

Andersonville, Ga., Aug. 29, 1864

I have, my dearest, just got one long letter of the 27 [?]. I've got some white paper too, and now reply to those questions. But before I begin to answer these, perhaps I had best tell you that I am still improving -- that the blue mass I took two or more days ago began this morning to act and that it made me quite sick for a time. I am still quite weak which makes me think of my fainting when I came from Va. I wrote Mother on yesterday about my sickness. You will doubtless see the note, for it was nothing but a note. You must not get uneasy about me, but always recollect that I am a first rate hand to take care of myself. Now for the questions:

1st. What I do every day. I think I've answered this question some time ago. But if so let me repeat. In the first place I go to the chief Surgeon's Hd. Qrs. about 8 A.M. where I [illegible] the number of sick to be admitted to the hospital. This number divided by twelve, which is the number of physicians now on duty at the stockade, gives the number each one is to admit. The whole number to be admitted depends upon the mortality in the hospital the day previous. We can only fill up the vacancies. After knowing what the number to be admitted to the hospital is, I have only to select that number from the sickest cases, make an entry of it, by entering whether private or not (the grade). I have a clerk to do the writing, give each case, as the prisoners call it, a label, and have them to be sent to the hospital. I forgot to mention that the label has written on it the name detachment, mess and the ward admitted. I forgot also to mention that the entry has the diagnosis and the word hospital written in a line corresponding with the date of admission. I now prescribe for

the other cases, my clerk writing the prescription. I'm usually engaged from 8 to 12. The evening I devote to my own affairs -- unless I happen to be officer of the day. But perhaps I'm too minute.

2nd. What pay and whether I belong to the militia? I get, or presume will some day get, the same pay one of Brown's brigadiers gets -- Eleven dollars per month. Yes I belong to the Militia. When they are disbanded I shall be footloose. I'm only a detailed Militia-man.

3rd. What the Yankees ask for their jewelry. I have been offered a very nice silver pencil containing points and an excellent gold pen for two & a half dollars. But this is the cheapest one I've found. I haven't seen any genuine gold watches, but I have seen some good looking silver ones. These range from fifty to one hundred & twenty. One of my med. mates bought a heavy plain gold ring for twelve dollars.

4th. How many prisoners. I'm sure I've answered this question, but don't recollect whether to you or to Mother. But perhaps you consider the number of deaths. Well, there are just about as many brought in as die. This keeps the stockade full. There are just about thirty thousand prisoners. Every ten days we bury about a thousand, making just about three thousand a month. It would take but a short time (comparatively) to bury the whole of them -- no new ones being brought in.

5th. Grandma's question. If there is more than one female prisoner she keeps herself undiscovered. At least I've not heard of but one and I've asked Jenkins in regard to the matter. There is one here who seems, I am told, to be a very nice woman. Her husband is a prisoner and they were both captured in N.C. She refused to be separated from her husband when told she might go home, and has occupied a little hut in a few yards of Dr. White's Hd. Qrs. until very recently. She gave birth in this time

and one of our physicians attended her in the confinement. She is now at a private house and her husband, who is paroled, visits her every night.

6th. Were eleven of the best lawyer-prisoners sent North to insist on an exchange? Twenty-one prisoners -- not lawyers, but paroled Yankees, were sent North to insist on exchange. They were such men as the authorities trusted, considering them intelligent and honorable men. If they failed in this undertaking they obligated themselves to return and become prisoners of war again.

Lastly. Have any of the prisoners been hung and do they fight much?

Yes, both. Six of the prisoners were by a jury of their own men. Sentenced and hung somewhere about 4th July last. They were hung for robbery and murder, all at the same time and to the same pole. They were the most desperate characters ever heard of. Several dead men were found under their beds. They also had any number of watches. I might continue about the prisoners -- Might tell you of the exercise of boxing, etc., but have said so much about them. Aunt Cynthia's question I must believe answer in writing to Aunt Susan. I found yesterday her note, the one she sent me when Uncle Danny's coat and pants came. The last of it says, "When you write sometimes think of your Aunt -- signed -- Susan." I don't think I ever saw the sentence before. Can you guess where I found it? It was in the carpet bag and around it was my sewing thread. She is a good auntie as well as Dad's, though her name ain't "Fay".

I'm very sorry to hear of Henry's critical condition and am surprised that the fractured bone has not united. His case, I am afraid, is a very doubtful one, if such is really the true case. I wish I could talk more hopefully, but maybe 'tis best to be plain.

You are right in getting Housand to grind the Millet, and am thankful for his kind offer.

Since getting your letter I have not been well enough to inquire for Jim McGibony. Tell Miss H. that I will try to find him. But I am very tired now, dear, and must lay aside my writing till tomorrow. It won't make your letter a great deal later, and besides, I know you will excuse me. I call it your letter, for my letters are your letters and yours are mine.

This is next to the last day of the month and I'm up again this morning. I am still far from well, having had signs in the early part of the night. A very slight fever and got up with my back hurting -- one of those old aches. You will remember that it has been a long time since I was troubled with the latter affliction. My pulse is just a hundred.

We, too, have good news from the front. I wish I knew positively that Sherman had taken back track. But the news seems to have come straight and perhaps is true.

Mrs. Moore has had another dream, has she? I expect Dr. M. will put great confidence in it for he says that his mother had two dreams -- one that she saw Dawson about the time he died and before hearing of his death and the other the same about Cosby. She interpreted them to mean the death of her sons since about that time they died.

I must now tell you how I am fixed up. We have an excellent sixteen square foot tent, of the genuine tent cloth and have for furniture a rough table, which does well enough. Comfortable bunks, a box for our victuals and cooking utensils, a clothes horse and enough stools for each man to occupy one. To fix us up this way we got a Yankee carpenter. He has

floored our tent and built brush arbors at each end. Under the same

I must tell you that each of us has drawn two sheets and a bed tick. If I just had some good straw to fill my bed tick I could have a nice and comfortable bed. We fire better in other respects in the way of provisions. I've told you what they are, and besides being coarse and too scarce. The balance of my men love beef's liver, brains, heart, tripe &c. which I can not eat. These are easily got from the slaughter pen. But I haven't had an appetite in a great while, and to have little to eat doesn't trouble me much. When I get well good perhaps I shall enjoy their tenderloin, brains, liver -- or things I never ate before.

This is my last page, dearie, so I must again soon bid you good bye. I want to see you all very much, and hope the time is not far distant when I may be allowed that privilege. Is there not now some sign of promise? Whether there is or not, let's not pine, but suffer and be strong. We have learned to labor and I think also to wait. Percy says tell father to come home. He's a great boy. Wonder if he would like to come here. I have thought that I would like to keep him with me for a while. But such a thing unless he were larger, might be very inconvenient. Kiss the boys for me and ask them to kiss Mother for father. And now dear, I must say that Good bye.

J.M.H.