

LETTERS OF 1862-3

I

Washington, Monday forenoon, Dec. 29, 1862. DEAR, DEAR MOTHER--Friday the 19th inst. I succeeded in reaching the camp of the 51st New York, and found George[1] alive and well. In order to make sure that you would get the good news, I sent back by messenger to Washington a telegraphic dispatch (I dare say you did not get it for some time) as well as a letter--and the same to Hannah[2] at Burlington. I have staid in camp with George ever since, till yesterday, when I came back to Washington, about the 24th. George got Jeff's[3] letter of the 20th. Mother, how much you must have suffered, all that week, till George's letter came--and all the rest must too. As to me, I know I put in about three days of the greatest suffering I ever experienced in my life. I wrote to Jeff how I had my pocket picked in a jam and hurry, changing cars, at Philadelphia--so that I landed here without a dime. The next two days I spent hunting through the hospitals, walking day and night, unable to ride, trying to get information--trying to get access to big people, etc.--I could not get the least clue to anything. Odell would not see me at all. But Thursday afternoon, I lit on a way to get down on the Government boat that runs to Aquia creek, and so by railroad to the neighborhood of Falmouth, opposite Fredericksburg--so by degrees I worked my way to Ferrero's[4] brigade, which I found Friday afternoon without much trouble after I got in camp. When I found dear brother George, and found that he was alive and well, O

you may imagine how trifling all my little cares and difficulties seemed--they vanished into nothing. And now that I have lived for eight or nine days amid such scenes as the camps furnish, and had a practical part in it all, and realize the way that hundreds of thousands of good men are now living, and have had to live for a year or more, not only without any of the comforts, but with death and sickness and hard marching and hard fighting (and no success at that) for their continual experience--really nothing we call trouble seems worth talking about. One of the first things that met my eyes in camp was a heap of feet, arms, legs, etc., under a tree in front of a hospital, the Lacy house.

George is very well in health, has a good appetite--I think he is at times more wearied out and homesick than he shows, but stands it upon the whole very well. Every one of the soldiers, to a man, wants to get home.

I suppose Jeff got quite a long letter I wrote, from camp, about a week ago. I told you that George had been promoted to captain--his commission arrived while I was there. When you write, address, Capt. George W. Whitman, Co. K., 51st New York Volunteers, Ferrero's brigade, near Falmouth, Va. Jeff must write oftener, and put in a few lines from mother, even if it is only two lines--then in the next letter a few lines from Mat, and so on. You have no idea how letters from home cheer one up in camp, and dissipate homesickness.

While I was there George still lived in Capt. Francis's tent--there were five of us altogether, to eat, sleep, write, etc., in a space twelve feet

square, but we got along very well--the weather all along was very fine--and would have got along to perfection, but Capt. Francis is not a man I could like much--I had very little to say to him. George is about building a place, half hut and half tent, for himself, (he is probably about it this very day,) and then he will be better off, I think. Every captain has a tent, in which he lives, transacts company business, etc., has a cook, (or a man of all work,) and in the same tent mess and sleep his lieutenants, and perhaps the first sergeant. They have a kind of fire-place--and the cook's fire is outside on the open ground. George had very good times while Francis was away--the cook, a young disabled soldier, Tom, is an excellent fellow and a first-rate cook, and the second lieutenant, Pooley, is a tip-top young Pennsylvanian. Tom thinks all the world of George; when he heard he was wounded, on the day of the battle, he left everything, got across the river, and went hunting for George through the field, through thick and thin. I wrote to Jeff that George was wounded by a shell, a gash in the cheek--you could stick a splint through into the mouth, but it has healed up without difficulty already. Everything is uncertain about the army, whether it moves or stays where it is. There are no furloughs granted at present. I will stay here for the present, at any rate long enough to see if I can get any employment at anything, and shall write what luck I have. Of course I am unsettled at present. Dear mother; my love.

WALT.

If Jeff or any writes, address me, care of Major Hapgood, paymaster, U. S.

A. Army, Washington, D. C. I send my love to dear sister Mat,[5] and little Sis[6]--and to Andrew[7] and all my brothers. O Mat, how lucky it was you did not come--together, we could never have got down to see George.

II

Washington, Friday morning, Jan. 2, 1863. DEAR SISTER[8]--You have heard of my fortunes and misfortunes of course, (through my letters to mother and Jeff,) since I left home that Tuesday afternoon. But I thought I would write a few lines to you, as it is a comfort to write home, even if I have nothing particular to say. Well, dear sister, I hope you are well and hearty, and that little Sis[9] keeps as well as she always had, when I left home so far. Dear little plague, how I would like to have her with me, for one day; I can fancy I see her, and hear her talk. Jeff must have got a note from me about a letter I have written to the Eagle--you may be sure you will get letters enough from me, for I have little else to do at present. Since I laid my eyes on dear brother George, and saw him alive and well--and since I have spent a week in camp, down there opposite Fredericksburg, and seen what well men, and sick men, and mangled men endure--it seems to me I can be satisfied and happy henceforward if I can get one meal a day, and know that mother and all are in good health, and especially be with you again, and have some little steady paying occupation in N. Y. or Brooklyn.

I am writing this in the office of Major Hapgood, way up in the top of a big high house, corner of 15th and F street; there is a splendid view, away down south of the Potomac river, and across to the Georgetown side, and the grounds and houses of Washington spread out beneath my high point of view. The weather is perfect--I have had that in my favor ever since leaving home--yesterday and to-day it is bright, and plenty warm enough. The poor soldiers are continually coming in from the hospitals, etc., to get their pay--some of them waiting for it to go home. They climb up here, quite exhausted, and then find it is no good, for there is no money to pay them; there are two or three paymasters' desks in this room, and the scenes of disappointment are quite affecting. Here they wait in Washington, perhaps week after week, wretched and heart-sick--this is the greatest place of delays and puttings off, and no finding the clue to anything. This building is the paymaster-general's quarters, and the crowds on the walk and corner of poor, sick, pale, tattered soldiers are awful--many of them day after day disappointed and tired out. Well, Mat, I will suspend my letter for the present, and go through the city--I have a couple of poor fellows in the hospital to visit also.

WALT.

Saturday evening, Jan. 3 [1863.] I write this in the place where I have my lodging-room, 394 L street, 4th door above 14th street. A friend of mine, William D. O'Connor,[10] has two apartments on the 3rd floor, very ordinarily furnished, for which he pays the extraordinary price of \$25 a month. I have a werry little bedroom on the 2nd floor. Mr. and Mrs.

O'Connor and their little girl have all gone out "down town" for an hour or two, to make some Saturday evening purchases, and I am left in possession of the premises--so I sit by the fire, and scribble more of my letter. I have not heard anything from dear brother George since I left the camp last Sunday morning, 28th Dec. I wrote to him on Tuesday last. I wish to get to him the two blue woolen shirts Jeff sent, as they would come very acceptable to him--and will try to do it yet. I think of sending them by mail, if the postage is not more than \$1.

Yesterday I went out to the Campbell hospital to see a couple of Brooklyn boys, of the 51st. They knew I was in Washington, and sent me a note, to come and see them. O my dear sister, how your heart would ache to go through the rows of wounded young men, as I did--and stopt to speak a comforting word to them. There were about 100 in one long room, just a long shed neatly whitewashed inside. One young man was very much prostrated, and groaning with pain. I stopt and tried to comfort him. He was very sick. I found he had not had any medical attention since he was brought there; among so many he had been overlooked; so I sent for the doctor, and he made an examination of him. The doctor behaved very well--seemed to be anxious to do right--said that the young man would recover; he had been brought pretty low with diarrhoea, and now had bronchitis, but not so serious as to be dangerous. I talked to him some time--he seemed to have entirely given up, and lost heart--he had not a cent of money--not a friend or acquaintance. I wrote a letter from him to his sister--his name is John A. Holmes, Campello, Plymouth county, Mass. I gave him a little change I had--he said he would like to buy a drink of

milk when the woman came through with milk. Trifling as this was, he was overcome and began to cry. Then there were many, many others. I mention the one, as a specimen. My Brooklyn boys were John Lowery, shot at Fredericksburg, and lost his left forearm, and Amos H. Vliet--Jeff knows the latter--he has his feet frozen, and is doing well. The 100 are in a ward, (6), and there are, I should think, eight or ten or twelve such wards in the Campbell hospital--indeed a real village. Then there are 38 more hospitals here in Washington, some of them much larger.

Sunday forenoon, Jan. 4, 1863. Mat, I hope and trust dear mother and all are well, and everything goes on good home. The envelope I send, Jeff or any of you can keep for direction, or use it when wanted to write to me. As near as I can tell, the army at Falmouth remains the same. Dear sister, good-bye.

WALT.

I send my love to Andrew and Jesse and Eddy and all. What distressing news this is of the loss of the Monitor.[11]

III

Washington, Friday noon, February 6, 1863. DEAREST MOTHER--Jeff must have got a letter from me yesterday, containing George's last letter. The news of your sickness and the strange silence of Han made me feel somewhat

gloomy. I wrote to George yesterday, conveying the news--and to-day I have sent him another letter, with much more comforting news, for I was so glad to hear from Han (her letter enclosed in Jeff's received this morning) that I wrote him right away, and sent Han's letter.

Mother, I am quite in hopes George will get a furlough--may-be my expectations are unfounded, but I almost count on it. I am so glad this morning to hear you are no worse, but changed for the better--and dear sister Mat too, and Sissy, I am so glad to think they are recovering. Jeff's enclosure of \$10 through Mr. Lane, from the young engineers for the soldiers in hospitals, the most needy cases, came safe of course--I shall acknowledge it to Mr. Lane to-morrow. Mother, I have written so much about hospitals that I will not write any in this letter.

We have had bad weather enough here lately to most make up for the delightful weather we had for five weeks after I came from home.

Mother, I do hope you will be careful, and not get any relapse--and hope you will go on improving. Do you then think of getting new apartments, after the 1st of May? I suppose Jeff has settled about the lot--it seems to me first rate as an investment--the kind of house to build is quite a consideration (if any house). I should build a regular Irish shanty myself--two rooms, and an end shed. I think that's luxury enough, since I have been down in the army.

Well, mother, I believe I will not fill out the sheet this time, as I want

to go down without delay to the P. O. and send George's letter and this one. Good-bye, dear mother.

WALT.

IV

Washington, Monday morning, Feb. 9, 1863. DEAREST MOTHER--I write to enclose you a letter I have just received from George. His corps (Ninth Army) and perhaps one other are to move either to Fort Monroe, or somewhere down there--some say Suffolk. I am in hopes that when they get there, George will still have a sight for a furlough. I have written him I should think four letters since the 27th Jan. (and have sent him Han's letter to you in one). I hope he has got most of them before this. I am afraid the \$3 change I sent him is gone. He will write to you as soon as he gets settled wherever they go to. I don't know as it makes any difference in respect to danger, or fighting, from this move. One reason they have to move from the Rappahannock, up there, is that wood is all gone for miles, forage is scarce to get, and I don't know as there is any need of their staying there, for any purpose. In some haste, dearest mother, as I am off to visit for an hour or so, one of my hospitals. Your affectionate son,

WALT.

V

Office Major Hapgood, cor. 15th & F sts, Washington, Feb. 13, 1863. DEAR BROTHER[12]--Nothing new; still I thought I would write you a line this morning. The \$4, namely \$2 from Theo A. Drake and \$2 from John D. Martin, enclosed in your letter of the 10th, came safe. They too will please accept the grateful thanks of several poor fellows, in hospital here.

The letter of introduction to Mr. Webster, chief clerk, State department, will be very acceptable. If convenient, I should like Mr. Lane to send it on immediately. I do not so much look for an appointment from Mr. Seward as his backing me from the State of New York. I have seen Preston King this morning for the second time (it is very amusing to hunt for an office--so the thing seems to me just now, even if one don't get it). I have seen Charles Sumner three times--he says ev'ry thing here moves as part of a great machine, and that I must consign myself to the fate of the rest--still [in] an interview I had with him yesterday he talked and acted as though he had life in him, and would exert himself to any reasonable extent for me to get something. Meantime I make about enough to pay my expenses by hacking on the press here, and copying in the paymasters' offices, a couple of hours a day. One thing is favorable here, namely, pay for whatever one does is at a high rate. I have not yet presented my letters to either Seward or Chase--I thought I would get my forces all in a body, and make one concentrated dash, if possible with the personal introduction and presence of some big bug. I like fat old Preston King

very much--he is fat as a hoghead, with great hanging chops. The first thing he said to me the other day in the parlor chambers of the Senate, when I sent in for him and he came out, was, "Why, how can I do this thing, or any thing for you--how do I know but you are a Secessionist? You look for all the world like an old Southern planter--a regular Carolina or Virginia planter." I treated him with just as much hauteur as he did me with bluntness--this was the first time--it afterward proved that Charles Sumner had not prepared the way for me, as I supposed, or rather not so strongly as I supposed, and Mr. King had even forgotten it--so I was an entire stranger. But the same day C. S. talked further with Mr. King in the Senate, and the second interview I had with the latter (this forenoon) he has given me a sort of general letter, endorsing me from New York--one envelope is addressed to Secretary Chase, and another to Gen. Meigs, head Quartermaster's dept. Meantime, I am getting better and better acquainted with office-hunting wisdom and Washington peculiarities generally. I spent several hours in the Capitol the other day. The incredible gorgeousness of some of the rooms, (interior decorations, etc.)--rooms used perhaps but for merely three or four committee meetings in the course of the whole year--is beyond one's flightiest dreams. Costly frescoes of the style of Taylor's saloon in Broadway, only really the best and choicest of their sort, done by imported French and Italian artists, are the prevailing sorts. (Imagine the work you see on the fine china vases in Tiffany's, the paintings of Cupids and goddesses, etc., spread recklessly over the arched ceiling and broad panels of a big room--the whole floor underneath paved with tessellated pavement, which is a sort of cross between marble and china, with little figures, drab, blue, cream

color, etc.) These things, with heavy elaborately wrought balustrades, columns, and steps--all of the most beautiful marbles I ever saw, some white as milk, other of all colors, green, spotted, lined, or of our old chocolate color--all these marbles used as freely as if they were common blue flags--with rich door-frames and window-casings of bronze and gold--heavy chandeliers and mantles, and clocks in every room--and indeed by far the richest and gayest, and most un-American and inappropriate ornamenting and finest interior workmanship I ever conceived possible, spread in profusion through scores, hundreds, (and almost thousands) of rooms--such are what I find, or rather would find to interest me, if I devoted time to it. But a few of the rooms are enough for me--the style is without grandeur, and without simplicity. These days, the state our country is in, and especially filled as I am from top to toe of late with scenes and thoughts of the hospitals, (America seems to me now, though only in her youth, but brought already here, feeble, bandaged, and bloody in hospital)--these days I say, Jeff, all the poppy-show goddesses, and all the pretty blue and gold in which the interior Capitol is got up, seem to me out of place beyond anything I could tell--and I get away from it as quick as I can when that kind of thought comes over me. I suppose it is to be described throughout--those interiors--as all of them got up in the French style--well, enough for a New York.

VI

Washington, March 31, 1863. DEAREST MOTHER--I have not heard from

George, except a note he wrote me a couple of days after he got back from his furlough. I think it likely the regiment has gone with its corps to the West, the Kentucky or Tennessee region--Burnside at last accounts was in Cincinnati. Well, it will be a change for George, if he is out there. I sent a long letter to Han last Saturday--enclosed George's note to me. Mother, when you or Jeff writes again, tell me if my papers and MSS. are all right; I should be very sorry indeed if they got scattered, or used up or anything--especially the copy of "Leaves of Grass" covered in blue paper,[13] and the little MS. book "Drum-Taps," and the MS. tied up in the square, spotted (stone-paper) loose covers--I want them all carefully kept.

Mother, it is quite a snow-storm here this morning--the ground is an inch and a half deep with snow--and it is snowing and drizzling--but I feel very independent in my stout army-boots; I go anywhere. I have felt quite well of my deafness and cold in my head for four days or so, but it is back again bad as ever this morning.

Dear mother, I wrote the above in my room--I have now come down to Major Hapgood's office. I do not find anything from home, and no particular news in the paper this morning--no news about the Ninth Army Corps, or where they are. I find a good letter from one of my New York boys, (Fifth avenue) a young fellow named Hugo Fritsch, son of the Austrian Consul-General--he writes me a long, first-rate letter this morning. He too speaks about the Opera--like Jeff he goes there a good deal--says that Medori, the soprano, as Norma made the greatest success ever seen--says

that the whole company there now, the singers, are very fine. All this I write for Jeff and Mat--I hope they will go once in a while when it is convenient.

It is a most disagreeable day here, mother, walking poshy and a rain and drizzle.

There is nothing new with me, no particular sight for an office that I can count on. But I can make enough with the papers, for the present necessities. I hear that the paymaster, Major Yard, that pays the 51st, has gone on West, I suppose to Cincinnati, or wherever the brigade has gone--of course to pay up--he pays up to 1st of March--all the Army is going to be paid up to 1st March everywhere.

Mother, I hope you are well and hearty as usual. I am so glad you are none of you going to move. I would like to have the pleasure of Miss Mannahatta Whitman's company, the first fine forenoon, if it were possible; I think we might have first-rate times, for one day at any rate. I hope she will not forget her Uncle Walt. I received a note from Probasco, requesting me not to put his name in my next letter. I appreciate his motive, and wish to please him always--but in this matter I shall do what I think appropriate. Mother, I see some very interesting persons here--a young master's mate, who was on the Hatteras, when surprised and broadsided by the Alabama, Capt Semmes--he gave me a very good acc't of it all--then Capt. Mullen, U. S. Army, (engineer) who has been six years out in the Rocky mts. making a Gov't road 650 miles from

Ft. Benton to Walla Walla--very, very interesting to know such men intimately, and talk freely with them. Dearest mother, I shall have great yarns to spin, when I come home. I am not a bit homesick, yet I should like to see you and Mat very, very much--one thinks of the women when he is away.

WALT.

Shall send the shirts in a day or two.

VII

Washington, Wednesday forenoon, April 15, 1863. DEAREST MOTHER--Jeff's letter of the 11th, acknowledging the books, also the one about five days previous, containing the \$10 from Van Anden, came safe. Jeff's letters are always first rate and welcome--the good long one with so much about home, and containing Han's and George's, was especially so. It is a great pleasure, though sometimes a melancholy one, to hear from Han, under her own hand. I have writ to George--I wrote last Friday. I directed the letter to "Lexington or elsewhere, Kentucky"--as I saw in a letter in a Cincinnati paper that Gen. Ferrero was appointed provost marshal at Lexington. The 51st is down there somewhere, and I guess it is about as well off there as anywhere. There is much said about their closing up the regimental companies--that is, where there are ten companies of 40 men each, closing them up to five companies, of 80 men each. It is said the

Government purposes something of this kind. It will throw a good many captains and lieutenants out. I suppose you know that Le Gendre is now colonel of the 51st--it's a pity if we haven't Americans enough to put over our old war regiments. (I think less and less of foreigners, in this war. What I see, especially in the hospitals, convinces me that there is no other stock, for emergencies, but native American--no other name by which we can be saved.)

Mother, I feel quite bad about Andrew--I am so in hopes to hear that he has recovered--I think about him every day. He must not get fretting and disheartened--that is really the worst feature of any sickness. Diseases of the throat and bronchia are the result always of bad state of the stomach, blood, etc. (they never come from the throat itself). The throat and the bronchia are lined, like the stomach and other interior organs, with a fine lining like silk or crape, and when all this gets ulcerated or inflamed or what-not (it is Dr. Sammis's mucous membrane, you know) it is bad, and most distressing. Medicine is really of no great account, except just to pacify a person. This lining I speak of is full of little blood vessels, and the way to make a real cure is by gentle and steady means to recuperate the whole system; this will tell upon the blood, upon the blood vessels, and so finally and effectually upon all this coating I speak of that lines the throat, etc. But as it is a long time before this vital lining membrane (very important) is injured, so it is a long time before it can be made all healthy and right again; but Andrew is young and strong enough and [has a] good constitution for basis--and of course by

regular diet, care, (and nary whiskey under any circumstances) I am sure he would not only get over that trouble, but be as well and strong as he ever was in his life. Mother, you tell him I sent him my love, and Nancy[14] the same, and the dear little boys the same--the next time you or Mat goes down there you take this and show him.

Mat, I am quite glad to hear that you are not hurried and fretted with work from New York this spring--I am sure I should think Sis and housekeeping, etc., would be enough to attend to. I was real amused with Sis's remarks, and all that was in the letter about her. You must none of you notice her smartness, nor criticisms, before her, nor encourage her to spread herself nor be critical, as it is not good to encourage a child to be too sharp--and I hope Sissy is going to be a splendid specimen of good animal health. For the few years to come I should think more of that than anything--that is the foundation of all (righteousness included); as to her mental vivacity and growth, they are plenty enough of themselves, and will get along quite fast enough of themselves, plenty fast enough--don't stimulate them at all. Dear little creature, how I should like to see her this minute. Jeff must not make his lessons to her in music anyways strong or frequent on any account--two lessons a week, of ten minutes each, is enough--but then I dare say Jeff will think of all these things, just the same as I am saying. Jeff writes he wonders if I am as well and hearty, and I suppose he means as much of a beauty as ever, whether I look the same. Well, not only as much but more so--I believe I weigh about 200, and as to my face, (so scarlet,) and my beard and neck, they are terrible to behold. I fancy the reason I am able to do some good in the hospitals

among the poor languishing and wounded boys, is, that I am so large and well--indeed like a great wild buffalo, with much hair. Many of the soldiers are from the West, and far North, and they take to a man that has not the bleached shiny and shaved cut of the cities and the East. I spent three to four hours yesterday in Armory hospital. One of my particular boys there was dying--pneumonia--he wanted me to stop with him awhile; he could not articulate--but the look of his eyes, and the holding on of his hand was deeply affecting. His case is a relapse--eight days ago he had recovered, was up, was perhaps a little careless--at any rate took cold, was taken down again and has sank rapidly. He has no friends or relatives here. Yesterday he labored and panted so for breath, it was terrible. He is a young man from New England, from the country. I expected to see his cot vacated this afternoon or evening, as I shall go down then. Mother, if you or Mat was here a couple of days, you would cry your eyes out. I find I have to restrain myself and keep my composure--I succeed pretty well. Good-bye, dearest mother.

WALT.

Jeff, Capt. Muller remains here yet for some time. He is bringing out his report. I shall try to send you a copy. Give my best respects to Dr. Ruggles.

Mother, my last letter home was a week ago to-day--we are having a dark rainy day here--it is now half-past 3. I have been in my room all day so far--shall have dinner in half an hour, and then down to Armory.

VIII

Washington, April 28, 1863. DEAREST MOTHER--A letter from Jeff came this morning. Mother, I was sorry to hear you had a return of your rheumatism--I do hope you will favor yourself more, it depends so much on that--and rheumatism is so obstinate, when it gets hold of one. Mother, you received a letter from me sent last Wednesday, 22nd, of course, with a small quantity of shinplasters. Next time you or Jeff writes, I wish you would tell me whether the letters come pretty regularly, the next morning after I write them--this now ought to reach you Wednesday forenoon, April 29th. Mother, did a Mr. Howell call on you? He was here last week to see about his boy, died a long while ago in hospital in Yorktown. He works in the Navy Yard--knows Andrew. You will see about him (the boy) in a letter I sent yesterday to the Eagle--it ought to appear to-day or to-morrow.

Jeff, I wish you would take 10¢ I send in this letter and get me ten copies of the Eagle with it in--put in five more of my pictures (the big ones in last edition "Leaves"), and a couple of the photographs carte visites (the smaller ones), and send me to the same direction as before; it came very well. I will send an Eagle to Han and George. The stamps and 10¢ are for Jeff for the papers and postage.

I have written to Han, and sent her George's last two letters from Kentucky; one I got last week from Mount Sterling. I write to George and

send him papers. Sam Beatty is here in Washington again. I saw him, and he said he would write to George. Mother, I have not got any new clothes yet, but shall very soon I hope. People are more rough and free and easy drest than your way. Then it is dusty or muddy most of the time here. Mother dear, I hope you have comfortable times--at least as comfortable as the law allows. I am so glad you are not going to have the trouble of moving this 1st of May. How are the Browns? Tell Will I should like to see him first rate--if he was here attached to the suite of some big officer, or something of that kind, he would have a good time and do well. I see lots of young fellows not half as capable and trustworthy as he, coming and going in Washington, in such positions. The big generals and head men all through the armies, and provosts etc., like to have a squad of such smart, nimble young men around them. Give my respects to Mr. and Mrs. Brown.

Tell Jeff I am going to write to Mr. Lane either to-day or to-morrow. Jeff asks me if I go to hospitals as much as ever. If my letters home don't show it, you don't get 'em. I feel sorry sometimes after I have sent them, I have said so much about hospitals, and so mournful. O mother, the young man in Armory-square, Dennis Barrett, in the 169th N. Y., I mentioned before, is probably going to get up after all; he is like one saved from the grave. Saturday last I saw him and talked with him and gave him something to eat, and he was much better--it is the most unexpected recovery I have yet seen. Mother, I see Jeff says in the letter you don't hear from me very often--I will write oftener, especially to Jeff. Dear brother, I hope you are getting along good, and in good spirits; you must not mind the failure of the sewer bills, etc. It don't seem to me it makes

so much difference about worldly successes (beyond just enough to eat and drink and shelter, in the moderate limits) any more, since the last four months of my life especially, and that merely to live, and have one fair meal a day, is enough--but then you have a family, and that makes a difference.

Matty, I send you my best love, dear sister--how I wish I could be with you one or two good days. Mat, do you remember the good time we had that awful stormy night we went to the Opera, New York, and had the front seat, and heard the handsome-mouthed Guerrabella? and had the good oyster supper at Fulton market--("pewter them ales.") O Mat, I hope and trust we shall have such times again.

Tell Andrew he must remember what I wrote about the throat, etc. I am sure he will get all right before long, and recover his voice. Give him my love--and tell Mannahatta her Uncle Walt is living now among the sick soldiers. Jeff, look out for the Eagles, and send the portraits. Dearest mother, I must bid you and all for the present good-bye.

WALT.

IX

Washington, Tuesday, May 5, 1863. DEAREST MOTHER--Your letter came safe, and was very welcome, and always will be. Mother, I am sorry about your

rheumatism--if it still continues I think it would be well for me to write a line to Mrs. Piercy, and get Jeff to stop with it, so that you could take the baths again, as I am sure they are very beneficial. Dear mother, you write me, or Jeff must in the next letter, how you are getting along, whether it is any better or worse--I want to know. Mother, about George's fund in the bank; I hope by all means you can scratch along so as to leave \$250 there--I am so anxious that our family should have a little ranch, even if it is the meanest kind, off somewhere that you can call your own, and that would do for Ed etc.--it might be a real dependence, and comfort--and may-be for George as much as any one. I mean to come home one of these days, and get the acre or half acre somewhere out in some by-place on Long Island, and build it--you see if I don't. About Hannah, dear mother, I hardly know what advice to give you--from what I know at present I can't tell what course to pursue. I want Han to come home, from the bottom of my heart. Then there are other thoughts and considerations that come up. Dear mother, I cannot advise, but shall acquiesce in anything that is settled upon, and try to help.

The condition of things here in the hospitals is getting pretty bad--the wounded from the battles around Fredericksburg are coming up in large numbers. It is very sad to see them. I have written to Mr. Lane, asking him to get his friends to forward me what they think proper--but somehow I feel delicate about sending such requests, after all.

I have almost made up my mind to do what I can personally, and not seek assistance from others.

Dear mother, I have not received any letter from George. I write to him and send papers to Winchester. Mother, while I have been writing this a very large number of Southern prisoners, I should think 1,000 at least, has past up Pennsylvania avenue, under a strong guard. I went out in the street, close to them. Poor fellows, many of them mere lads--it brought the tears; they seemed our flesh and blood too, some wounded, all miserable in clothing, all in dirt and tatters--many of them fine young men. Mother, I cannot tell you how I feel to see those prisoners marched.

X

Washington, Wednesday forenoon, May 13, 1863. DEAREST MOTHER--I am late with my letter this week--my poor, poor boys occupy my time very much--I go every day, and sometimes nights. I believe I mentioned a young man in Ward F, Armory-square, with a bad wound in the leg, very agonizing--had to have it propt up, and an attendant all the while dripping water on night and day. I was in hopes at one time he would get through with it, but a few days ago he took a sudden bad turn and died about 3 o'clock the same afternoon--it was horrible. He was of good family--handsome, intelligent man, about 26, married; his name was John Elliot, of Cumberland Valley, Bedford co., Penn.--belonged to 2nd Pennsylvania Cavalry. I felt very bad about it. I have wrote to his father--have not received any answer yet; no friend nor any of his folks was here, and have not been here nor sent--probably don't know of it at all. The surgeons put off amputating

the leg, he was so exhausted, but at last it was imperatively necessary to amputate. Mother, I am shocked to tell you that he never came alive off the amputating table--he died under the operation--it was what I had dreaded and anticipated. Poor young man, he suffered much, very, very much, for many days, and bore it so patiently--so that it was a release to him. Mother, such things are awful--not a soul here he knew or cared about, except me--yet the surgeons and nurses were good to him. I think all was done for him that could be--there was no help but take off the leg; he was under chloroform--they tried their best to bring him to--three long hours were spent, a strong smelling bottle held under his nostrils, with other means, three hours. Mother, how contemptible all the usual little worldly prides and vanities, and striving after appearances, seems in the midst of such scenes as these--such tragedies of soul and body. To see such things and not be able to help them is awful--I feel almost ashamed of being so well and whole.

Dear mother, I have not heard from George himself; but I got a letter from Fred McReady, a young Brooklyn man in 51st--he is intimate with George, said he was well and hearty. I got the letter about five days ago. I wrote to George four days since, directed to Winchester, Kentucky. I got a letter from a friend in Nashville, Tenn., yesterday--he told me the 9th Army Corps was ordered to move to Murfreesboro, Tenn. I don't know whether this is so or not. I send papers to George almost every day. So far I think it was fortunate the 51st was moved West, and I hope it will continue so. Mother, it is all a lottery, this war; no one knows what will come up next.

Mother, I received Jeff's letter of May 9th--it was welcome, as all Jeff's letters are, and all others from home. Jeff says you do not hear from me at home but seldom. Mother, I write once a week to you regular; but I will write soon to Jeff a good long letter--I have wanted to for some time, but have been much occupied. Dear brother, I wish you to say to Probasco and all the other young men on the Works, I send them my love and best thanks--never anything came more acceptable than the little fund they forwarded me the last week through Mr. Lane. Our wounded from Hooker's battles are worse wounded and more of them than any battle of the war, and indeed any, I may say, of modern times--besides, the weather has been very hot here, very bad for new wounds. Yet as Jeff writes so downhearted I must tell him the Rebellion has lost worse and more than we have. The more I find out about it, the more I think they, the Confederates, have received an irreparable harm and loss in Virginia--I should not be surprised to see them (either voluntarily or by force) leaving Virginia before many weeks; I don't see how on earth they can stay there. I think Hooker is already reaching after them again--I myself do not give up Hooker yet. Dear mother, I should like to hear from Han, poor Han. I send my best love to sister Mat and all. Good-bye, dearest mother.

WALT.

XI

Washington, Tuesday forenoon, May 19, 1863. DEAREST MOTHER--... I sent George a letter yesterday--have not got any letter myself from Georgy, but have sent him quite a good many and papers. Mother, what a tramp the 51st has had--they only need now to go to California, and they will finish the job complete. O mother, how welcome the shirts were--I was putting off and putting off, to get some new ones. I could not find any one to do them as I want them, and it would have cost such a price--and so my old ones had got to be. When they came back from the wash I had to laugh; they were a lot of rags, held together with starch. I have a very nice old black aunty for a washwoman, but she bears down pretty hard, I guess, when she irons them, and they showed something like the poor old city of Fredericksburg does, since Burnside bombarded it. Well, mother, when the bundle came, I was so glad--and the coats too, worn as they are, they come in very handy--and the cake, dear mother, I am almost like the boy that put it under his pillow and woke up in the night and eat some. I carried a good chunk to a young man wounded I think a good deal of, and it did him so much good--it is dry, but all the better, as he eat it with tea and it relished. I eat a piece with him, and dranked some tea out of his cup, as I sat by the side of his cot. Mother, I have neglected, I think, what I ought to have told you two or three weeks ago, that is that I have discarded my old clothes--somewhat because they were too thick, and more still because they were worse gone in than any I have ever yet wore, I think, in my life, especially the trowsers. Wearing my big boots had caused the inside of the legs just above the knee to wear two beautiful round holes right through cloth and partly through the lining, producing a novel effect, which was not necessary, as I produce a sufficient

sensation without--then they were desperately faded. I have a nice plain suit of a dark wine color; looks very well, and feels good--single breasted sack coat with breast pockets, etc., and vest and pants same as what I always wear (pants pretty full), so upon the whole all looks unusually good for me. My hat is very good yet, boots ditto; have a new necktie, nice shirts--you can imagine I cut quite a swell. I have not trimmed my beard since I left home, but it is not grown much longer, only perhaps a little bushier. I keep about as stout as ever, and the past five or six days I have felt wonderful well, indeed never did I feel better. About ten or twelve days ago, we had a short spell of very warm weather here, but for about six days now it has been delightful, just warm enough. I generally go to the hospitals from 12 to 4--and then again from 6 to 9; some days I only go in the middle of the day or evening, not both--and then when I feel somewhat oppressed, I skip over a day, or make perhaps a light call only, as I have several cautions from the doctors, who tell me that one must beware of continuing too steady and long in the air and influences of the hospitals. I find the caution a wise one.

Mother, you or Jeff must write me what Andrew does about going to North Carolina. I should think it might have a beneficial effect upon his throat. I wrote Jeff quite a long letter Sunday. Jeff must write to me whenever he can, I like dearly to have them--and whenever you feel like it you too, dear mother. Tell Sis her uncle Walt will come back one of these days from the sick soldiers and take her out on Fort Greene again. Mother, I received a letter yesterday from John Elliot's father, in Bedford co., Pennsylvania (the young man I told you about, who died under the

operation). It was very sad; it was the first he knew about it. I don't know whether I told you of Dennis Barrett, pneumonia three weeks since, had got well enough to be sent home. Dearest Mother, I hope you will take things as easy as possible and try to keep a good heart. Matty, my dear sister, I have to inform you that I was treated to a splendid dish of ice-cream Sunday night; I wished you was with me to have another. I send you my love, dear sister. Mother, I hope by all means it will be possible to keep the money whole to get some ranch next spring, if not before; I mean to come home and build it. Good-bye for the present, dear mother.

WALT.

XII

Washington, Tuesday forenoon, May 26, 1863. DEAREST MOTHER--I got a long letter from George, dated near Lancaster, Kentucky, May 15th; he seems to be well and in good spirits--says he gets some letters from me and papers too. At the time he wrote the 51st was doing provost duty at Lancaster, but would not probably remain so very long--seem to be moving towards southeast Kentucky--had a good camp, and good times generally. Le Gendre is colonel--Gen. Ferrero has left the service--Col. Potter (now brig.-gen.) is in Cincinnati--Capt. Sims, etc., are all well. George describes Kentucky as a very fine country--says the people are about half and half, Secesh and Union. This is the longest letter I have yet received from George. Did he write you one about the same time? Mother, I have not

rec'd any word from home in over a week--the last letter I had from Mr. Lane was about twelve days ago, sending me \$10 for the soldiers (five from Mr. Kirkwood and five from Mr. Conklin Brush). Mother dear, I should like to hear from Martha; I wish Jeff would write me about it. Has Andrew gone? and how is your wrist and arm, mother? We had some very hot weather here--I don't know what I should have done without the thin grey coat you sent--you don't know how good it does, and looks too; I wore it three days, and carried a fan and an umbrella (quite a Japanee)--most everybody here carries an umbrella, on account of the sun. Yesterday and to-day however have been quite cool, east wind. Mother, the shirts were a real godsend, they do first rate; I like the fancy marseilles collar and wrist-bands. Mother, how are you getting along--I suppose just the same as ever. I suppose Jess and Ed are just the same as ever. When you write, you tell me all about everything, and the Browns, and the neighborhood generally. Mother, is George's trunk home and of no use there? I wish I had it here, as I must have a trunk--but do not wish you to send until I send you word. I suppose my letter never appeared in the Eagle; well, I shall send them no more, as I think likely they hate to put in anything which may celebrate me a little, even though it is just the thing they want for their paper and readers. They altered the other letter on that account, very meanly. I shall probably have letters in the N. Y. Times and perhaps other papers in about a week. Mother, I have been pretty active in hospitals for the past two weeks, somewhere every day or night. I have written you so much about cases, etc., I will not write you any more on that subject this time. O the sad, sad things I see--the noble young men with legs and arms taken off--the deaths--the sick weakness,

sicker than death, that some endure, after amputations (there is a great difference, some make little of it, others lie after it for days, just flickering alive, and O so deathly weak and sick). I go this afternoon to Campbell hospital, out a couple of miles.

Mother, I should like to have Jeff send me 20 of the large-sized portraits and as many of the standing figure; do them up flat. I think every day about Martha. Mother, have you heard any further about Han? Good-bye for the present, dearest mother.

WALT.

XIII

Washington, Tuesday morning, June 9, 1863. DEAREST MOTHER--Jeff's letter came yesterday and was very welcome, as I wanted to hear about you all. I wrote to George yesterday and sent Jeff's letter enclosed. It looks from some accounts as though the 9th Army Corps might be going down into East Tennessee (Cumberland Gap, or perhaps bound for Knoxville). It is an important region, and has many Southern Unionists. The staunchest Union man I have ever met is a young Southerner in the 2nd Tennessee (Union reg't)--he was ten months in Southern prisons; came up from Richmond paroled about ten weeks ago, and has been in hospital here sick until lately. He suffered everything but death--he is [the] one they hung up by the heels, head downwards--and indeed worse than death, but stuck to his

convictions like a hero--John Barker, a real manly fellow; I saw much of him and heard much of that country that can be relied on. He is now gone home to his reg't.

Mother, I am feeling very well these days--my head that was stopt up so and hard of hearing seems to be all right; I only hope you have had similar good fortune with your rheumatism, and that it will continue so. I wish I could come in for a couple of days and see you; if I should succeed in getting a transportation ticket that would take me to New York and back I should be tempted to come home for two or three days, as I want some MSS. and books, and the trunk, etc.--but I will see. Mother, your letter week before last was very good--whenever you feel like it you write me, dear mother, and tell me everything about the neighborhood and all the items of our family.

And sister Mat, how is she getting along--I believe I will have to write a letter especially to her and Sis one of these times.

It is awful dry weather here, no rain of any consequence for five or six weeks. We have strawberries good and plenty, 15 cents a quart, with the hulls on--I go down to market sometimes of a morning and buy two or three quarts, for the folks I take my meals with. Mother, do you know I have not paid, as you may say, a cent of board since I have been in Washington, that is for meals--four or five times I have made a rush to leave the folks and find a moderate-priced boarding-house, but every time they have made such a time about it that I have kept on. It is Mr. and Mrs. O'Connor

(he is the author of "Harrington"); he has a \$1600 office in the Treasury, and she is a first-rate woman, a Massachusetts girl. They keep house in a moderate way; they have one little girl (lost a fine boy about a year ago); they have two rooms in the same house where I hire my rooms, and I take breakfast (half-past 8) and dinner (half-past 4) with them, as they will have it so. That's the way it has gone on now over five months, and as I say, they won't listen to my leaving--but I shall do so, I think. I can never forget the kindness and real friendship, and it appears as though they would continue just the same, if it were for all our lives. But I have insisted on going to market (it is pleasant in the cool of the morning) and getting the things at my own expense, two or three times a week lately. I pay for the room I occupy now \$7 a month--the landlord is a mixture of booby, miser, and hog; his name is G----; the landlady is a good woman, Washington raised--they are quite rich; he is Irish of the worst kind--has had a good office for ten years until Lincoln came in. They have bought another house, smaller, to live in, and are going to move (were to have moved 1st of June). They had an auction of the house we live in yesterday, but nobody came to buy, so it was ridiculous--we had a red flag out, and a nigger walked up and down ringing a big bell, which is the fashion here for auctions.

Well, mother, the war still goes on, and everything as much in a fog as ever--and the battles as bloody, and the wounded and sick getting worse and plentier all the time. I see a letter in the Tribune from Lexington, Ky., June 5th, headed "The 9th Army Corps departing for Vicksburg"--but I cannot exactly make it out on reading the letter carefully--I don't see

anything in the letter about the 9th Corps moving from Vicksburg; at any rate I think the 2nd division is more likely to be needed in Kentucky (or as I said, in Eastern Tennessee), as the Secesh are expected to make trouble there. But one can hardly tell--the only thing is to resign oneself to events as they occur; it is a sad and dreary time, for so many thousands of parents and relatives, not knowing what will occur next. Mother, I told you, I think last week, that I had wrote to Han, and enclosed George's last letter to me--I wrote a week ago last Sunday--I wonder if she got the letter. About the pictures, I should like Jeff to send them, as soon as convenient--might send 20 of the big head, 10 or 12 of the standing figure, and 3 of the carte visite.

I am writing this in Major Hapgood's office--it is bright and pleasant, only the dust here in Washington is a great nuisance. Mother, your shirts do first rate--I am wearing them; the one I have on to-day suits me better than any I have ever yet had. I have not worn the thin coat the last week or so, as it has not been very hot lately. Mother, I think something of commencing a series of lectures and reading, etc., through different cities of the North, to supply myself with funds for my hospital and soldiers' visits, as I do not like to be beholden to the medium of others. I need a pretty large supply of money, etc., to do the good I would like to, and the work grows upon me, and fascinates me--it is the most affecting thing you ever see, the lots of poor sick and wounded young men that depend so much, in one word or another, upon my petting or soothing or feeding, sitting by them and feeding them their dinner or supper--some are quite helpless, some wounded in both arms--or giving some trifle (for

a novelty or a change, it isn't for the value of it), or stopping a little while with them. Nobody will do but me--so, mother, I feel as though I would like to inaugurate a plan by which I could raise means on my own hook, and perhaps quite plenty too. Best love to you, dearest mother, and to sister Mat, and Jeff.

WALT.

XIV

Washington, Monday morning, June 22, 1863. DEAR MOTHER--Jeff's letter came informing me of the birth of the little girl,[15] and that Matty was feeling pretty well, so far. I hope it will continue. Dear sister, I should much like to come home and see you and the little one; I am sure from Jeff's description it is a noble babe--and as to its being a girl, it is all the better. (I am not sure but the Whitman breed gives better women than men.)

Well, mother, we are generally anticipating a lively time here, or in the neighborhood, as it is probable Lee is feeling about to strike a blow on Washington, or perhaps right into it--and as Lee is no fool, it is perhaps possible he may give us a good shake. He is not very far off--yesterday was a fight to the southwest of here all day; we heard the cannons nearly all day. The wounded are arriving in small squads every day, mostly cavalry, a great many Ohio men; they send off to-day from the Washington

hospitals a great many to New York, Philadelphia, etc., all who are able, to make room, which looks ominous--indeed, it is pretty certain that there is to be some severe fighting, may-be a great battle again, the pending week. I am getting so callous that it hardly arouses me at all. I fancy I should take it very quietly if I found myself in the midst of a desperate conflict here in Washington.

Mother, I have nothing particular to write about--I see and hear nothing but new and old cases of my poor suffering boys in hospitals, and I dare say you have had enough of such things. I have not missed a day at hospital, I think, for more than three weeks--I get more and more wound round. Poor young men--there are some cases that would literally sink and give up if I did not pass a portion of the time with them. I have quite made up my mind about the lecturing, etc., project--I have no doubt it will succeed well enough the way I shall put it in operation. You know, mother, it is to raise funds to enable me to continue my hospital ministrations, on a more free-handed scale. As to the Sanitary commissions and the like, I am sick of them all, and would not accept any of their berths. You ought to see the way the men, as they lay helpless in bed, turn away their faces from the sight of those agents, chaplains, etc. (hirelings, as Elias Hicks would call them--they seem to me always a set of foxes and wolves). They get well paid, and are always incompetent and disagreeable; as I told you before, the only good fellows I have met are the Christian commissioners--they go everywhere and receive no pay.

Dear, dear mother, I want much to see you, and dear Matty too; I send you

both my best love, and Jeff too. The pictures came--I have not heard from George nor Han. I write a day earlier than usual.

WALT.

We here think Vicksburg is ours. The probability is that it has capitulated--and there has been no general assault--can't tell yet whether the 51st went there. We are having very fine weather here to-day--rained last night.

XV

Washington, June 30th, 1863. DEAREST MOTHER--Your letter, with Han's, I have sent to George, though whether it will find him or not I cannot tell, as I think the 51st must be away down at Vicksburg. I have not had a word from George yet. Mother, I have had quite an attack of sore throat and distress in my head for some days past, up to last night, but to-day I feel nearly all right again. I have been about the city same as usual nearly--to the hospitals, etc., I mean. I am told that I hover too much over the beds of the hospitals, with fever and putrid wounds, etc. One soldier brought here about fifteen days ago, very low with typhoid fever, Livingston Brooks, Co. B., 17th Penn. Cavalry, I have particularly stuck to, as I found him to be in what appeared to be a dying condition, from negligence and a horrible journey of about forty miles, bad roads and fast driving; and then after he got here, as he is a simple country boy, very

shy and silent, and made no complaint, they neglected him. I found him something like I found John Holmes last winter. I called the doctor's attention to him, shook up the nurses, had him bathed in spirits, gave him lumps of ice, and ice to his head; he had a fearful bursting pain in his head, and his body was like fire. He was very quiet, a very sensible boy, old fashioned; he did not want to die, and I had to lie to him without stint, for he thought I knew everything, and I always put in of course that what I told him was exactly the truth, and that if he got really dangerous I would tell him and not conceal it. The rule is to remove bad fever patients out from the main wards to a tent by themselves, and the doctor told me he would have to be removed. I broke it gently to him, but the poor boy got it immediately in his head that he was marked with death, and was to be removed on that account. It had a great effect upon him, and although I told the truth this time it did not have as good a result as my former fibs. I persuaded the doctor to let him remain. For three days he lay just about an even chance, go or stay, with a little leaning toward the first. But, mother, to make a long story short, he is now out of any immediate danger. He has been perfectly rational throughout--begins to taste a little food (for a week he ate nothing; I had to compel him to take a quarter of an orange now and then), and I will say, whether anyone calls it pride or not, that if he does get up and around again it's me that saved his life. Mother, as I have said in former letters, you can have no idea how these sick and dying youngsters cling to a fellow, and how fascinating it is, with all its hospital surroundings of sadness and scenes of repulsion and death. In this same hospital, Armory-square, where this cavalry boy is, I have about fifteen or twenty particular cases I see

much to--some of them as much as him. There are two from East Brooklyn; George Monk, Co. A, 78th N. Y., and Stephen Redgate (his mother is a widow in East Brooklyn--I have written to her). Both are pretty badly wounded--both are youngsters under 19. O mother, it seems to me as I go through these rows of cots as if it was too bad to accept these children, to subject them to such premature experiences. I devote myself much to Armory-square hospital because it contains by far the worst cases, most repulsive wounds, has the most suffering and most need of consolation. I go every day without fail, and often at night--sometimes stay very late. No one interferes with me, guards, nurses, doctors, nor anyone. I am let to take my own course.

Well, mother, I suppose you folks think we are in a somewhat dubious position here in Washington, with Lee in strong force almost between us and you Northerners. Well, it does look ticklish; if the Rebs cut the connection then there will be fun. The Reb cavalry come quite near us, dash in and steal wagon trains, etc.; it would be funny if they should come some night to the President's country house (Soldiers' home), where he goes out to sleep every night; it is in the same direction as their saucy raid last Sunday. Mr. Lincoln passes here (14th st.) every evening on his way out. I noticed him last evening about half-past 6--he was in his barouche, two horses, guarded by about thirty cavalry. The barouche comes first under a slow trot, driven by one man in the box, no servant or footman beside; the cavalry all follow closely after with a lieutenant at their head. I had a good view of the President last evening. He looks more careworn even than usual, his face with deep cut lines, seams, and his

complexion gray through very dark skin--a curious looking man, very sad. I said to a lady who was looking with me, "Who can see that man without losing all wish to be sharp upon him personally?" The lady assented, although she is almost vindictive on the course of the administration (thinks it wants nerve, etc.--the usual complaint). The equipage is rather shabby, horses indeed almost what my friends the Broadway drivers would call old plugs. The President dresses in plain black clothes, cylinder hat--he was alone yesterday. As he came up, he first drove over to the house of the Sec. of War, on K st., about 300 feet from here; sat in his carriage while Stanton came out and had a 15 minutes interview with him (I can see from my window), and then wheeled around the corner and up Fourteenth st., the cavalry after him. I really think it would be safer for him just now to stop at the White House, but I expect he is too proud to abandon the former custom. Then about an hour after we had a large cavalry regiment pass, with blankets, arms, etc., on the war march over the same track. The regt. was very full, over a thousand--indeed thirteen or fourteen hundred. It was an old regt., veterans, old fighters, young as they were. They were preceded by a fine mounted band of sixteen (about ten bugles, the rest cymbals and drums). I tell you, mother, it made everything ring--made my heart leap. They played with a will. Then the accompaniment: the sabers rattled on a thousand men's sides--they had pistols, their heels were spurred--handsome American young men (I make no acc't of any other); rude uniforms, well worn, but good cattle, prancing--all good riders, full of the devil; nobody shaved, very sunburnt. The regimental officers (splendidly mounted, but just as roughly dressed as the men) came immediately after the band, then company after

company, with each its officers at its head--the tramps of so many horses (there is a good hard turnpike)--then a long train of men with led horses, mounted negroes, and a long, long string of baggage wagons, each with four horses, and then a strong rear guard. I tell you it had the look of real war--noble looking fellows; a man feels so proud on a good horse, and armed. They are off toward the region of Lee's (supposed) rendezvous, toward Susquehannah, for the great anticipated battle. Alas! how many of these healthy, handsome, rollicking young men will lie cold in death before the apples ripen in the orchard. Mother, it is curious and stirring here in some respects. Smaller or larger bodies of troops are moving continually--many just-well men are turned out of the hospitals. I am where I see a good deal of them. There are getting to be many black troops. There is one very good regt. here black as tar; they go around, have the regular uniform--they submit to no nonsense. Others are constantly forming. It is getting to be a common sight. [The rest of the letter is lost.--ED.]

XVI

Washington, July 10, 1863. DEAR MOTHER--I suppose you rec'd a letter from me last Wednesday, as I sent you one Tuesday (7th). Dear mother, I was glad enough to hear from George, by that letter from Snyder's Bluffs, June 28th. I had felt a little fear on acc't of some of those storming parties Grant sent against Vicksburg the middle of June and up to the 20th--but this letter dispels all anxiety. I have written to George many

times, but it seems he has not got them. Mother, I shall write immediately to him again. I think he will get the letter I sent last Sunday, as I directed it to Vicksburg--I told him all the news from home. Mother, I shall write to Han and enclose George's letter. I am real glad to hear from Mat and the little one, all so favorable. We are having pleasant weather here still. I go to Campbell hospital this afternoon--I still keep going, mother. The wounded are doing rather badly; I am sorry to say there are frequent deaths--the weather, I suppose, which has been peculiarly bad for wounds, so wet and warm (though not disagreeable outdoors). Mother, you must write as often as you can, and Jeff too--you must not get worried about the ups and downs of the war; I don't know any course but to resign oneself to events--if one can only bring one's mind to it. Good-bye once more, for the present, dearest mother, Mat, and the dear little ones.

WALT.

Mother, do you ever hear from Mary?[16]

XVII

Washington, Wednesday forenoon, July 15, 1863. DEAR MOTHER--So the mob has risen at last in New York--I have been expecting it, but as the day for the draft had arrived and everything was so quiet, I supposed all might go on smoothly; but it seems the passions of the people were only

sleeping, and have burst forth with terrible fury, and they have destroyed life and property, the enrolment buildings, etc., as we hear. The accounts we get are a good deal in a muddle, but it seems bad enough. The feeling here is savage and hot as fire against New York (the mob--"Copperhead mob" the papers here call it), and I hear nothing in all directions but threats of ordering up the gunboats, cannonading the city, shooting down the mob, hanging them in a body, etc., etc. Meantime I remain silent, partly amused, partly scornful, or occasionally put a dry remark, which only adds fuel to the flame. I do not feel it in my heart to abuse the poor people, or call for a rope or bullets for them, but, that is all the talk here, even in the hospitals. The acc'ts from N. Y. this morning are that the Gov't has ordered the draft to be suspended there--I hope it is true, for I find that the deeper they go in with the draft, the more trouble it is likely to make. I have changed my opinion and feelings on the subject--we are in the midst of strange and terrible times--one is pulled a dozen different ways in his mind, and hardly knows what to think or do. Mother, I have not much fear that the troubles in New York will affect any of our family, still I feel somewhat uneasy about Jeff, if any one, as he is more around. I have had it much on my mind what could be done, if it should so happen that Jeff should be drafted--of course he could not go without its being the downfall almost of our whole family, as you may say, Mat and his young ones, and sad blow to you too, mother, and to all. I didn't see any other way than to try to raise the \$300, mostly by borrowing if possible of Mr. Lane. Mother, I have no doubt I shall make a few hundred dollars by the lectures I shall certainly commence soon (for my hospital missionary purposes and my own, for that purpose), and I could lend that

am't to Jeff to pay it back. May-be the draft will not come off after all; I should say it was very doubtful if they can carry it out in N. Y. and Brooklyn--and besides, it is only one chance out of several, to be drawn if it does. I don't wonder dear brother Jeff feels the effect it would have on domestic affairs; I think it is right to feel so, full as strongly as a man can. I do hope all will go well and without such an additional trouble falling upon us, but as it can be met with money, I hope Jeff and Mat and all of you, dear mother, will not worry any more about it. I wrote to Jeff a few lines last Sunday, I suppose he got. Mother, I don't know whether you have had a kind of gloomy week the past week, but somehow I feel as if you all had; but I hope it has passed over. How is dear sister Mat, and how is Miss Mannahatta, and little Black Head? I sometimes feel as if I must come home and see you all--I want to very much.

My hospital life still continues the same--I was in Armory all day yesterday--and day and night before. They have the men wounded in the railroad accident at Laurel station (bet. here and Baltimore), about 30 soldiers, some of them horribly injured at 3 o'clock A. M. last Saturday by collision--poor, poor, poor men. I go again this afternoon and night--I see so much of butcher sights, so much sickness and suffering, I must get away a while, I believe, for self-preservation. I have felt quite well though the past week--we have had rain continually. Mother, I have not heard from George since, have you? I shall write Han to-day and send George's letter--if you or Jeff has not written this week, I hope Jeff will write on receiving this. Good-bye for present, dearest mother, and Jeff, and Mat.

WALT.

Mother, the army is to be paid off two months more, right away. Of course George will get two months more pay. Dear Mother, I hope you will keep untouched and put in bank every cent you can. I want us to have a ranch somewhere by or before next spring.

XVIII

Washington, Aug. 11, 1863. DEAR MOTHER--I sent Jeff a letter on Sunday--I suppose he got it at the office. I feel so anxious to hear from George; one cannot help feeling uneasy, although these days sometimes it cannot help being long intervals without one's hearing from friends in the army. O I do hope we shall hear soon, and that it is all right with him. It seems as if the 9th Corps had returned to Vicksburg, and some acc'ts say that part of the Corps had started to come up the river again--toward Kentucky, I suppose. I have sent George two letters within a week past, hoping they might have the luck to get to him, but hardly expect it either.

Mother, I feel very sorry to hear Andrew is so troubled in his throat yet. I know it must make you feel very unhappy. Jeff wrote me a good deal about it, and seems to feel very bad about Andrew's being unwell; but I hope it will go over, and that a little time will make him recover--I think about

it every day.

Mother, it has been the hottest weather here that I ever experienced, and still continues so. Yesterday and last night was the hottest. Still, I slept sound, have good ventilation through my room, little as it is (I still hire the same room in L street). I was quite wet with sweat this morning when I woke up, a thing I never remember to have happened to me before, for I was not disturbed in my sleep and did not wake up once all night. Mother, I believe I did not tell you that on the 1st of June (or a while before) the O'Connors, the friends I took my meals with so long, moved to other apartments for more room and pleasanter--not far off though, I am there every day almost, a little--so for nearly two months and a half I have been in the habit of getting my own breakfast in my room and my dinner at a restaurant. I have a little spirit lamp, and always have a capital cup of tea, and some bread, and perhaps some preserved fruit; for dinner I get a good plate of meat and plenty of potatoes, good and plenty for 25 or 30 cents. I hardly ever take any thing more than these two meals, both of them are pretty hearty--eat dinner about 3--my appetite is plenty good enough, and I am about as fleshy as I was in Brooklyn. Mother, I feel better the last ten days, and at present, than I did the preceding six or eight weeks. There was nothing particular the matter with me, but I suppose a different climate and being so continually in the hospitals--but as I say, I feel better, more strength, and better in my head, etc. About the wound in my hand and the inflammation, etc., it has thoroughly healed, and I have not worn anything on my hand, nor had any dressing for the last five days. Mother, I hope you get along with the

heat, for I see it is as bad or worse in New York and Brooklyn--I am afraid you suffer from it; it must be distressing to you. Dear mother, do let things go, and just sit still and fan yourself. I think about you these hot days. I fancy I see you down there in the basement. I suppose you have your coffee for breakfast; I have not had three cups of coffee in six months--tea altogether (I must come home and have some coffee for breakfast with you).

Mother, I wrote to you about Erastus Haskell, Co. K, 141st, N. Y.--his father, poor old man, come on here to see him and found him dead three days. He had the body embalmed and took home. They are poor folks but very respectable. I was at the hospital yesterday as usual--I never miss a day. I go by my feelings--if I should feel that it would be better for me to lay by for a while, I should do so, but not while I feel so well as I do the past week, for all the hot weather; and while the chance lasts I would improve it, for by and by the night cometh when no man can work (ain't I getting pious!). I got a letter from Probasco yesterday; he sent \$4 for my sick and wounded--I wish Jeff to tell him that it came right, and give him the men's thanks and my love.

Mother, have you heard anything from Han? And about Mary's Fanny--I hope you will write me soon and tell me everything, tell me exactly as things are, but I know you will--I want to hear family affairs before anything else. I am so glad to hear Mat is good and hearty--you must write me about Hat and little Black Head too. Mother, how is Eddy getting along? and Jess, is he about the same? I suppose Will Brown is home all right; tell

him I spoke about him, and the Browns too. Dearest Mother, I send you my love, and to Jeff too--must write when you can.

WALT.

XIX

Washington, Aug. 18, 1863. DEAR MOTHER--I was mighty glad to get George's letter, I can tell you--you have not heard since, I suppose. They must be now back again in Kentucky, or that way, as I see [by] a letter from Cairo (up the Mississippi river) that boats had stopt there with the 9th Corps on from Vicksburg, going up towards Cincinnati--I think the letter was dated Aug. 10. I have no doubt they are back again up that way somewhere. I wrote to George four or five days ago--I directed it Ohio, Mississippi, or elsewhere. Mother, I was very glad indeed to get your letter--I am so sorry Andrew does not get any better; it is very distressing about losing the voice; he must not be so much alarmed, as that continues some times years and the health otherwise good. Mother, I wrote to Han about five days ago; told her we had heard from George, and all the news--I must write to Mary too, without fail--I should like to hear from them all, and from Fanny. There has been a young man here in hospital, from Farmingdale; he was wounded; his name is Hendrickson; he has gone home on a furlough; he knows the Van Nostrands very well--I told him to go and see Aunt Fanny. I was glad you gave Emma Price my direction here; I should [like] to hear from Mrs. Price and her

girls first rate, I think a great deal about them--and mother, I wish you to tell any of them so; they always used me first rate, and always stuck up for me--if I knew their street and number I should write.

It has been awful hot here now for twenty-one days; ain't that a spell of weather? The first two weeks I got along better than I would have thought, but the last week I have felt it more, have felt it in my head a little--I no more stir without my umbrella, in the day time, than I would without my boots. I am afraid of the sun affecting my head and move pretty cautious. Mother, I think every day, I wonder if the hot weather is affecting mother much; I suppose it must a good deal, but I hope it cannot last much longer. Mother, I had a letter in the N. Y. Times of last Sunday--did you see it? I wonder if George can't get a furlough and come home for a while; that furlough he had was only a flea-bite. If he could it would be no more than right, for no man in the country has done his duty more faithful, and without complaining of anything or asking for anything, than George. I suppose they will fill up the 51st with conscripts, as that seems the order of the day--a good many are arriving here, from the North, and passing through to join Meade's army. We are expecting to hear of more rows in New York about the draft; it commences there right away I see--this time it will be no such doings as a month or five weeks ago; the Gov't here is forwarding a large force of regulars to New York to be ready for anything that may happen--there will be no blank cartridges this time. Well, I thought when I first heard of the riot in N. Y. I had some feeling for them, but soon as I found what it really was, I felt it was the devil's own work all through. I guess the strong arm will be exhibited

this time up to the shoulder. Mother, I want to see you and all very much. As I wish to be here at the opening of Congress, and during the winter, I have an idea I will try to come home for a month, but I don't know when--I want to see the young ones and Mat and Jeff and everybody. Well, mother, I should like to know all the domestic affairs at home; don't you have the usual things eating, etc.? Why, mother, I should think you would eat nearly all your meals with Mat--I know you must when they have anything good (and I know Mat will have good things if she has got a cent left). Mother, don't you miss Walt loafing around, and carting himself off to New York toward the latter part of every afternoon? How do you and the Browns get along?--that hell hole over the way, what a nuisance it must be nights, and I generally have a very good sleep. Mother, I suppose you sleep in the back room yet--I suppose the new houses next door are occupied. How I should like to take a walk on old Fort Greene--tell Mannahatta her Uncle Walt will be home yet, from the sick soldiers, and have a good walk all around, if she behaves to her grandmother and don't cut up. Mother, I am scribbling this hastily in Major Hapgood's office; it is not so hot to-day, quite endurable. I send you my love, dear mother, and to all, and wish Jeff and you to write as often as you can.

WALT.

XX

Washington, Aug. 25, 1863. DEAR MOTHER--The letter from George, and your

lines, and a few from Jeff came yesterday, and I was glad indeed to be certain that George had got back to Kentucky safe and well--while so many fall that we know, or, what is about as bad, get sick or hurt in the fight, and lay in hospital, it seems almost a miracle that George should have gone through so much, South and North and East and West, and been in so many hard-fought battles, and thousands of miles of weary and exhausting marches, and yet have stood it so, and be yet alive and in good health and spirits. O mother, what would we [have] done if it had been otherwise--if he had met the fate of so many we know--if he had been killed or badly hurt in some of those battles? I get thinking about it sometimes, and it works upon me so I have to stop and turn my mind on something else. Mother, I feel bad enough about Andrew, and I know it must be so with you too--one don't know what to do; if we had money he would be welcome to it, if it would do any good. If George's money comes from Kentucky this last time, and you think some of it would do Andrew any real good, I advise you to take some and give him--I think it would be proper and George would approve of it. I believe there is not much but trouble in this world, and if one hasn't any for himself he has it made up by having it brought close to him through others, and that is sometimes worse than to have it touch one's self. Mother, you must not let Andrew's case and the poor condition of his household comforts, etc., work upon you, for I fear you will--but, mother, it's no use to worry about such things. I have seen so much horrors that befall men (so bad and such suffering and mutilations, etc., that the poor men can defy their fate to do anything more or any harder misfortune or worse a-going) that I sometimes think I have grown callous--but no, I don't think it is that, but nothing of

ordinary misfortune seems as it used to, and death itself has lost all its terrors--I have seen so many cases in which it was so welcome and such a relief.

Mother, you must just resign yourself to things that occur--but I hardly think it is necessary to give you any charge about it, for I think you have done so for many years, and stood it all with good courage.

We have a second attack of hot weather--Sunday was the most burning day I ever yet saw. It is very dry and dusty here, but to-day we are having a middling good breeze--I feel pretty well, and whenever the weather for a day or so is passably cool I feel really first rate, so I anticipate the cooler season with pleasure. Mother, I believe I wrote to you I had a letter in N. Y. Times, Sunday, 16th--I shall try to write others and more frequently. The three Eagles came safe; I was glad to get them--I sent them and another paper to George. Mother, none of you ever mention whether you get my letters, but I suppose they come safe--it is not impossible I may miss some week, but I have not missed a single one for months past. I wish I could send you something worth while, and I wish I could send something for Andrew--mother, write me exactly how it is with him.... Mother, I have some idea Han is getting some better; it is only my idea somehow--I hope it is so from the bottom of my heart. Did you hear from Mary's Fanny since? And how are Mat's girls? So, Mannahatta, you tear Uncle George's letters, do you? You mustn't do so, little girl, nor Uncle Walt's either; but when you get to be a big girl you must have them all nice, and read them, for Grandmother will perhaps leave them to you in her

will, if you behave like a lady. Matty, my dear sister, how are you getting along? I really want to see you bad, and the baby too--well, may-be we shall all come together and have some good times yet. Jeff, I hope by next week this time we shall be in possession of Charleston--some papers say Burnside is moving for Knoxville, but it is doubtful--I think the 9th Corps might take a rest awhile, anyhow. Good-bye, mother.

WALT.

XXI

Washington, Sept. 1, 1863. DEAR MOTHER--I have been thinking to-day and all yesterday about the draft in Brooklyn, and whether Jeff would be drafted; you must some of you write me just as soon as you get this--I want to know; I feel anxious enough I can tell you--and besides, it seems a good while since I have received any letters from home. Of course it is impossible for Jeff to go, in case it should turn out he was drafted--the way our family is all situated now, it would be madness. If the Common Council raise the money to exempt men with families dependent on them, I think Jeff ought to have no scruples in taking advantage of it, as I think he is in duty bound--but we will see what course to take, when we know the result, etc.; write about it right away.

The Eagles came; this is the second time; I am glad to get them--Jeff, wait till you get four or five, and then send them with a two-cent stamp.

I have not had any letter from George. Mother, have you heard anything? did the money come? Dear mother, how are you nowadays? I do hope you feel well and in good spirits--I think about you every day of my life out here. Sometimes I see women in the hospitals, mothers come to see their sons, and occasionally one that makes me think of my dear mother--one did very much, a lady about 60, from Pennsylvania, come to see her son, a captain, very badly wounded and his wound gangrened, and they after a while removed him to a tent by himself. Another son of hers, a young man, came with her to see his brother. She was a pretty full-sized lady, with spectacles; she dressed in black--looked real Velsory.[17] I got very well acquainted with her; she had a real Long Island old-fashioned way--but I had to avoid the poor captain, as it was that time that my hand was cut in the artery, and I was liable to gangrene myself--but she and the two sons have gone home now, but I doubt whether the wounded one is alive, as he was very low. Mother, I want to hear about Andrew too, whether he went to Rockland lake. You have no idea how many soldiers there are who have lost their voices, and have to speak in whispers--there are a great many, I meet some almost every day; as far as that alone is concerned, Andrew must not be discouraged, as the general health may be good as common irrespective of that. I do hope Andrew will get along better than he thinks for--it is bad enough for a poor man to be out of health even partially, but he must try to look on the bright side. Mother, have you heard anything from Han since, or from Mary's folks? I got a letter from Mrs. Price last week; if you see Emma tell her I was pleased to get it, and shall answer it very soon. Mother, I have sent another letter to the N. Y. Times--it may appear, if not to-day, within a few days. I am

feeling excellent well these days, it is so moderate and pleasant weather now; I was getting real exhausted with the heat. I thought of you too, how it must have exhausted you those hot days. I still occupy the same 3rd story room, 394 L st., and get my breakfast in my room in the morning myself, and dinner at a restaurant about 3 o'clock--I get along very well and very economical (which is a forced put, but just as well). But I must get another room or a boarding-house soon, as the folks are all going to move this month. My good and real friends the O'Connors live in the same block; I am in there every day. Dear mother, tell Mat and Miss Mannahatta I send them my love--I want to see them both. O how I want to see Jeff and you, mother; I sometimes feel as if I should just get in the cars and come home--and the baby too, you must always write about her. Dear mother, good-bye for present.

WALT.

XXII

Washington, Sept. 8, 1863, Tuesday morning. DEAREST MOTHER--I wrote to Jeff Sunday last that his letter sent Sept. 3rd, containing your letter and \$5 from Mr. Lane, had miscarried--this morning when I came down to Major Hapgood's office I found it on my table, so it is all right--singular where it has been all this while, as I see the postmark on it is Brooklyn, Sept. 3, as Jeff said. Mother, what to do about Andrew I hardly know--as it is I feel about as much pity for you as I do for my

poor brother Andrew, for I know you will worry yourself about him all the time. I was in hopes it was only the trouble about the voice, etc., but I see I was mistaken, and it is probably worse. I know you and Jeff and Mat will do all you can--and will have patience with all (it is not only the sick who are poorly off, but their friends; but it is best to have the greatest forbearance, and do and give, etc., whatever one can--but you know that, and practice it too, dear mother). Mother, if I had the means, O how cheerfully I would give them, whether they availed anything for Andrew or not--yet I have long made up my mind that money does not amount to so much, at least not so very much, in serious cases of sickness; it is judgment both in the person himself, and in those he has to do with--and good heart in everything. (Mother, you remember Theodore Gould, how he stuck it out, though sickness and death has had hold of him, as you may say, for fifteen years.) But anyhow, I hope we will all do what we can for Andrew. Mother, I think I must try to come home for a month--I have not given up my project of lecturing I spoke about before, but shall put it in practice yet; I feel clear it will succeed enough. (I wish I had some of the money already; it would be satisfaction to me to contribute something to Andrew's necessities, for he must have bread.) I will write to you, of course, before I come. Mother, I hope you will live better--Jeff tells me you and Jess and Ed live on poor stuff, you are so economical. Mother, you mustn't do so as long as you have a cent--I hope you will, at least four or five times a week, have a steak of beef or mutton, or something substantial for dinner. I have one good meal of that kind every day, or at least five or six days out of the seven--but for breakfast I have nothing but a cup of tea and some bread or crackers (first-rate tea though, with

milk and good white sugar). Well, I find it is hearty enough--more than half the time I never eat anything after dinner, and when I do it is only a cracker and cup of tea. Mother, I hope you will not stint yourselves--as to using George's money for your and Jess's and Ed's needful living expenses, I know George would be mad and hurt in his feelings if he thought you was afraid to. Mother, you have a comfortable time as much as you can, and get a steak occasionally, won't you? I suppose Mat got her letter last Saturday; I sent it Friday. O I was so pleased that Jeff was not drawn, and I know how Mat must have felt too; I have no idea the Government will try to draft again, whatever happens--they have carried their point, but have not made much out of it. O how the conscripts and substitutes are deserting down in front and on their way there--you don't hear anything about it, but it is incredible--they don't allow it to get in the papers. Mother, I was so glad to get your letter; you must write again--can't you write to-morrow, so I can get it Friday or Saturday?--you know though you wrote more than a week ago I did not get it till this morning. I wish Jeff to write too, as often as he can. Mother, I was gratified to hear you went up among the soldiers--they are rude in appearance, but they know what is decent, and it pleases them much to have folks, even old women, take an interest and come among them. Mother, you must go again, and take Mat. Well, dear mother, I must close. I am first rate in health, so much better than a month and two months ago--my hand has entirely healed. I go to hospital every day or night--I believe no men ever loved each other as I and some of these poor wounded sick and dying men love each other. Good-bye, dearest mother, for present.

WALT.

Tuesday afternoon. Mother, it seems to be certain that Meade has gained the day, and that the battles there in Pennsylvania have been about as terrible as any in the war--I think the killed and wounded there on both sides were as many as eighteen or twenty thousand--in one place, four or five acres, there were a thousand dead at daybreak on Saturday morning. Mother, one's heart grows sick of war, after all, when you see what it really is; every once in a while I feel so horrified and disgusted--it seems to me like a great slaughter-house and the men mutually butchering each other--then I feel how impossible it appears, again, to retire from this contest, until we have carried our points (it is cruel to be so tossed from pillar to post in one's judgment). Washington is a pleasant place in some respects--it has the finest trees, and plenty of them everywhere, on the streets and grounds. The Capitol grounds, though small, have the finest cultivated trees I ever see--there is a great variety, and not one but is in perfect condition. After I finish this letter I am going out there for an hour's recreation. The great sights of Washington are the public buildings, the wide streets, the public grounds, the trees, the Smithsonian institute and grounds. I go to the latter occasionally--the institute is an old foggy concern, but the grounds are fine. Sometimes I go up to Georgetown, about two and a half miles up the Potomac, an old town--just opposite it in the river is an island, where the niggers have their first Washington reg't encamped. They make a good show, are often seen in the streets of Washington in squads. Since they have begun to carry arms, the Secesh here and in Georgetown (about three fifths) are not

insulting to them as formerly.

One of the things here always on the go is long trains of army wagons--sometimes they will stream along all day; it almost seems as if there was nothing else but army wagons and ambulances. They have great camps here in every direction, of army wagons, teamsters, ambulance camps, etc.; some of them are permanent, and have small hospitals. I go to them (as no one else goes; ladies would not venture). I sometimes have the luck to give some of the drivers a great deal of comfort and help. Indeed, mother, there are camps here of everything--I went once or twice to the contraband camp, to the hospital, etc., but I could not bring myself to go again--when I meet black men or boys among my own hospitals, I use them kindly, give them something, etc.--I believe I told you that I do the same to the wounded Rebels, too--but as there is a limit to one's sinews and endurance and sympathies, etc., I have got in the way, after going lightly, as it were, all through the wards of a hospital, and trying to give a word of cheer, if nothing else, to every one, then confining my special attentions to the few where the investment seems to tell best, and who want it most. Mother, I have real pride in telling you that I have the consciousness of saving quite a number of lives by saving them from giving up--and being a good deal with them; the men say it is so, and the doctors say it is so--and I will candidly confess I can see it is true, though I say it of myself. I know you will like to hear it, mother, so I tell you. I am finishing this in Major Hapgood's office, about 1 o'clock--it is pretty warm, but has not cleared off yet. The trees look so well from where I am, and the Potomac--it is a noble river; I see it several miles,

and the Arlington heights. Mother, I see some of the 47th Brooklyn every day or two; the reg't is on the heights back of Arlington house, a fine camp ground. O Matty, I have just thought of you--dear sister, how are you getting along? Jeff, I will write you truly. Good-bye for the present, dearest mother, and all.

WALT.

XXIII

Washington, Sept. 15, 1863. DEAR MOTHER--Your letters were very acceptable--one came just as I was putting my last in the post office--I guess they all come right. I have written to Han and George and sent George papers. Mother, have you heard anything whether the 51st went on with Burnside, or did they remain as a reserve in Kentucky? Burnside has managed splendidly so far, his taking Knoxville and all together--it is a first-class success. I have known Tennessee Union men here in hospital, and I understand it, therefore--the region where Knoxville is is mainly Union, but the Southerners could not exist without it, as it is in their midst, so they determined to pound and kill and crush out the Unionists--all the savage and monstrous things printed in the papers about their treatment are true, at least that kind of thing is, as bad as the Irish in the mob treated the poor niggers in New York. We North don't understand some things about Southerners; it is very strange, the contrast--if I should pick out the most genuine Union men and real

patriots I have ever met in all my experience, I should pick out two or three Tennessee and Virginia Unionists I have met in the hospitals, wounded or sick. One young man I guess I have mentioned to you in my letters, John Barker, 2nd Tennessee Vol. (Union), was a long while a prisoner in Secesh prisons in Georgia, and in Richmond--three times the devils hung him up by the heels to make him promise to give up his Unionism; once he was cut down for dead. He is a young married man with one child. His little property destroyed, his wife and child turned out--he hunted and tormented--and any moment he could have had anything if he would join the Confederacy--but he was firm as a rock; he would not even take an oath to not fight for either side. They held him about eight months--then he was very sick, scurvy, and they exchanged him and he came up from Richmond here to hospital; here I got acquainted with him. He is a large, slow, good-natured man, somehow made me often think of father; shrewd, very little to say--wouldn't talk to anybody but me. His whole thought was to get back and fight; he was not fit to go, but he has gone back to Tennessee. He spent two days with his wife and young one there, and then to his regiment--he writes to me frequently and I to him; he is not fit to soldier, for the Rebels have destroyed his health and strength (though he is only 23 or 4), but nothing will keep him from his regiment, and fighting--he is uneducated, but as sensible a young man as I ever met, and understands the whole question. Well, mother, Jack Barker is the most genuine Union man I have ever yet met. I asked him once very gravely why he didn't take the Southern oath and get his liberty--if he didn't think he was foolish to be so stiff, etc. I never saw such a look as he gave me, he thought I was in earnest--the old devil himself couldn't have had put a

worse look in his eyes. Mother, I have no doubt there are quite a good many just such men. He is down there with his regiment (one of his brothers was killed)--when he fails in strength he gets the colonel to detach him to do teamster's duty for a few days, on a march till he recruits his strength--but he always carries his gun with him--in a battle he is always in the ranks--then he is so sensible, such decent manly ways, nothing shallow or mean (he must have been a giant in health, but now he is weaker, has a cough too). Mother, can you wonder at my getting so attached to such men, with such love, especially when they show it to me--some of them on their dying beds, and in the very hour of death, or just the same when they recover, or partially recover? I never knew what American young men were till I have been in the hospitals. Well, mother, I have got writing on--there is nothing new with me, just the same old thing, as I suppose it is with you there. Mother, how is Andrew? I wish to hear all about him--I do hope he is better, and that it will not prove anything so bad. I will write to him soon myself, but in the meantime you must tell him to not put so much faith in medicine--drugs, I mean--as in the true curative things; namely, diet and careful habits, breathing good air, etc. You know I wrote in a former letter what is the cause and foundation of the diseases of the throat and what must be the remedy that goes to the bottom of the thing--sudden attacks are to be treated with applications and medicines, but diseases of a seated character are not to be cured by them, only perhaps a little relieved (and often aggravated, made firmer).

Dearest mother, I hope you yourself are well, and getting along good.

About the letter in the Times, I see ever since I sent they have been very crowded with news that must be printed--I think they will give it yet. I hear there is a new paper in Brooklyn, or to be one--I wish Jeff would send me some of the first numbers without fail, and a stray Eagle in same parcel to make up the 4 ounces. I am glad to hear Mat was going to write me a good long letter--every letter from home is so good, when one is away (I often see the men crying in the hospital when they get a letter). Jeff too, I want him to write whenever he can, and not forget the new paper. We are having pleasant weather here; it is such a relief from that awful heat (I can't think of another such siege without feeling sick at the thought).

Mother, I believe I told you I had written to Mrs. Price--do you see Emma? Are the soldiers still on Fort Greene? Well, mother, I have writ quite a letter--it is between 2 and 3 o'clock--I am in Major Hapgood's all alone--from my window I see all the Potomac, and all around Washington--Major and all gone down to the army to pay troops, and I keep house. I am invited to dinner to-day at 4 o'clock at a Mr. Boyle's--I am going (hope we shall have something good). Dear mother, I send you my love, and some to Jeff and Mat and all, not forgetting Mannahatta (who I hope is a help and comfort to her grandmother). Well, I must scratch off in a hurry, for it is nearly an hour [later] than I thought. Good-bye for the present, dear mother.

WALT.

XXIV

Washington, Sept. 29, 1863. DEAR MOTHER--Well, here I sit this forenoon in a corner by the window in Major Hapgood's office, all the Potomac, and Maryland, and Virginia hills in sight, writing my Tuesday letter to you, dearest mother. Major has gone home to Boston on sick leave, and only the clerk and me occupy the office, and he not much of the time. At the present moment there are two wounded officers come in to get their pay--one has crutches; the other is drest in the light-blue uniform of the invalid corps. Way up here on the 5th floor it is pretty hard scratching for cripples and very weak men to journey up here--often they come up here very weary and faint, and then find out they can't get their money, some red-tape hitch, and the poor soldiers look so disappointed--it always makes me feel bad.

Mother, we are having perfect weather here nowadays, both night and day. The nights are wonderful; for the last three nights as I have walked home from the hospital pretty late, it has seemed to me like a dream, the moon and sky ahead of anything I ever see before. Mother, do you hear anything from George? I wrote to him yesterday and sent him your last letter, and Jeff's enclosed--I shall send him some papers to-day--I send him papers quite often. (Why hasn't Jeff sent me the Union with my letter in? I want much to see it, and whether they have misprinted it.)

Mother, I don't think the 51st has been in any of the fighting we know of

down there yet--what is to come of course nobody can tell. As to Burnside, I suppose you know he is among his friends, and I think this quite important, for such the main body of East Tennesseans are, and are far truer Americans anyhow than the Copperheads of the North. The Tennesseans will fight for us too. Mother, you have no idea how the soldiers, sick, etc. (I mean the American ones, to a man) all feel about the Copperheads; they never speak of them without a curse, and I hear them say, with an air that shows they mean it, they would shoot them sooner than they would a Rebel. Mother, the troops from Meade's army are passing through here night and day, going West and so down to reinforce Rosecrans I suppose--the papers are not permitted to mention it, but it is so. Two Army Corps, I should think, have mostly passed--they go through night and day--I hear the whistle of the locomotive screaming away any time at night when I wake up, and the rumbling of the trains.

Mother dear, you must write to me soon, and so must Jeff. I thought Mat was going to send me a great long letter--I am always looking for it; I hope it will be full of everything about family matters and doings, and how everybody really is. I go to Major's box three or four times a day. I want to hear also about Andrew, and indeed about every one of you and everything--nothing is too trifling, nothing uninteresting.

O mother, who do you think I got a letter from, two or three days ago? Aunt Fanny, Ansel's mother--she sent it by a young man, a wounded soldier who has been home to Farmingdale on furlough, and lately returned. She writes a first-rate letter, Quaker all over--I shall answer it. She says

Mary and Ansel and all are well. I have received another letter from Mrs. Price--she has not good health. I am sorry for her from my heart; she is a good, noble woman, no better kind. Mother, I am in the hospitals as usual--I stand it better the last three weeks than ever before--I go among the worst fevers and wounds with impunity. I go among the smallpox, etc., just the same--I feel to go without apprehension, and so I go. Nobody else goes; and as the darkey said there at Charleston when the boat run on a flat and the Reb sharpshooters were peppering them, "somebody must jump in de water and shove de boat off."

WALT.

XXV

Washington, Oct. 6, 1863. DEAREST MOTHER--Your letter and George's came safe--dear brother George, one don't more than get a letter from him before you want to hear again, especially as things are looking pretty stormy that way--but mother, I rather lean to the opinion that the 51st is still in Kentucky, at or near where George last wrote; but of course that is only my guess. I send George papers and occasionally letters. Mother, I sent him enclosed your letter before the last, though you said in it not to tell him how much money he had home, as you wanted to surprise him; but I sent it. Mother, I think Rosecrans and Burnside will be too much for the Rebels down there yet. I myself make a great acc't of Burnside being in the midst of friends, and such friends too--they will fight and fight up

to the handle, and kill somebody (it seems as if it was coming to that pass where we will either have to destroy or be destroyed). Mother, I wish you would write soon after you get this, or Jeff or Mat must, and tell me about Andrew, if there is anything different with him--I think about him every day and night. I believe I must come home, even if it is only for a week--I want to see you all very much. Mother, I know you must have a great deal to harass and trouble you; I don't mean about Andrew personally, for I know you would feel to give your life to save his, and do anything to nourish him, but about the children and Nancy--but, mother, you must not let anything chafe you, and you must not be squeamish about saying firmly at times not to have little Georgy too much to trouble you (poor little fellow, I have no doubt he will be a pleasanter child when he grows older); and while you are pleasant with Nancy you must be sufficiently plain with her--only, mother, I know you will, and Jeff and Mat will too, be invariably good to Andrew, and not mind his being irritable at times; it is his disease, and then his temper is naturally fretful, but it is such a misfortune to have such sickness--and always do anything for him that you can in reason. Mat, my dear sister, I know you will, for I know your nature is to come out a first-class girl in times of trouble and sickness, and do anything. Mother, you don't know how pleased I was to read what you wrote about little Sis. I want to see her so bad I don't know what to do; I know she must be just the best young one on Long Island--but I hope it will not be understood as meaning any slight or disrespect to Miss Hat, nor to put her nose out of joint, because Uncle Walt, I hope, has heart and gizzard big enough for both his little nieces and as many more as the Lord may send.

Mother, I am writing this in Major Hapgood's office, as usual. I am all alone to-day--Major is still absent, unwell, and the clerk is away somewhere. O how pleasant it is here--the weather I mean--and other things too, for that matter. I still occupy my little room, 394 L st.; get my own breakfast there; had good tea this morning, and some nice biscuit (yesterday morning and day before had peaches cut up). My friends the O'Connors that I wrote about recommenced cooking the 1st of this month (they have been, as usual in summer, taking their meals at a family hotel near by). Saturday they sent for me to breakfast, and Sunday I eat dinner with them--very good dinner, roast beef, lima beans, good potatoes, etc. They are truly friends to me. I still get my dinner at a restaurant usually. I have a very good plain dinner, which is the only meal of any account I make during the day; but it is just as well, for I would be in danger of getting fat on the least encouragement, and I have no ambition that way. Mother, it is lucky I like Washington in many respects, and that things are upon the whole pleasant personally, for every day of my life I see enough to make one's heart ache with sympathy and anguish here in the hospitals, and I do not know as I could stand it if it was not counterbalanced outside. It is curious, when I am present at the most appalling things--deaths, operations, sickening wounds (perhaps full of maggots)--I do not fail, although my sympathies are very much excited, but keep singularly cool; but often hours afterward, perhaps when I am home or out walking alone, I feel sick and actually tremble when I recall the thing and have it in my mind again before me. Mother, did you see my letter in the N. Y. Times of Sunday, Oct. 4? That was the long-delayed

letter. Mother, I am very sorry Jeff did not send me the Union with my letter in--I wish very much he could do so yet; and always when I have a letter in a paper I would like to have one sent. If you take the Union, send me some once in a while. Mother, was it Will Brown sent me those? Tell him if so I was much obliged; and if he or Mr. and Mrs. Brown take any interest in hearing my scribblings, mother, you let them read the letters, of course. O, I must not close without telling you the highly important intelligence that I have cut my hair and beard--since the event Rosecrans, Charleston, etc., etc., have among my acquaintances been hardly mentioned, being insignificant themes in comparison. Jeff, my dearest brother, I have been going to write you a good gossipy letter for two or three weeks past; will try to yet, so it will reach you for Sunday reading--so good-bye, Jeff, and good-bye for present, mother dear, and all, and tell Andrew he must not be discouraged yet.

WALT.

XXVI

Washington, Oct. 11, 1863. DEAR FRIEND[18]--Your letters were both received, and were indeed welcome. Don't mind my not answering them promptly, for you know what a wretch I am about such things. But you must write just as often as you conveniently can. Tell me all about your folks, especially the girls, and about Mr. A. Of course you won't forget Arthur,[19] and always when you write to him send my love. Tell me about

Mrs. U. and the dear little rogues. Tell Mrs. B. she ought to be here, hospital matron, only it is a harder pull than folks anticipate. You wrote about Emma;[20] she thinks she might and ought to come as nurse for the soldiers. Dear girl, I know it would be a blessed thing for the men to have her loving spirit and hand, and whoever of the poor fellows had them would indeed think it so. But, my darling, it is a dreadful thing--you don't know these wounds, sickness, etc., the sad condition in which many of the men are brought here, and remain for days; sometimes the wounds full of crawling corruption, etc. Down in the field-hospitals in front they have no proper care (can't have), and after a battle go for many days unattended to.

Abby, I think often about you and the pleasant days, the visits I used to pay you, and how good it was always to be made so welcome. O, I wish I could come in this afternoon and have a good tea with you, and have three or four hours of mutual comfort, and rest and talk, and be all of us together again. Is Helen home and well? and what is she doing now? And you, my dear friend, how sorry I am to hear that your health is not rugged--but, dear Abby, you must not dwell on anticipations of the worst (but I know that is not your nature, or did not use to be). I hope this will find you quite well and in good spirits. I feel so well myself--I will have to come and see you, I think--I am so fat, out considerable in the open air, and all red and tanned worse than ever. You see, therefore, that my life amid these sad and death-stricken hospitals has not told upon me, for I am this fall so running over with health, and I feel as if I ought to go on, on that account, working among all the sick and deficient;

and O how gladly I would bestow upon you a liberal share of my health, dear Abby, if such a thing were possible.

I am continually moving around among the hospitals. One I go to oftenest the last three months is "Armory-square," as it is large, generally full of the worst wounds and sickness, and is among the least visited. To this or some other I never miss a day or evening. I am enabled to give the men something, and perhaps some trifle to their supper all around. Then there are always special cases calling for something special. Above all the poor boys welcome magnetic friendship, personality (some are so fervent, so hungering for this)--poor fellows, how young they are, lying there with their pale faces, and that mute look in their eyes. O, how one gets to love them--often, particular cases, so suffering, so good, so manly and affectionate! Abby, you would all smile to see me among them--many of them like children. Ceremony is mostly discarded--they suffer and get exhausted and so weary--not a few are on their dying beds--lots of them have grown to expect, as I leave at night, that we should kiss each other, sometimes quite a number; I have to go round, poor boys. There is little petting in a soldier's life in the field, but, Abby, I know what is in their hearts, always waiting, though they may be unconscious of it themselves.

I have a place where I buy very nice homemade biscuits, sweet crackers, etc. Among others, one of my ways is to get a good lot of these, and, for supper, go through a couple of wards and give a portion to each man--next day two wards more, and so on. Then each marked case needs something to itself. I spend my evenings altogether at the hospitals--my days often. I

give little gifts of money in small sums, which I am enabled to do--all sorts of things indeed, food, clothing, letter-stamps (I write lots of letters), now and then a good pair of crutches, etc., etc. Then I read to the boys. The whole ward that can walk gathers around me and listens.

All this I tell you, my dear, because I know it will interest you. I like Washington very well. (Did you see my last letter in the New York Times of October 4th, Sunday?) I have three or four hours' work every day copying, and in writing letters for the press, etc.; make enough to pay my way--live in an inexpensive manner anyhow. I like the mission I am on here, and as it deeply holds me I shall continue.

October 15. Well, Abby, I guess I send you letter enough. I ought to have finished and sent off the letter last Sunday, when it was written. I have been pretty busy. We are having new arrivals of wounded and sick now all the time--some very bad cases. Abby, should you come across any one who feels to help contribute to the men through me, write me. (I may then send word some purchases I should find acceptable for the men). But this only if it happens to come in that you know or meet any one, perfectly convenient. Abby, I have found some good friends here, a few, but true as steel--W. D. O'Connor and wife above all. He is a clerk in the Treasury--she is a Yankee girl. Then C. W. Eldridge[21] in Paymaster's Department. He is a Boston boy, too--their friendship has been unswerving.

In the hospitals, among these American young men, I could not describe to you what mutual attachments, and how passing deep and tender these boys.

Some have died, but the love for them lives as long as I draw breath. These soldiers know how to love too, when once they have the right person and the right love offered them. It is wonderful. You see I am running off into the clouds, but this is my element. Abby, I am writing this note this afternoon in Major H's office--he is away sick--I am here a good deal of the time alone. It is a dark rainy afternoon--we don't know what is going on down in front, whether Meade is getting the worst of it or not--(but the result of the big elections cheers us). I believe fully in Lincoln--few know the rocks and quicksands he has to steer through. I enclose you a note Mrs. O'C. handed me to send you--written, I suppose, upon impulse. She is a noble Massachusetts woman, is not very rugged in health--I am there very much--her husband and I are great friends too. Well, I will close--the rain is pouring, the sky leaden, it is between 2 and 3. I am going to get some dinner, and then to the hospital. Good-bye, dear friends, and I send my love to all.

WALT.

XXVII

Washington, Oct. 13, 1863. DEAREST MOTHER--Nothing particular new with me. I am well and hearty--think a good deal about home. Mother, I so much want to see you, even if only for a couple of weeks, for I feel I must return here and continue my hospital operations. They are so much needed, although one can do only such a little in comparison, amid these

thousands. Then I desire much to see Andrew. I wonder if I could cheer him up any. Does he get any good from that treatment with the baths, etc.?

Mother, I suppose you have your hands full with Nancy's poor little children, and one worry and another (when one gets old little things bother a great deal). Mother, I go down every day looking for a letter from you or Jeff--I had two from Jeff latter part of the week. I want to see Jeff much. I wonder why he didn't send me the Union with my letter in; I am disappointed at not getting it. I sent Han a N. Y. Times with my last letter, and one to George too. Have you heard anything from George or Han? There is a new lot of wounded now again. They have been arriving sick and wounded for three days--first long strings of ambulances with the sick, but yesterday many with bad and bloody wounds, poor fellows. I thought I was cooler and more used to it, but the sight of some of them brought tears into my eyes. Mother, I had the good luck yesterday to do quite a great deal of good. I had provided a lot of nourishing things for the men, but for another quarter--but I had them where I could use them immediately for these new wounded as they came in faint and hungry, and fagged out with a long rough journey, all dirty and torn, and many pale as ashes and all bloody. I distributed all my stores, gave partly to the nurses I knew that were just taking charge of them--and as many as I could I fed myself. Then besides I found a lot of oyster soup handy, and I procured it all at once. Mother, it is the most pitiful sight, I think, when first the men are brought in. I have to bustle round, to keep from crying--they are such rugged young men--all these just arrived are cavalry men. Our troops got the worst of it, but fought like devils. Our men engaged were Kilpatrick's Cavalry. They were in the rear as part of

Meade's retreat, and the Reb cavalry cut in between and cut them off and attacked them and shelled them terribly. But Kilpatrick brought them out mostly--this was last Sunday.

Mother, I will try to come home before long, if only for six or eight days. I wish to see you, and Andrew--I wish to see the young ones; and Mat, you must write. I am about moving. I have been hunting for a room to-day--I shall [write] next [time] how I succeed. Good-bye for present, dear mother.

WALT.

XXVIII

Washington, Oct. 20, 1863. DEAREST MOTHER--I got your last letter Sunday morning, though it was dated Thursday night. Mother, I suppose you got a letter from me Saturday last, as I sent one the day before, as I was concerned about Andrew. If I thought it would be any benefit to Andrew I should certainly leave everything else and come back to Brooklyn. Mother, do you recollect what I wrote last summer about throat diseases, when Andrew was first pretty bad? Well, that's the whole groundwork of the business; any true physician would confirm it. There is no great charm about such things; as to any costly and mysterious baths, there are no better baths than warm water, or vapor (and perhaps sulphur vapor). There is nothing costly or difficult about them; one can have a very good

sweating bath, at a pinch, by having a pan of warm water under a chair with a couple of blankets around him to enclose the vapor, and heating a couple of bricks or stones or anything to put in one after another, and sitting on the chair--it is a very wholesome sweat, too, and not to be sneezed at if one wishes to do what is salutary, and thinks of the sense of a thing, and not what others do. Andrew mustn't be discouraged; those diseases are painful and tedious, but he can recover, and will yet. Dear mother, I sent your last letter to George, with a short one I wrote myself. I sent it yesterday. I sent a letter last Wednesday (14th) to him also, hoping that if one don't reach him another will. Hasn't Jeff seen Capt. Sims or Lieut. McReady yet, and don't they hear whether the 51st is near Nicholasville, Kentucky, yet? I send George papers now and then. Mother, one of your letters contains part of my letter to the Union (I wish I could have got the whole of it). It seems to me mostly as I intended it, barring a few slight misprints. Was my last name signed at the bottom of it? Tell me when you write next. Dear mother, I am real sorry, and mad too, that the water works people have cut Jeff's wages down to \$50; this is a pretty time to cut a man's wages down, the mean old punkin heads. Mother, I can't understand it at all; tell me more of the particulars. Jeff, I often wish you was on here; you would be better appreciated--there are big salaries paid here sometimes to civil engineers. Jeff, I know a fellow, E. C. Stedman; has been here till lately; is now in Wall street. He is poor, but he is in with the big bankers, Hallett & Co., who are in with Fremont in his line of Pacific railroad. I can get his (Stedman's) address, and should you wish it any time I will give you a letter to him. I shouldn't wonder if the big men,

with Fremont at head, were going to push their route works, road, etc., etc., in earnest, and if a fellow could get a good managing place in it, why it might be worth while. I think after Jeff has been with the Brooklyn w[ater] w[orks] from the beginning, and so faithful and so really valuable, to put down to \$50--the mean, low-lived old shoats! I have felt as indignant about it, the meanness of the thing, and mighty inconvenient, too--\$40 a month makes a big difference. Mother, I hope Jeff won't get and keep himself in a perpetual fever, with all these things and others and botherations, both family and business ones. If he does, he will just wear himself down before his time comes. I do hope, Jeff, you will take things equally all round, and not brood or think too deeply. So I go on giving you all good advice. O mother, I must tell you how I get along in my new quarters. I have moved to a new room, 456 Sixth street, not far from Pennsylvania avenue (the big street here), and not far from the Capitol. It is in the 3d story, an addition back; seems to be going to prove a very good winter room, as it is right under the roof and looks south; has low windows, is plenty big enough; I have gas. I think the lady will prove a good woman. She is old and feeble. (There is a little girl of 4 or 5; I hear her sometimes calling Grandma, Grandma, just exactly like Hat; it made me think of you and Hat right away.) One thing is I am quite by myself; there is no passage up there except to my room, and right off against my side of the house is a great old yard with grass and some trees back, and the sun shines in all day, etc., and it smells sweet, and good air--good big bed; I sleep first rate. There is a young wench of 12 or 13, Lucy (the niggers here are the best and most amusing creatures you ever see)--she comes and goes, gets water, etc. She is pretty much the only one

I see. Then I believe the front door is not locked at all at night. (In the other place the old thief, the landlord, had two front doors, with four locks and bolts on one and three on the other--and a big bulldog in the back yard. We were well fortified, I tell you. Sometimes I had an awful time at night getting in.) I pay \$10 a month; this includes gas, but not fuel. Jeff, you can come on and see me easy now. Mother, to give you an idea of prices here, while I was looking for rooms, about like our two in Wheeler's houses (2nd story), nothing extra about them, either in location or anything, and the rent was \$60 a month. Yet, quite curious, vacant houses here are not so very dear; very much the same as in Brooklyn. Dear mother, Jeff wrote in his letter latter part of last week, you was real unwell with a very bad cold (and that you didn't have enough good meals). Mother, I hope this will find you well and in good spirits. I think about you every day and night. Jeff thinks you show your age more, and failing like. O my dear mother, you must not think of failing yet. I hope we shall have some comfortable years yet. Mother, don't allow things, troubles, to take hold of you; write a few lines whenever you can; tell me exactly how things are. Mother, I am first rate and well--only a little of that deafness again. Good-bye for present.

WALT.

XXIX

Washington, Oct. 27, 1863. DEAREST MOTHER,--Yours and George's letter

came, and a letter from Jeff too--all good. I had received a letter a day or so before from George too. I am very glad he is at Camp Nelson, Kentucky, and I hope and pray the reg't will be kept there--for God knows they have tramped enough for the last two years, and fought battles and been through enough. I have sent George papers to Camp Nelson, and will write to-morrow. I send him the Unions and the late New York papers. Mother, you or Jeff write and tell me how Andrew is; I hope he will prove to be better. Such complaints are sometimes very alarming for awhile, and then take such a turn for the better. Common means and steadily pursuing them, about diet especially, are so much more reliable than any course of medicine whatever. Mother, I have written to Han; I sent her George's letter to me, and wrote her a short letter myself. I sent it four or five days ago. Mother, I am real pleased to hear Jeff's explanation how it is that his wages is cut down, and that it was not as I fancied from the meanness of the old coons in the board. I felt so indignant about it, as I took it into my head, (though I don't know why) that it was done out of meanness, and was a sort of insult. I was quite glad Jeff wrote a few lines about it--and glad they appreciate Jeff, too. Mother, if any of my soldier boys should ever call upon you (as they are often anxious to have my address in Brooklyn) you just use them as you know how to without ceremony, and if you happen to have pot luck and feel to ask them to take a bite, don't be afraid to do so. There is one very good boy, Thos. Neat, 2nd N. Y. Cavalry, wounded in leg. He is now home on furlough--his folks live, I think, in Jamaica. He is a noble boy. He may call upon you. (I gave him here \$1 toward buying his crutches, etc.) I like him very much. Then possibly a Mr. Haskell, or some of his folks from Western New York,

may call--he had a son died here, a very fine boy. I was with him a good deal, and the old man and his wife have written me, and asked me my address in Brooklyn. He said he had children in N. Y. city and was occasionally down there. Mother, when I come home I will show you some of the letters I get from mothers, sisters, fathers, etc.--they will make you cry. There is nothing new with my hospital doings--I was there yesterday afternoon and evening, and shall be there again to-day. Mother, I should like to hear how you are yourself--has your cold left you, and do you feel better? Do you feel quite well again? I suppose you have your good stove all fired up these days--we have had some real cool weather here. I must rake up a little cheap second-hand stove for my room, for it was in the bargain that I should get that myself. Mother, I like my place quite well, better on nearly every account than my old room, but I see it will only do for a winter room. They keep it clean, and the house smells clean, and the room too. My old room, they just let everything lay where it was, and you can fancy what a litter of dirt there was--still it was a splendid room for air, for summer, as good as there is in Washington. I got a letter from Mrs. Price this morning--does Emmy ever come to see you?

Matty, my dear sister, and Miss Mannahatta, and the little one (whose name I don't know, and perhaps hasn't got any name yet), I hope you are all well and having good times. I often, often think about you all. Mat, do you go any to the Opera now? They say the new singers are so good--when I come home we'll try to go. Mother, I am very well--have some cold in my head and my ears stopt up yet, making me sometimes quite hard of hearing. I am writing this in Major Hapgood's office. Last Sunday I took dinner at

my friends the O'Connors--had two roast chickens, stewed tomatoes, potatoes, etc. I took dinner there previous Sunday also.

Well, dear mother, how the time passes away--to think it will soon be a year I have been away! It has passed away very swiftly, somehow, to me. O what things I have witnessed during that time--I shall never forget them. And the war is not settled yet, and one does not see anything at all certain about the settlement yet; but I have finally got for good, I think, into the feeling that our triumph is assured, whether it be sooner or whether it be later, or whatever roundabout way we are led there, and I find I don't change that conviction from any reverses we meet, or any delays or Government blunders. There are blunders enough, heaven knows, but I am thankful things have gone on as well for us as they have--thankful the ship rides safe and sound at all. Then I have finally made up my mind that Mr. Lincoln has done as good as a human man could do. I still think him a pretty big President. I realize here in Washington that it has been a big thing to have just kept the United States from being thrown down and having its throat cut; and now I have no doubt it will throw down Secession and cut its throat--and I have not had any doubt since Gettysburg. Well, dear, dear mother, I will draw to a close. Andrew and Jeff and all, I send you my love. Good-bye, dear mother and dear Matty and all hands.

WALT.

XXX

Washington, Dec. 15, 1863. DEAREST MOTHER--The last word I got from home was your letter written the night before Andrew was buried--Friday night, nearly a fortnight ago. I have not heard anything since from you or Jeff. Mother, Major Hapgood has moved from his office, cor. 15th street, and I am not with him any more. He has moved his office to his private room. I am writing this in my room, 456 Sixth street, but my letters still come to Major's care; they are to be address same as ever, as I can easily go and get them out of his box (only nothing need be sent me any time to the old office, as I am not there, nor Major either). Anything like a telegraphic dispatch or express box or the like should be address 456 Sixth street, 3rd story, back room. Dear mother, I hope you are well and in good spirits. I wish you would try to write to me everything about home and the particulars of Andrew's funeral, and how you all are getting along. I have not received the Eagle with the little piece in. I was in hopes Jeff would have sent it. I wish he would yet, or some of you would; I want to see it. I think it must have been put in by a young man named Howard; he is now editor of the Eagle, and is very friendly to me.

Mother, I am quite well. I have been out this morning early, went down through the market; it is quite a curiosity--I bought some butter, tea, etc. I have had my breakfast here in my room, good tea, bread and butter, etc.

Mother, I think about you all more than ever--and poor Andrew, I often

think about him. Mother, write to me how Nancy and the little boys are getting along. I got thinking last night about little California.[22] O how I wished I had her here for an hour to take care of--dear little girl. I don't think I ever saw a young one I took to so much--but I mustn't slight Hattie; I like her too. Mother, I am still going among the hospitals; there is plenty of need, just the same as ever. I go every day or evening. I have not heard from George--I have no doubt the 51st is still at Crab Orchard.

Mother, I hope you will try to write. I send you my love, and to Jeff and Mat and all--so good-bye, dear mother.

WALT.

LETTERS OF 1864

I

Washington, Friday afternoon, Jan. 29. '64. DEAR MOTHER--Your letter of Tuesday night came this forenoon--the one of Sunday night I received yesterday. Mother, you don't say in either of them whether George has re-enlisted or not--or is that not yet decided positively one way or the