

Camp near Fairfax C.H., Va.
October 25

#2

Dearest Melissa,

After four days delay the mail came in last night bringing your two letters of the 12th and 15th and 17th inst. You can hardly conceive of the pleasure it gave me to hear from you and the children once more, though I was saddened to hear that you were too unwell to attend church and too weak to finish the one letter at once. I really hope that you are well now as you made no mention of illness in your last letter. Take care of yourself--do not expose yourself to cold or abuse yourself by work. Put yourself entirely at rest on account of any hardship and exposure I am undergoing in Army. I am really quite comfortably situated. You can hardly understand the multiple uses and how comfortable and convenient a small room may be.

Now here we are, Dr. Day and myself, occupying a tent 9' square which contains our bed, a good and comfortable one, a table for writing purposes and to hold our books and papers, a good fire arrangement in the shape of a brick oven or stove which leads back under the edge of the tent and then turns upward in the shape of a chimney. The brick was once a component of some rebels mansion--a large and fine one in its day, but our boys have confiscated the whole and there is not now one brick left upon another now. It was really surprising to see the assiduity and industry of the boys when they went into that house. We were a summer encampment and in two days there was a good brick chimney to the hospital and to nearly all the large tents. In approaching we look like a village.

*Prop. of Pav. Ctr. Antigua Hosp
Pavilion 57 ft.*

I think I have written you a description of the camp. If not I will say that in our camp there are two kinds of tents - what is called a "wall tent" for officers--and the "fly tent" for the men. The Wall Tents are really small cloth houses - 9 feet square. The fly tent is a sufficient number of pieces of canvas cloth buttoned together and drawn tightly over a pole raised on crotches--the ends fastened to the ground several feet apart--in shape like the roof of a house--the gables composed of pieces of cloth attached loosely which serves as the door. The bottom is covered with cedar boughs or straw or hay and four men sleep in one of these.

There are in all maybe 240 of these tents--arranged in regular streets which are well ditched and clean, separated by a broad street just back of these are the "line officers tents"--20 in number. These are wall tents - one being devoted to a Captain and 2 Lts. in one. Still back and separated by another broad street are the Field and Staff Officers tents - 8 - and then back of these the Hospital - and large tents containing the Quartermasters and commissaries store - and back of these still are the wagons, mules and horses.