look quite anxiously for a letter but shall not be much disapointed if I do not get any till monday it is now nessesary to make preparations for cooking the rations

Saturday evening 8 O clock we have been making preparations for a march but I do not think we shall leave tomorrow I have cooked beef and pork this afternoon but at dress parade orders were given to attend church at half past ten A.M. which I was glad to hear for though I feel that I am not a child of god yet I delight to hear the word of god proclaimed and hear sinners speak of his mercies we have had no meetings since we left Jamestown and the evil

[October 11, 1862, continued]

influences were in the ascendancy for we all know that the human heart is prone to wander from the right and walk with fearful alacrity the downward road but I hope now that our chaplain has arrived that beneficial results will follow his labors. there was a death in a New Hampshire regt last night it is supposed from the effects of poison by eating a pie which he bought of one of the groceries near by they came into camp night before last lost one man by the way showing the necessity of being prepared for we know not when we shall be summoned into eternity. I have not got that letter for which I looked so anxiously but trust you are not to blame the wind blows hard and it is quite chilly I feel better than when I write this A.M. I will bid you good night W.F.C.

Sunday Oct. 12th. 10 miles from camp seaward on road to Fairfax

Dear wife and other friends quite unexpected to us we were ordered to prepare to march this morning before we had finished our breakfast dishes and all was bustle for a while making preparations for the march we had to pack our napsacks each man a plate knife fork spoon 1/2 tent for two with our cloths which make quite a load we commenced our march about noon and marched ten miles and encamped for night we soon had our tents pitched and though wet and rainy can rest quite well I think George Bailey is in one of the waggon's being unable to walk I think the most of us are tired enough to rest but I have stood it better than I expected so good night Mary.

Monday 9 AM 13. we have arrived at Fairfax and are encamped for the present but marching is pretty hard as you would think is you could see our men our load was pretty heavy but hereafter we shall not carry any more than we wear except blanket and overcoat except necessary equipments which will greatly reduce our load which at the best with our fare will be hard enough. we are now at the renowned Fairfax courthouse county seat of Fairfax county but a place of little importance I do not think there are many county Towns in any of the free states of as small pretensions as this I must confess that I was never more disappointed in any country than this I did not expect to find as pleasant a country as where free labor prevails I expected to find large farms with magnificent dwellings for the wealthy slaveowners but from Washington to Fairfax a distance of 17 miles with the exception of a few dwellings in the vicinity of the capitol it was the most desolate country I ever saw though the land is naturally fertile and productive and less hilly than in Cattaraugus the buildings are old and going to ruin & every the blight of slavery is to be seen there were but few slaves on the rout and few of the inhabitants I do not wonder at Edgars expression in regard to Virginia & Cattaraugus though at first I thought it was because he was homesick and I have heard many say that they did not blame Newton as much as before we enlisted and I looked at it different from

[October 13, 1862, continued]

what I did but I have had no thoughts of deserting but hope to live to get an honorable discharge but we little know what is before us. I feel quite well and anxious to hear from you but must not be too eager perhaps your folks and others will think I mean to slight them but I do not good night Mary

[undated portion of letter from Mary J. Chittenden to William F. Chittenden, apparently circa October 1862]

I expect Stephen Langmade here this week sometime to look at the three year old steers & I shall try to sell them as well as I can but I think I shall let them go at some rate or other O William this is business which I do not like I never was cut out for a man or to do a man's business & I do not know how to get along with it I read your letter to your father the one in which you spoke of his helping me to sell the steers but he did not say a word whether he would or not & I was just independent enough not to say a word more about it to him perhaps I shall get along with it some way I will have all the work done as near as I think you want it as I can & I want you to write freely about your business & tell me how you want things done You do not know how it cheers me to have your advice about the farm work O I wish I could get a letter from you every day I assure you they would all get answered though in a poor way you must excuse my poor writing & composition for you know I cant do very well at the best & now I often have to write in a great hurry & the children both teasing me or making a noise but you will not laugh at my blunders I know. I want you to let me know if there is any prospect of your fighting soon and if you have to march or prepare for battle at any time write if not but a few words and let me know O how I hope and pray that this rebellion will soon end & our loved ones will come to our arms again Good Bye My Dear write soon and I will answer every letter

M J Chittenden

PM 1 oclock It is quite warm & pleasant this P.M. I think we shall soon be able to gather our apples & get our roots taken care of our hogs begin to look quite well---O my dear how I hope you are striving to make your eternal happiness sure & living as becometh those whose peace is made with God & O how I wish I could say that I was a child of God But Wm. I fear I never shall be a christian my heart is prone to evil O my loved one pray for me that I may be one of those who shall have a home in Glory Pray too that if we meet no more below we may be family unbroken in the kingdom of God

Jennie

Yorkshire Oct 12th 1862

My Dearest

I will spend a part of this Holy day in trying to converse with you through the only medium now left us "the silent pen" We are as well as usual & I think the children may be a trifle better but so little it is hardly perceivable I can tell you it is a task to take care of them & I think I shall be very thankful when they get over the whooping cough. O how much I think of you of late. It seems as though I could not yield to my fate; every night when I retire I miss the loved one who has for the past five years lain by my side whose loving arms have so often folded me to his bosom & sleep is for a while driven from my eyes; instead of becoming more reconciled it seems harder for me to bear than at first O if war's relentless hand should make you its victim & you should return no more to your little ones and Mary, she would not be long behind she would soon lie low and the loved ones separated here below would (if prepared) clap glad hands "on the other side of Jordan" I hope you will enjoy yourself as well as you can & I hope you are where you can lie down on the Sabbath & rest your weary limbs without being disturbed by your unkind Mary O the past would that some sad scenes could be for ever driven from my heart for oftentimes it comes up before me and fills my soul with bitter grief O my dear again I ask you to forgive me every unkind look word & action I bury them forever in Oblivion & let naught but the sweets of our wedded life rest within our hearts. But perhaps you will say that Mary is in one of her downcast moods to day but I am not I feel as well in mind to day as usual only a little more lonely for the loved one is gone & I miss him more than ever on the sabbath. I have so much to do that I have no time to be lonesome weekdays but I miss you every where The day we had the thrashers I could hardly controll my feelings while waiting on them at the dinner table O it was so hard to see them all gather round & no Wm. there but I will forbear lest I make you discontented I want you to keep up good courage & not worry about home any more than you can help for it will do no good but do try & be careful of your health & life rush into no danger that can be avoided think of Mary & how she would stand even between you & the deathly missiles if possible, & be careful O so careful I do not know how much G Burdick will ask for the thrashing but George Robinson \$1.50 & Adin Howe asked \$1.25 I paid Adin in barley & G. Robinson I let have 3 pigs Uncle Jim charged 5 shillings & wants the money E J was here but made no charge Emery & Wyman & father were the rest except the hands with the machine father would like two or three bush of the peas & oats if you thought best to let them go write & tell me I had to help pay John's fare to & from Jamestown & Nancy & I together got mother a calico dress for taking care of the children & all together it cost me about 5 dollars & I had to let John have 10 dollars & paid George R 50 cents for the horse so you see it will use the money up so I shall not have enough to spare 107 dollars to the Land Office & keep much by me father thinks it would be the best way to put the money out at interest & not pay on the land at present he says that land is fast

[MJC, October 12, 1862, continued]

becoming of little value & if any thing should happen & I should be obliged to sell I might not get as much as we have already paid out but William I want you to have the money used just as you think will be for the best you know father is notional and always looks on the dark side I am perfectly willing to pay it in at the office and want to if you think it will be safe now write just as you feel about it and I want you to write how you want things done here for I should like to carry the work along to suit you just as much as if you were here. the steers are so unruly that I can do nothing with them they are in the yoke now I think I shall try hard to sell them. if you think it would pay better to winter that sheep I will do it willingly I have got rid of all the pigs but three by killing one the day we had the thrashers & if I do not get a chance to sell the other I shall have it killed I do not know as you will think I manage things very well. I should like your advise more about things please tell me how to do when you write. I got those books yesterday namely Mothers true stories, the Bridal Keepsake, Mesias throne, two tracts, the pictorial tract primer 54 picture cards I understand you to say you had sent a Hymn book & one or two more please let me know about it I also received with the books a coat a pair of pants & an old shirt which if you sent to me all right but I want you to tell me all about it the coat & pants were a brownish color specked with a lighter color please to let me know & if it is all right I thank you for them & if not tell me who they do belong to I shall have to close for want of space you will have no reason to complain of my not writing often for this is the third letter in the space of a week I sent a line with Mrs Bailey friday Good Bye & I hope you will soon be with us again Write often

Jennie

[Mary J. Chittenden to John H. Wheeler]

Yorkshire Oct 17th

Dear Brother

As Hattie has given me an invitation to send a few lines with her I thought I would accept for I intend to improve every opportunity which I have to converse with you through the only means we now have. Hattie will likely tell you all the news so I will only write a few lines of my own. We heard that you had gone to Missouri we do not know the truth but think we shall when we hear from you next. I am at home to day Hattie & E. J. are here & my dear brother we wish you were here too. We find a vacant chair whenever we join the loved circle at home and John whenever I go I miss you or in other words there is a loneliness in my heart which has never left me since that morning you left your home to lead a soldier's life but John I would not add a sad feeling to your heart I would rather cheer you with words of encouragement and bid you nerve your heart to meet all coming trials bravely

I know when you think of home it is with tender feelings and it is with tender very tender feelings that your parents & brothers & sisters think of their absent brother & son and though unworthy to adress a throne of grace yet I strive each day to ask the God of Heaven to protect and preserve the absent loved one and bring him safely home again

Thou art gone away my brother dear
We know for when we meet
In that loved home so dear to us
We find a vacant seat
We miss thee & our hearts are sad
Our bosoms heave a sigh
For O Alas my brother dear
We've bidden thee good bye

And now again good bye till I hear from you write often and John I crave one boon & that is your picture it would be dearer to me than so much gold

M J Chittenden

Be of good cheer & trust in the Lord

Fairfax Va. 20th 1862 8 P.M.
Co D 154 Regt

Dear Mary Children and Friends

I will again pencil a few broken sentences to the ones so near to me but it is under more painful circumstances than heretofore we are called to mourn the loss of a comrad from our company John Myers of Machias 4 or 5 miles west of the corners a man I should think about my age and under verry similar circumstances having a wife and two little ones, which will enable you to know how to sympathise with the mourners. he has a brother here and they seemed to think of each other with brotherly love, always marching together and sleeping together & Edward will feel deeply the loss of his Brother. he was to all appearances as healthy and robust a man as in the company he has been sick three or four days with the dysentery but thought he was getting better and yesterday he told me he felt a great deal better but had been quite sick and last night his brother said he was up about midnight & said he felt a good deal better than for two or three days past and after he went to bed they talked some time and went to sleep not knowing but his brother was in reality better. after awhile he awoke and heard John breathing hard but thought it nothing more than snoring but after awhile took hold of his arm to wake him up but failed the others in the tent then woke up when it was found he was in a fit the surgeon was called but he was past all earthly power to save and was removed so untill half past 3 AM when he breathed his last as calmly as if going to sleep This is the second death in the regt. and shows most conclusively that whether in Camp or the Battle field death is the most certain & yet the most uncertain of all events that it will come none can question but when none can determine some thought best to send his body home but it was overruled being considered verry inconsistent under the circumstances as the corpse would not look natural and it would be impossible to do so in every case but the company will make up a purse I think for the family. I have just run over what I have written and find an apology nessessary. the cause of his death the Surgeon said was congestion of the brain I will now bid you good night hoping you are well with Hiram & Clyde sleeping sweetly by your side where it would be a pleasur for me to repose being

W. F. C.

[undated fragment, apparently late October 1862]

but mary do all you can to make you comfortable this winter I hope Edgar will get his discharge and that you can get him or some one else to stay with you this winter do not mind the cost for I prise your health and comforts higher than dollars & cts I have written again to fathers folks & have intended wrote to your folks & some others but have neglected it till I shall not be able to do so at present but give my best wishes to all as well as neighbors glad that each of them can enjoy comforts which are denied to the soldiers but wishing that their votes may each count on the side that will do the most to restore peace to our country and give to each portion it rights regardless of party principal I have written all that is nessessary at present concerning our business I feel satisfied with your management and hope to hear from you often this from your near friend

Wm. F. Chittenden

Tuesday Oct 28th 1862

Loved one far away

I have just got through my evening chores & my head aches severely but I will try and write a few lines to you before retiring I have been to the Center to day & was intending to settle with Wright but G. Whitney was posting his accounts & I could not I got my foot measured for a pair of shoes & I done a little trading I carried butter to pay within 4 cents of what I traded. I intend to pay them up & then pay as I go along & if you want me to pay Peirce write & let me know I had my feelings hurt very much this morning & O Wm. how my heart went forth to the absent one it seemed as if my heart would burst with grief but William I have made up my mind to let my neighbors alone as far as I can & live by my self till William comes home My bad feelings as much as any thing was the cause of my head ache I will close for to night for I am so tired & my head is so bad that I do not feel much like writing—and I have no William here to lighten my cares or soothe my aching brow & heart

Jennie

Wednesday evening Oct 29th. Just got through with my work again & sit down for the first time this evening it is now 1/2 past 8 oclock I have been churning & baking this evening & am somewhat tired but not too much so as to spend a little time writing to the absent one I am usually well this evening and it would add greatly to my happiness could I know you were well & faring well. Your folks were here to day Your mother brought up your letter & the tract you sent her she said she should have written to you before but she did not want to write till she came here for she wanted to let you know how we were here I urged your mother & Phebe to stay with me one or the other of them but they would not I think it is the last time I shall urge them to stay with me while you are gone. Your father brought me a bag of apples & they brought me a piece of pork & I gave them a piece of mutton & shall let them have some turnips Your father says he will take the barley to Buffalo for me & he thinks I can get a dollar a bushel for it write & tell me just as soon as you get this if you want it sold for I shall not let it go till I know your mind—Charlie Lowe spoke to E. J. about his pay but E. J. told him about our land debt & he seemed to be quite willing to wait I think & I shall pay him if I can sell the year old steers Good night with a kiss

Thursday Oct 30th

Good Morning William,

How are you this morning and what are you doing. I am quite well & the children are better & I think will get along without further trouble I am getting breakfast & writing at intervals to the one who ever occupys my heart & mind

[MJC, October 30, 1862, continued]

for William I do not think there is 10 minutes at a time when I am awake that you are not present in my thoughts it is not hardly light but the little ones are up and are singing as happy as birds Clydie says "I am singing to Pa" & Hiram says he wants to see pa & if he would come home he would hug & kiss him. I shall have to wait awhile for my breakfast is nearly done O how I wish you were here to eat with us it seems so lonesome at the table without you

Good Morning 1/2 past 8 A.M. I have just got my breakfast out of the way & work done up & will now try and finish my letter so that I can send it the first chance I have. Wyman Bull's work since you saw him at Jamestown amounts to \$1.00 & I have paid father 60 cents money 60 cents in mutton & let him have 4 pigs beside the two I let James Hall have for which James pays father the lumber & father says I do not owe him any more for work I let Emery have your frock & those shirts Newton gave you and a pig for which he paid me in work I paid George B 3 dollars cash for thrashing Adin Howe 2 bush barley George Robinson 3 pigs & Uncle Jim 56 cents cash for help about the thrashing & I owe George Burdick for building the fence between the house & barn & the meadow & if James Bailey says anything about my paying him I shall let him have 50 cents and that will be the full amount I shall have to pay for work done since you left home I do not know but you will think that is too much but I have got along & hired as little as possible I shall probably have to hire about a half month yet this fall & then get Edgar to board & go to school he will work till I get the work straightened around & then go to school our work is rather behind the times but do not blame me for I have done the best I could I should have hired sooner if I could have got any one I am fattening the yearling & think we shall have him killed in about a week I shall let Wyman have a quarter & I do not know whether I shall let any more go or not what do you think about it I suppose you will think I did not do right about the barley but they all said it was only 4 or 5 shillings per bush & I had but little money then without breaking into the hundred dollars for the land & I did not know but it would be better to let the barley go I am sorry as it has turned but cant help it do not feel hard and I will try & look out a little cautiously

Fairfax Oct. 30, 1862, Co. D. 154. Reg't.

Mary

Again I will converse with you while the twilight shadows are gathering around us it has been a verry pleasant day warm enough to be comfortable and I hope you are favored with the same delightful weather for the time will pass off much more pleasantly than when cold and stormy last night we changed our camp and have got on better ground I thought from what I heard when I wrote last that there might be a fight before this time not far from here but there is no prosepect of anything immediate neither are there any of the enemy verry near if reports are correct but there is no dependence to be put in the camp lies I feel verry anxious to hear from you again it seems strange that no letters come but I hope you and the children are as well as usual would I could spend the evening with you but I must dispence with such pleasures good night and may God protect and bless you is the wish of your friend

Oct. 31th the weather continues fine and it seems to me that if there is to be any more fighting done this fall that our Armies might better be about it while the weather is fair than to be laying in camp and giving the enemy every possible chance to retreat or strengthen his positions but the affairs of our Armies may be conducted in the best possible manner for the public good I hope this may be the case but we are kept poorly informed of the movements of our Armies we have been reviewed to day by the principle Officers of this Army corps accompanied by Secretary Stanton there is quite a strong force encamped about here I have not been able to learn the exact number as it is variously estimated but could put down quite a number of figures representing them but all might be false 4 P.M. have just returned from washing my cloths and person for I think cleanliness is a help toward preserving our health again I will bid you good night hoping you are enjoying yourself well also the children

W. F. C.

Oct 31st 1862

Dear William

It is evening & all is still the little ones are asleep and Edgar has just gone to bed & Mary sits by the table trying to prepare a little missive to send to her absent Loved One. & O my dear could I but fly think you I would sit here & converse with you in this way. No I would soar swiftly away till I found the cherished friend & with my head resting on his bosom pour forth all my Joys & sorrows in his ear who has so often listened & seemed so ready to share all my troubles but this cannot be we are far apart now and know not how long we shall thus be severed "perhaps forever" But Oh! let us pray "Our Father" that he lay not his chastening rod to heavily upon us Edgar has been digging potatoes to day they yield well & we have enough I think to last a year or till the time potatoes are fit to eat another season I am so sleepy that I cannot half write so you will have to excuse me for to night Good night my love with a kiss

Jennie

Nov 1st

Evening again I have just received a letter from you dated Oct 20th 21st 22nd and was very glad to learn that you was not very sick but you did not say whether you had got over your cough or not—O my dear if you knew how anxious I feel about you, you would not think I had forgotten you but you perhaps think I do not feel anxious to receive your letters as I do my brothers but I have written at least 7 or 8 letters to you since you left Jamestown & only one to John & one to Edgar before he got home

[Edgar W. Wheeler to William F. Chittenden]

Yorkshire Nov 1 1862

Dear absent friend

as Mary was writing to you I thought I would put in a few lines I am rather tired to night I have been digging potatoes all day I finished digging the piece east of the house to day there was 35 bushel with the row that went around the corn we buried 16 bushel and put the rest in the cellar there is a few more to dig around the turnips but if it holds off fair a few days longer we shall them all out turnips and all I suppose you have pretty tough times down there you psake about their settleing the war before long and sending the soldiers home or else carry it on in a larger scale I think they have got scale enough to weigh it all now if they would turn off some of the head officers and put in privates the war would be closed before long but as it is so it will be and so i think you will have a chance to stay your three years if not discharged on the account of Disability but I wish it was closed so all of you could come home I dont think of any thing more at presant so good night write often and tell all the news give my best wishes to the boys yours in haste

Edgar W Wheeler

To William F Chittenden

[on stationery illustrated with "The Girl Left Behind Me."]

Fairfax Va.

Sunday morning Nov 2nd 1862

kindly remembered friends at home

it is a beautiful Sabbath morning and as has been often done before by our Armies on this day of rest we are to march we have got our things packed or what we are to take with us napsacks and under cloths are to be left behind we carry our overcoat blanket and each man his piece of tent cloth with two days rations and 40 rounds of cartridges we have been in line for marching for some time and as we may have to wait for awhile I thought I would commence an answer to the verry kind affectionate long and wellcome letter which I have just received of the 24 + 26 with the kind and unexpected note from Edgar it is over a week since I heard from you and you can imagine how anxious I have felt but am glad to hear you are all as well as you say you are I wish you could have seen the troops that have passed through this place this morning it is now about 11 A.M. and the road has been full of Infantry cavalry Artillery and long rows of waggons and our turn to fall in has not come yet wer you where you could witness the movement you could form something of an idea of the magnitude of our Armies and the expense of carrying on this ruinous war but I fear that so long as our officers are sure of their large salaries it will be protracted many who have entered the service under the last call and have been to some expense would do all in their pour to prevent a settlement little thinking of the suffering which is caused every day but it will not be left I hope for a few in power to decide for one I hope it it will soon be closed in a just way so that the south as well as North may receive their rights but perhaps this can not be yet it is often times better to suffer than do wrong I feel verry thankful or at best glad that that the children are better O that I could clasp them each to my heart but this may be a pleasure not in store for me but will hope for the best and try to be prepared for what awaits me tell them that Pa thinks of them verry often and wishes them to be good boys to love each other and always obey their mother kiss them as last I did for me and overlook my weakness Mary for none but emotions of love and tenderness swell my brest I hope ere this reaches you you will be quite well & before this time is is probably nothing more than expected or desired yet in all of your sufferings you have my sympathy would I could be with you when won feel tired or unwell and hope at no very distant day to meet you all in safety I am verry sorry to hear that you have to work so hard and late but you may think I might have considered it before and I should but do not chide me to harshly and I hope to make reparation for all wrongs I feel that you are managing all things for the best and you have my cincere thanks and aproval as regards disposing of the Barley I will leave it to your discesion if it will sell for more than it will be worth to you let it go I have

[November 2, 1862, continued]

written to you to let your Father have some peas and do not think you ought charge for every thing you let him have good bye we must march

I will resume where I left of but consider how much he helps you and how many weary steps he your are saved by his kindness I feel that I owe him my sincere thanks for his kindness to you in your times of need and when it is so hard to obtain help and I feel verry grateful to George Br for his kindness in helping you about your chores when stormy weather I am glad that utter selfishness dus not predominate in every brest for if all wer as some are many families of soldiers would have to suffer I hope I may be able to compensate all for their kindness to you but hope it will be under different circumstances. I am very glad to hear that Edgar has got home again even with the loss of a thumb I do not wonder that he is satisfied with soldiering for at the best it is poor business even if well folowed I hope you can get him to stay with you this winter I hope he will feel interested in taking good care of the stock and other chores and thus lessen your cares to a great extent if I could know that you had some reliable person to stay with you this winter I should feel much more contented about you all now as to our march we started about

[continued on another sheet, headed] Three miles west of Haymarket
Nov. 3d 1862. O. Domin

about 12 M. and except two short halts of about 10 m. kept on till night when we camped about three miles from Centerville the day for the season was excessively warm and many a poor soldier suffered from the heat that Sabbath after noon which was designed by the Savior of mankind as a day of rest and preparation for eternity and could we have reste till to day it would have been much better for to day is an extreme of the temperature of yesterday it being so cool that an overcoat adds much to our comfort. as to my health it has been quite poor for over a weak past so that I have not done duty for that time for three days keeping my tent but was getting better but the march has been pretty hard for me I never sweat more in my life in one day at home than yesterday afternoon Saturday night the Captain asked me if I would be able to march I told him I should try it and go as far as I could, but there wer a number of the boys who stayed behind or come with the regimental train 4 from our Town G Bailey with the rest after we had gone about a mile we came up with the Army train which had stoped to rest and we marched by the side of it and the artillery till night as we reached the hights of Centerville we could see the Bull run mountains in the distance and could see the country between but it is not verry pleasing to the sight Centerville is a small town not larger than coonville and not half as much business ever done as there we encamped for the night about three or four miles from centerville but did not pitch our tents for it was so warm that we thought we could be comfortable with our blankets but before morning it

[November 3, 1862, continued]

rained and was quite cold the changes are I think as sudden as in Cattaraugus the next morning we started as soon as breakfast was over which was I assure you quite different from at home we soon come to Bull run in about an hours march or less crossed the bridge where our soldiers were so brutally shot while on their retreat from the Bull run Battle and at 1/2 past 10 A.M. halted in the woods that formed a part of the last battle ground and ate our dinners there were abundant signs of the fight shells and balls were strewn in every direction limbs cut from the trees and graves of soldiers who fell in the fray never to behold their homes again such is the fate of war we are I am told about three miles from thoroughfare gap in the Bull run mountains Nat, Eason & Charles King are writing to night but we do not know when we can send them so good night Mary with a kiss

Tuesday morning Nov 4 quite pleasant this morning quite cool I feel better this morning and quite rested but far from being well but shall keep up with the company as long as I can and share the dangers with the rest of the boys but as soon as orders to march come many are sick I presume it is so in other companies and regiments do not worry about me for I think I shall be better soon and will take as good care of my health as possible and keep all I can from harms way I should be glad to attend Election at home to day for I presume there will be much excitement there you said you had got my likeness I presume it was damaged some on the way though not good at first if I had waited till we got to Fairfax I could have got a better picture but hope to make you a present of the original at some future time not long I hope. I do not know what the orders for to day will be it is about 10 A.M. and we have not received orders to march and may not to day it is not more than 4 miles to thoroughfare gap where we are told there are about 80 regts and some expect a battle there soon I will write no more this morning but try and rest some

I can send this now good bye

W. F. Chittenden

[circa November 6, 1862--the first part of the letter is missing]

the name of the road but it is no matter we are told however that the cares have not run on it since the war broke out if I had known sooner I could have got a map of Eastern Va. but do not know I can now I think if you could get one of all of the States in rebellion or of the Union it would suit you better perhaps you can send by Father or some one else I should be glad to have you get one if you would like you could better understand the position of both Armies one thing I wish you to bear in mind it is this I want you to use what money you need whether it be of that which I have drawn or that you have obtained some other way it is my desire and I think I have expressed it often enough that you should make your self and families comfortable as you can it is not a few paltry dollars that I prise above your happiness nor do I wish you to think me unkind in talking thus plainly I know what prompts you to mention it and I fear you did not exactly understand me in mentioning your expenses I think you got along as economically as I should or more so as to the way you have managed in disposing of what things you have sold I feel not onely satisfied but well pleased and without flattery think you are quite a competent confidential clerk I think it be for the convenience of the one who does the barn chores to have a middle door so as to prevent the sheep from running into the barn so much and I think it would be best to stable all of the cattle in the barn and use the shed for the sheep seeing that it is not to warm and I would not have them run under the barn. you spoke of sending me some aples and other comforts it will not be best at present and if you should do not send any green aples but dry in their place the green would be acceptable but much more weighty of other things you must be your own judge I hope however to be able to recompense you for your kindness for I know your wishes and should I never receive any presents it will be as well I have not stood any guard for some time but presume I shall have to tomorrow there has been no snow here yet but the air is verry chilly and feels much like it. our folks said there had nearly two feet fell there it must seem like winter in good earnest but it will probably go off soon and you may get some quite warm weather. I have heard verry unexpected news as to Sister Phebes future home but you have I doubt not heard it I will not mention it good night loved one

Encamped for the night 5 miles this side of Warrenton

Friday Nov. 7, 2 P.M.

we took up our march this morning about 9 A.M. for Warrenton have just encamped for the night 5 or 6 miles from that place we are told our cavalry forces wer driven in yesterday about 1 mile to the rear of where we are encamped at present also that they wer driven back by our forces and that they wer at Warrenton but the reports may be false it is a cold stormy day the first snow storm we have yet had commenced this morning just as we started and I have found those mittens which you sent me to come verry acceptable this morning was the first time I wore them last Sunday morning before we started I

[November 7, 1862, continued]

put the last of the tea which I so reluctantly brought with me it has furnished me many a good drink and as often reminded me of your kindness to me on leaving home I intended to have sent this by this mornings mail but could not I have not rec'd any thing from you since Sunday of 24 & 26 I wrote to fathers last week and plead your care somewhat hoping to elicit their sympathy in your behalf I hope you receive more attention from their hands I feel it to be their duty to care for you now as one of their own children. I feel disgusted as we march along to see the reckless disposition for plunder showed forth by our officers and men and the officers are the most to blame one instance which is a disgrace even to the savage I will mention once of the soldiers who wer plundering a home of its valuables and one of their number more greedy than the rest took the rings from off a young lady her hand and from her ears a likeness from her and then offered her Father \$.50 for liberties with her person do not mention it it no credit to the Regt that man is as deserving of death as the meanest rebel. and to day as soon as we stopped some of the men wer on the hunt and soon come in with turkeys hens sheep and pigs also aples and other eatables for the sustenance of old men women & helpless children it seems wicked to see I have not taken any thing yet nor do I wish to I hope my dear ones are well to day good bye for the present.

Saturday 4 P.M. on the same ground as yesterday and do not know when we shall move it is much more pleasant to day although quite cool there is nothing of importance to write about as we have heared no war news I hope you and the children are well and taking all the comfort you can in our home which would seem more pleasant than ever to me should I ever return we have heared that Seymour is elected I hope it will be for the good of the country and that just and rightful measures may be adopted for the settlement of this useless war for one I long for time to come when when we can return to our homes it is discouraging to see how little is accomplished by our Armies but we will hope for the best and trust that the lord will bring peace out of confusion write soon tell the boys that Pa remembers them my love to you

W F Chittenden

Sunday Nov 9 we have orders to be ready to march at 8 A.M.

[undated portion of letter from Mary J. Chittenden to William F. Chittenden, circa November 1862]

O if this cruel war would ever close but I fear it never will until our loved ones are all slain O William why did I ever let you go if it had not been for the draft I never would & I do not believe they will draft after all. why did I not hinder you when I could but this is vain talk but William do be careful for her sake whose heart though cruel to you in days gone by yet now repentant mourns in silence at morning noon & night for the loved one far away midst the danger of the battle field I dreamed last night you was here But it was nothing but a dream & O I do not want you to come unless you can come without fear & come honorably I hear McClellan is removed when I get the full account I will try & send it to you I would send you a paper once in a while if they belonged to us alone but you know I should not want to now I want you to write to me all about your health how is your cough you do not say any thing about it of late I wish you would every mail if you cannot get paper & postage I will send you some I did not get a letter yesterday & I can hardly be contented to wait till the next mail Mrs Bailey gets letters oftener than I do & I write almost two to her one I send one nearly every mail do not think me complaining but your being in such danger makes me far more anxious about you

Little Clyde is standing up by the table almost a man with his little pants on you would hardly know your little Clydie you left in dresses now I have got him dressed in pants he hurt his finger pretty bad the other day & he cried for Pa as hard as he could cry Hiram wants me to write to pa & tell him to come home he dont want him to stay there and let the men shoot him & your Mary would gladly say come home were it in your power to do so with honor or safety. May God speed the happy day that will bring you safely home to our arms O William you will not thank me for such a letter as this but but to tell you my troubles makes them far easier for me to bear for indeed my heart feels lighter than when I commenced writing and I would willingly bear all my troubles if I knew you would live to get home to your loved ones again We are having a very heavy fall of rain it commenced raining monday morning & it has rained day & night ever since it is very gloomy weather there is nearly a foot of water in the cellar now & it keeps coming in yet I am alone with the children Edgar has gone down to draw some wood for father with the steers have you ever sold any birch lumber to Isaac White if so please tell me I wish it was so I could let out the place & then I should not have so much care on my mind but I cant this winter & I hope you will be at home before spring returns I want you to write often & do not forget to tell me if I could send some money safe to you there is some of my letters which you do not receive for I have written 12 or 13 thirteen beside two little notes I sent with Mrs Bailey & one with Nancy

Good Bye & do not let any thing I have written serve to cast you down for I want you to enjoy yourself the best you can & I will do the same

Jennie

*[MJC, undated circa November 1862,
continued]*

You can hardly read this letter it is so broken & poorly written but you must supply the vacancies & make allowance for poor composition and remember that though oftentimes cast down yet my heart always turns to you though far away as the bright star of all my earthly hopes from your unworthy

Mary

No 14

Thorofare Gap Va Nov 12th 1862

My dear companion & little Ones,

I will write a few lines to day but may not finish it to day. I feel quite comfortable to day & my cough is much better but is the worst in the night I have tried to get liccorice and hoarhound candy but could not and molasses is as bad as an emetic but I think I shall get along and hope to son be well and now mary do not worry about me for I shall do all I can to preserve my health for I desire as much as any one can to return to my family and home it is my greatest earthly wish stronger than for life itself for wer it not for you and the children it would not make but little difference whether in Southern soil or at home my bones are laid do not think by this that I feel discouraged or like giving up for if it is the Lords will that I shall see my home and friends again my carelessness will not prevent it but we must hop for the best and and consider that sore trials may be in store for us you can imagine how anxiously I have looked for tidings from you and how it gladened my heart whenever I heard the children wer better or you wer well I know you have had a hard time but you have never been forgotten by me and gladly would I have come to your assistance if I could have done so but you know it was impossible but I hope the worst has passed and the children will get along with little trouble and now Mary do not look so much on the dark side but with bright hopes for the future let us with renewed courage look forward to the time when this wicked ruinous war will be closed and those who prise the comforts of home above the scenes of strife and carnage may return in safety to their friends. and if I have one wish above another in regard to the war it this that each one North and South what would have this war prolonged one day for pay or to gain political power or who ever wished to have it protracted may leave their bones on Southern soils if this is a sinful wish it will be laid to my charge those who want the war prolonged for the purpose of liberating the niger are little better than rebels themselves the negroes who are in such awful servitude are many of them better off than than the poorer class of the north much better than if free and to provide for themselves not that I look upon the institution as just for I do not nor am I one of those who would sacrifice 10 white men for one negro though there are many of our union loving men who would like to have it so and would not be willing to give them more than their board for their labor and let them sleep with their cattle this is about the way I view the matter and had known as much about it before I enlisted as now I should not have been here draft or no draft and I am not alone I assure you but shall do my duty like

[the rest of the letter is missing]

Yorkshire Nov 12th Monday evening

William

It is evening again & I find myself seated & not as in days gone by visiting with the one so dear to me face to face but with the silent pen the only means now left us by which we can communicate our thoughts & feelings to each other O William how often I wish my heart were open as a book before your eyes that you might read my every thought of you. you would then fully know how full of love & tenderness your Mary's heart was for you. I dreamed of you all night last night I thought you were at home O how long before the dream will be a reality. or can it never be. I has been rainy all day Edgar has been away & I have been cleaning house & I did not have William here to help me I have been fixing the window glass where you fixed it last spring & who do you suppose I thought of all the time I am very tired to night but think by morning I shall be rested I received your letter of the 6th 7th & 8th this morning & believe me it was very gladly recd. I will wait till morning Good Night my love and may angels watch over you & keep you from danger

Please to let me know if you get the stamp I sent by Mr Bailey's letter & tell me if I can send you any money I safe for I know you cant have much left unless you have been very saving and gone without things you needed Good Bye again

Tuesday morning Nov 13th

Good morning William how are you this morning if I could know you were alive & well I should feel much better than I now do you do not say in your letters how you are & how much I wish you would tell me how is your cough? do you try & doctor it any are you troubled with the rheumatism any tell me all about your health O William I had such a sweet dream last night could it be reality how happy I should be I dreamed you was at home & I was resting my weary head on that loved bosom which has so often been my resting place in years gone by & O my dear it seemed as though my cup of happiness was full. but Alas I awoke & found it nothing but a dream And now a little about home matters We have got the turnips all taken care of good I think we had about 55 bushels I let George B have 10 bush Wyman B have 1 & shall let your father have 3 or 4 if he wants we buried 37 bush of turnips & 6 or 7 carrots I got 3 1/2 cents for the beef I let Wyman have I get 25 cts a bush for the turnips I sold the sheep pelt for 1.25 by taking 25 cts in trade. I sold it to a peddler I got some glass sauce dishes. he carried glass ware I do not know but you will think me foolish but I could get but 9 shillings money for it William you misjudge me in regard to the money I do not think but what you want me to use all the money I want & I always feel when I am getting any thing that if you could be here you would tell me to get every thing I needed or wanted. but I do not feel like using

[MJC, November 13, 1862, continued]

money unless necessary these hard times Your Mother has been teasing me to get some front teeth put in she thinks I would look so much better but I tell her when William comes home I will see about it she thinks I am very foolish to talk so & I finally told her there was no use of her talking to me for I should never get any teeth till William got home from the war. I think you have some very mean men in your Regiment to serve a young lady in that way I seems as though I could almost shoot such a man he is certainly deserving of death I am proud to say I feel perfect confidence in my William some think it is an honor to have their men plundering & cutting all kind of mean capers with the Rebels but I think that right is right the world over Now I will give you my opinion in regard to Newton & I think I have got the right of it I think he came home while your folks were gone east & staid a few days & then left for Canada for your Mother will not say he has not been at home but she says she has not seen him I will not have a chance to write much more for I can send it by George Burdick he is going to mill & is going to carry some grain for me he is here helping Edgar measure up the grain I will try & write again soon Do write often send a letter every mail if possible for I feel so anxious to hear from you for you are in so much danger so near the enemy it almost chills my blood when I think of it Good Bye for George is waiting Write often

Mary J Chittenden

I sent you a line with Mrs Bailey & a postage stamp I will send you one stamp in this letter and would send more if I thought you would get it

Thursday [November] 13th 9 A.M.

Dear Mary

I will write a few more lines this morning and perhaps send this by to days mail which leaves at 4 P.M. it is a pleasant day though somewhat cooler than yesterday I do not feel verry well to day but hope to soon be better do not feel over anxious about me for I shall get along I trust with little trouble. to commence where I left off I said I mean to do my duty like a man or at least what I can do I enlisted in good faith hoping to do my country some good and have no thoughts of deseting but am greatly disapointed in finding things as they are but let it all go if we live to see this war settled it may be a good lesson to many a poor soldier though rather hard to learn I have heard many a soldier say they should know how to prise the blessings of home hereafter so you see I am not alone. you said we had been blessed with bountiful products the past season I agree with you it has often seemed to me that we had always been kindly dealt by for which we should be verry thankful I am verry glad you have got some good aples there wer more of the kinds you mention than I should have thought there would have been and the potatoes have yielded well I should think you would have enough the yearling will be of more profit than to have sold him he had more tallow than I expected and the hide weighed well which are as good as money you have got along with to little help much less than I expected I should much rather you would have hired enough so as not to have had to done out door work your self I know there was a great deal of work that would have to be done and I did not want you to have it to do but I know you want to to get along with as little expense as possible Edgar spoke of making a bee to get some wood drawn to the door I should rather you would hired some one to have done it for some are verry unwilling to help a soldiers family little thinking how many inconveniences their families are subject to at the best and others not caring as all they went for was the pay but do not think I mean to have this aply to al for there are many generous hearts left behind but I do not like to ride a free horse to hard I think it may best way to get George to saw the wood as it will be the sooner done and he is so near by and then have enough split & piled in the wood shed to last the winter or a part at least and with the bark that is peeled in the woods which should be drawn down to the house before the snow gets to be deep I hope you can keep comfortable this winter. you wanted to know if it best to pay Peirce at present I think it is but cannot tell the amount of our indebtedness to him nor do I know how much we owe Wright & Cole nor when or what I payed them last but think the last was suggar & eggs in April I should pay them all and I have been thinking it would be best to all that we owe or as fast as you can I have written to to pay C. Lowe and other debts but you may not have got it the debt to Lowe if I am not mistaken amounts to \$61.70 or nearly I believe the date is April 15 1861 & \$10. to Dilingham & Co with use after July 1st the note to F. Poor 8.16 with use the balance to Packard, Doctor Wilts if you think best at present 45 cts H Snider and the debt for pasturing to G. W.

[November 13, 1862, continued]

Whiting is all I owe except for the work you mentioned one reason why I want them paid is that I want no one dunning you for my debts but use your own judgment how much was we owing Mr Day I expect he is paid you done perfectly right in letting A Howe have the Barley and I am satisfied if you sold it to soon it is no more than I have often done no more to day for I can send it now I meant to have written much more but will write soon I hope this will find you all well from your true friend & husband

W F Chittenden

no war news to day but heavy firing in the direction of Warrenton good
bye

Nov 16th

a verry pleasant Sabbath day services in camp to day at 10 A.M. but did not attend not feeling able to. I do not think I am as well as I have been have been to the surgeon got some medicine and hope to be better soon he said that if we marched tomorrow as is now expected I would be sent to one of the general hospitals I have long dreaded it but it may be for the best as I may be better taken care of but the boys are all verry kind to me Nat in particular. George Bailey will be with me he will probably get his discharge soon & now Mary do not let this worry you for I think it it may be for the best but I have put it as bad as it is and hope to write more favor soon but we are in a world of afflictions and know not how soon it may come to us but I will keep up good courage & you do the same it may not be the best to write untill you hear from me again please send me two dollars & no more I \$1.00 in postage stamps have borrowed 1.00 we have not got our pay yet nor can we tell when we shall but Mary my whole heart and affections are yours untill death kiss my children for their pa the move is said to be to the Rapahannock river I hope to before long to see you all in safety I remember you all in prayer from your friend

W. F. Chittenden

[undated fragment, written at Thoroughfare Gap, Virginia, November 1862]

and they are warm and nice I thank for them and also for all other kindnesses which I have received and would I could seal it as oft before. and now Mary you wished me to tell all I can about the war there are many reports circulated each day which would be useless to mention, but when we started from Fairfax a week ago last Sunday we thought quite probably from what we heard that we should have a chance to fight before this but there is no prospect of any fighting at present judging from what we hear but we may have to march by tomorrow we can not tell much about it till the orders comes we have to shape our movements by those of the enemy we wer ordered here to defend the gap against Jacksons Army should he attempt a passage and I think we can do it effectually but in all probability he will never attempt to come through here we heard to day the rebel armies wer marching for Richmond but we cannot tell whether it is true or false also that M.clellan is superceeded by Burnside I think judging from what we can learn we shall have no fighting to do untill we march much more than we have and many well informed persons think the war will soon close some think the political which the Democratic party have gained in some of the northern States will have an important bearing towards a settlement, which I earnestly hope may be the case for I believe it is the wish of 99 out of every 100 of the privates in Federal and confederate Armies that peace may soon be restored to the whole country I have just heard a letter read which was found on the body of a rebel oficer killed at the battle of Antietam to a brother in the army whom he charged to burn it as soon as read for if his officers found it they would give him hell for pay it shows plainly the feelings of some of them and they begin to see how they have been duved it was the most profane letter I ever heard but to the point. I believe I will not write much more to night for I am quite tired and I want to send this in the morning but I shall write often and let you know all that transpires of importance I have written to you about selling the barley but if you sell any I want you to get you a good shawl do as I wish, and I am willing to abide by your judgment for I think you are trustworthy I have not forgotten the little ones though space forbids writing much kiss them and in my next I will write to them and also to Edgar good night to you all and may God bless and protect you from all evil

W. F. Chittenden

[on stationery illustrated with eagle, flag and stars, "Not A Star Must Fall."]

Harewood Hospital
Washington D.C. Nov 22, 1862

Dear Mary & friends at home

I will try to write a few lines to you again to day I am better to day and hope to get along as soon as could be expected but am verry weak I have not had my cloths on since I came here but I think if it is pleasant tomorrow and the nurses will let I shall try to go out of doors a little I feel verry anxious to get about as soon as possible for it is lonesome lying here but I want to go safe you may think it strange that I did not write more particularly about my cough and what ailed me now but I did not feel able then I have hardly any cough not enough to be noticed I think the powders you sent me helped me much the dysentery has been the hardest with me I have had it for over four weeks but have got better of it now I have had a fever for nearly a week past but have none now and I have strong hopes that I shall continue to get better my writing is verry poor as I am lying in my bed I write a little & then rest and thus manage to get along verry well now do not worry about me for I shall do the best I can for myself always remembering my dear family at home wer it not for the hopes I have of seeing you I should feel quite different but when the sickest I think of you most I miss the care which I know I should get at home but do not mean to complain and if my life is spared to come home to stay shall feel verry thankful good bye for to day W.F.C.

Sunday Nov 23d. as well or a little better than yesterday wish I could hear from home but do not blame you Nat will take care of what letters goes to the Regt and send them to me as soon as he knows where I am I have written to him I durst not get up to day for I changed my clothes this morning and have got on a verry thin cotton shirt and drawers and fear I shall take cold as the wind blows hard and cold to day and the tent is quite open to the wind but there will be floors laid in them and stoves set up within a few days which will make us much more comfortable our fare is verry plane toast bread with tea and ocasionaly beef or mutton soup for dinner I cannot drink the tea as it is all sweetened but eat my bread with cold water to drink you may think this is different fare from what I should get at home I have realized the difference I assure you but am where I can rest so much more easy that I can get along verry well there is much I could write about home but it is all useless however I hope to enjoy its blessings again through the mercy and goodness of God. there has been divine service conducted not far off to day and the singing reminded me of by gone days when sabbath and sanctuary privileges wer enjoyed there are none here to visit us with an encouraging word as yet except an old lady she appears verry good and may God reward her is the wish of many a sick soldier I believe I will not write much more to day but will try and finish tomorrow and send it Tuesday morning I hope you are all well and enjoying yourself you

Thursday Nov 20th

William

My heart is so full this morning that it seems as though it would burst unless I let some one share its sorrows & who have I but you to disclose my hearts secrets to O William I would almost willingly lay my little ones in the grave that I might have nothing to detain me on this earth for indeed my life is a burden to me I have no desire to live now you are gone You will think me hard to write thus to you but if I write at all I must write my feelings the blinding teardrops fill my eyes & I can hardly see to write I do not wish to complain & yet I would rather die than live in the way I have to I never was calculated to endure the hardships of the life I now lead & not only this but I live in constant fear of the awful news that he who is so dear to me is slain upon the battle field O my God grant to save me from this last bitter cup & I will try by thy grace to bear all other trials more submissively But William you will say it is good enough for her—she might have been more patient & kind when she had her husband with her. Yes I know I deserve this chastening & would that I could yield to it with a better spirit I have tried to be patient & hopeful but now my heart is filled with wild despair. I almost go frantic at times. I cannot compose my mind it seems one bitter dream of sorrow from which I fear I shall never awake I suppose you will want to know why I feel so to day be satisfied when I tell you that Edgar is not my William nor am I cared for as I was by him still I do not wish to complain for I know he would not feel as you would nor can I expect it I would not have you say a word for the world but

[the rest of the letter is missing]

[November 23, 1862, continued]

know it is my wishes that you take all the comfort you can as well as your duty I presume it is cold winter weather at home now no snow here yet but cold winds good night all W.F.C.

Monday 24 4 P.M. feel quite comfortable have dressed myself and been out doors some this afternoon but am so weak it is hard to walk but think I shall gain strength fast if I continue well I feel verry anxious to hear from you for which you will not blame me write all the news I have not heard how the draft went in our town yet but probably shall soon there was one debt I have forgotten to mention it was due in October but it may be settled as you have not mentioned it it was for those last fruit trees I should not pay much it would be better to let them have the trees as they are about worthless but I want to give every one his due use your own judgement about settling the debt William Wellman is a verry sick man I think it doubtful if he is ever better but if I get well enough to do it shall take as good care of him as I can it is a hard place to be sick and now dear one do not worry about me for I think I shall get well as soon as could be expected keep up good courage I will write often my hearts purest affections are yours kiss the children good bye W.F.C.

Jurman Town Virginia Nov 25 1862

Friend William

Good Eavning I have just received youre letter this eavning and was happy to hear from you and to learn that you was not eney worse I do sincerly hope that you will continue to get better William when I left you I caculated to of gon back and stayed with you but I got down to the camp and I could not get away fore it was all alive for a battle and that after noon Eason Charley and Sol left to drive team and it made it rather lonely fore me but you have been in Virginia long enough to know that we cannot do as we would like to we had a hard march of it William enclosed I send you a scrip that I received in a letter of mine and I have received one letter fore you and I had it remailed to you with the rest of letters fore the other boys if thare is eney more that comes heare I will send them to you now Will write often wont you I am pretty well and I hope theas few imperfect lines will find you on the gain I will close by bidding you a silent Harts Good by May God Bless you write soon and except my best wishes

To Wm. F Chittenden

From your friend N. S. Brown

[Nathaniel S. Brown, private, Company D]

Nov. 25

feel a little better this morning hope you are all well have just been to breakfast toast bread and coffee pleasant morning hope it will be warmer to day shall walk out again to day if nothing happens hope you will keep up good courage I wish I could see you all this morning would like have a chat with Hiram and Clyde tell them pa thinks often of them hopes they will be good boys and try and learn to read before pa comes home good morning Mary

Direct Harewood Hospital Ward M. Washington D.C.

[on stationery illustrated with "The Girl I Left Behind Me."]

Harwood Hospital Nov 27th 1862

a verry pleasant day & somewhat warmer many are enjoying their thanksgiving to day with their friends and we had a verry good dinner I have thought of you many times to day and hope and pray we shall be spared to enjoy each others society many happy years but we know not what is ahead of us but let us try to be prepared for whatever awaits us trusting that the lord will do what is for our best good I feel as well to day as for a few days past but rather tired as I have walked arod considerable it has been so pleasant to day. I have heard nothing from you since I left the reg't a week ago last Sunday Nat was to take charge of my letters if any come and send them to me as soon as he knew where I was I have written to him but he may not have got the letter if I do not hear from him soon I shall write again we have tried to be friendly and accomodating to each other and I hope he will have his health and get along well and even then he will have a hard time for there are many who try to slip out of all kinds of duty and that brings a double portion on some. there are some who I sincerely believe are well as the most of men who have to perform the various camp duties who if in the service 3 years would not stand on guard as many times possessing what some call a great faculty for shirking but some would be offended if they knew my mind and perhaps caution me to judge not that I be not judged but I done as long as I could which was my determination when I enlisted feeling willing to share the good and bat with the rest I always want to do my part when I can I hope you may enjoy yourself well to day prehaps having a pleasant visit with some of our friends I sincerely hope you are happy at home good wishes for you good night W. F. Chittenden

Friday Nov 28th Washington DC

Dear ones at home

I will prepare this poorly written & poorly composed letter so as to send it tomorrow it has been quite pleasant to day though there are many indications of a storm I feel that it will be a long time before I shall be well again my constitution is not strong enough for a soldier I feared it would be so but had hopes that I might be more rugged. but do not be discouraged for I am gaining though it be slowly. I do not know but you will blame me for telling you that if you came here you would not be allowed to take care of me but you must know my motives for I did not think it would be prudent for you to come here alone nor would it be right for you to leave home to take care of me this is the reason why I wrote as I did I remembered what you said concerning me if I was taken sick or wounded and considering all things thought it would be for the best for you not to come I had got over the worst of my sickness before I came here and can take care of myself verry well our fare is hardly sufficient to make us gain strength fast but it may be for the best in the end I will write no more to day but will finish this in the morning in time for the mail O mary how I hope you are all well and enjoy yourself as well as could be expected I feel that if we are permitted to

[November 28, 1862, continued]

again share each others society that we shall know how to live more as we ought to be more sparing of the others feelings and answer the objects of our creation the better by living in a way that will prepare us for a happy future beyond the grave kiss the children accept my hearts deepest affections for they are yours and yours alone good Night Mary

Saturday morning Nov 29th weather continues mild hope you are all well Wm Wellman is better Dennis Snyder is better also quite a number of the boys are going to try for a discharge the Hos patients are one or two from our company they are anxious to get their bounty and thus make a nice speck of it was Edgar lucky enough to get his bounty I cannot write to him this time I shall write soon good bye for the present W. F. Chittenden

Jurman Town Virginia Nov 28 1862

Friend William

Good Morning

how are you a getting along write soon and let me know I have received
oure knapsacks and I found youres rather bad of I took out the things and dride
them and they look better what do you want done with it and the rest of the boys
write soon and let me know Excuse Hast

To William from his friend N. S. Brown

P.S. Enclosed I send you two letters Yours Truely

you will have to read this before it gets Cold

[Nathaniel S. Brown, private, Company D]