

Harwood Hospital Washington D.C.
Dec. 1th 1862

My Dearest Earthly Friend

What a treasure I possess in you more precious than any thing of an earthly nature which I now know how to prize. Dearer to me than life itself are you my bosom friend but before writing any more I will tell you all about my health I feel better now than I have for over 6 weeks past and if I had my strength should feel verry near as well as when I left home my throat is some what sore to day but not enough so to ocasion much inconvenience you will think when read this that I have either gained fast or was not verry sick and I tell you I have gained much faster than I expected to even at the best when I came here you blame me for not told you the worst and all that ailed me ailed me but I done as I thought best hoping to be better soon the diarreeah has been prety hard with me having had it for over four weeks before I went to the Hospital at the Gap I managed to check it but threw me into a fever and for a few days was prety sick but I have not had the fever hard as it was broken up on the start but for a few days had quite a high fever when I came here I could scarcely walk even with help and when I got here my mouth was parched and my head was hot with a burning fever shortly after we came here Mrs Rose a member of the sisters of charity came along and seeing our condition bathed our face and hands which revived us greatly another advantage which we have experienced is a comfortable place to sleep which has been a great help to us and the most of us have been gaining since except W. Wellman he has been the sickest of any of us but is gaining nicely now his brother Fred come here last Saturday night to take care of him untill he is able to go home I wrote to Mr Wellman to come and take care of Will untill he was able to go home but D. Brand wrote the day that we come to the Hospital and Fred started the next morning after they got his letter they had not received my letter as it was written 3 or 4 days later Fred is verry attentive to his brother and I hope he will be able to go home in two or three weeks at the most but he may not be able as soon it was about 4 P.M. when I received your letter of 26th ult also one from Nat with the note enclosed which you sent with Nancy of the 9 both came from the regt as soon as I read yours I commenced this as an answer to it knowing that you would feel verry anxious to hear from me which you have probably done before this time as I have written 3 since I am here and now I will answer your request to come here I have written concerning it befor and given my reasons in part when I wrote first I felt that I should get better soon and knew the inconveniences you would be subjected to in coming here alone and after you got here as the nurses are all young men and no accomodations for females that I know of it is not the money that I have thought of nor that I do not want to see you for I have felt that it would have been a great pleasure and benefit to me if I could have had your care and company when sickest O my dear do you know how verry near you have seemed to me of late at times I have thought I should never see your face again

[December 1, 1862, continued]

or hear your kind words of love and tenderness but I feel quite encouraged now and hope before this time you have received at least two of my letters which will encourage you also O mary what comforting words to me your letter contained and how much I wish I could feel all of that christian trust and resignation which you so earnestly desire and I try to put my trust in God but often think I do not try aright but the sinctoning blood of the lamb of God I hope may cleanse me of my many agravated sins and if no more we meet may god grant that in the _____ of eternal blessedness we may share each others love forever I was verry sorry to hear you say that you could easier part with our little ones than with your unworthy husband O my dear companion never let such a thought enter your mind again though I know you love them as tenderly as I can since I have been sick I have thought of them often as onely a parent can of a child and I pray that God who has ever been so kind to us may spare the lives and health of each of our Small family to enjoy each others society would it not be a happy reunion there is much that I want to write which I fear I shall not get in this it is now after 10 but I do not feel sleepy and I want to send this by tomorrows mail I recd the money you sent and am thankful for it when I want more I will know good night and I will finish in the morning

Tuesday Morning Dec 2

feel quite well this morning hope you are enjoying good health and the children well do not feel discouraged any more but cheer up for I am doing well and hope to be well soon I feel that I have reason to be verry thankful that I have got along so well Will. Wellman says he feels much better and I think he is gaining finely I went up to ward B to see Denis Snyder and the other boys of the company this morning Denis is better and he said that he shall try to get a furlow and come home for awhile you can tell his folks if you see them you may think strange that I do not try to come home it is not because I would not like see you but I cannot say that I want to come home and have to go back I had much rather stay if I can till the ball is closed (in the vulgar phrase) do you not think it will be for the best write often and tell all the news we got the Presidents message last night but I had no chance to read it yet now do feel cheerful and hope for best I hope Edgar is quite well bfore this time do not think of coming out here it would be a great undertaking for you alone I feel quite contented and happy in your love my whole heart is yours remembering the children with a parental affection good by for the present I will write again soon I shall look for a letter direct from you soon

W. F. Chittenden

I have not read this but know it is verry imperfect but it is designed for Mary so excuses are needless W. F. C.

Harwood Hospital Dec 3d 1862

Well Jennie

I must assume a more cheerful tenor in my corespondence with you or be unable to read your letters. How comes it that you have opened corespondence with a young unmarried man now stopping in this Hospital not an invalid or convalesant but a young man in perfect health professing to have been acquainted with you in by gone years who has just recd a very touching letter with your signature but I will trifle no more with your affections it is all right. I know the motives which prompted your actions but I am very glad that Fred got of as soon as he did if that has been the means of keeping you at home for you know not the inconvenience to which you would be subject in coming here alone it is for your sake that I have writen as I have in letters of late but what I fail to write you make up in imagination even when I write worse than things really are you do not seem to be satisfied but imagine things worse than in any probability they will be soon for since I came here my health has improved verry much and as I have written before I feel quite well but verry weak if I had my strength I should feel quite like myself now for supper

7 PM in your last you wanted to know if we had sufficient to eat we do since I have got well enough to be about I have been to the mess room for meals our fare morning breakfast is coffee bread ocasionaly aple sauce this morning molasses noon dinner boiled beef potatoes soup turnips cabbage & bread alternating each day Supper tea or coffee bread and ocasionaly butter enough so that none need to go hungry if not to dainty when Fred come here I felt verry sorry that you could not have known it before he started but I did think you wer so anxious to take a ride with him (there I went any more) but in all candor I tell you that what I have written since I have been has been as bad as I really was to be sure I might written much about myself as to bad feelings neglect of nurses and Hospital scenes of a touching character but I felt that it was not absolutely nessessary especially to one so immaginative as you are & another reason I did not feel able to go into a detailed account of every thing but had my thoughts with there far from here with those so near to me in my hearts purest affection you may think by this that I do not want to see you or that I do not regard the interest you take in my wellfare also that in return for your Epistles of love tenderness and encouragement to put my trust in the savior of sinners I should be so unfeeling as you may think me to be when you read this but Mary Judge me not to harshly for if my hearts emotions were spread out before you you see who was the possessor of all my affections arround whom all my hopes of earthly happiness centered though in time past I have been unkind and deeply wronged your confiding heart yet I hope the Lord who has been so kind to us will forgive my wickedness as freely as I know you will and I hope when the days of war & carnage are over that we may spend many happy days together and then we can recount to each other by gone trials in the quiet retreat of our own happy

[December 3, 1862, continued]

home with those little darlings whom I should like to clasp with their mother to my heart

Wednesday morning Dec 4 weather continues remarkably good for the season. I feel usually to day and quite encouraged about myself I hope cheer up and hope for the best try and view things on a brighter side it will be more pleasureable to you and when I read a cheerful letter from you it does me much more good for I think you are enjoying yourself as well as could be expected I recd a letter from the regt. last night with two enclosed from you one of the 17 another 20 Nov which I may answer more fully some other time I should be verry glad to see little Clyde and hiram in their new mits Pa can immagine how they look and wish I could be near to sooth their aching hearts for their little troubles are as hard for them to bear as greater ones to us. you spoke of the money you sent me I have recd it all safe also the stamps I am quite well on it for money having the \$2 you sent me a little change & about .50 cts postage stamps I borrowed \$3.00 before I left the regt but shall not repay it untill I receive my pay I use but little for we cannot get out to buy any thing and it is as well for we have enough to eat I will let you know as I want more I think Will. Wellman is improving but he is quite sick yet and it may be some time before he will be able to go home but I think he will get along as well as could be expected he will have as good care as possible to give here I saw D Snyder this morning he says he is some better I have recd 14 letters from you which I think I shall send home by Fred Wellman he and Will. will visit you I shall go to town now and may send you a few little presents but they will not be valuable the reason I send my letters home they are getting quite bulky for my blouse pocket as I do not burn them as many do and they might be lost I do not think it advisable to try for a furlow and a discharge would be impossible to get but I shall be careful and not go to the Regt untill better nor shall I perform any duty here after unless my health will admit without endangering it we have to learn as we go along and none will look out for another trust me for the future and I will deal frank with you always my love W. F. C. write soon and I will do the same

Harwood Hospital Dec. 7th 1862

Dear Mary

I will spend a part of this holy Sabbath day by conversing with you by the only means which we now have the pen, hoping this will find you and ours in perfect health and feeling more cheerful and resigned than when you wrote some of your late letters it pains me much to read of your anguish and suffering on acct. of my absence O my true hearted Mary would I could be by your side to day and tell you of the anxiety I have felt for you that you might enjoy yourself well during my absence O try and be courageous ever trusting in the Almighty for sustaining grace I know that your times are hard and my feelings are often pained when I think of your trials my own sufferings are nothing when I think of my dear family so far from me and the hardships you endure truly we did not fully realize all things before I enlisted could we but have looked even a little way into the future I should no doubt been at home now with my dear family but it may be all for the best that that we have been thus separated and to day I feel that we shall all meet again and I hope to spend many happy days together and shall we not know how to profit by our past experience I know you can not help thinking of the dangers to which I may be exposed yet I have never seen the time that I have had the least dread of what was before us or a night that I could not go to sleep as well as if at home unless sickness prevented it which has often been the case we have never been near the enemy as has been expected but have received orders that sounded very much like fighting soon but it is much the best way I think to ever be hopeful and not dwell so much on coming trouble but do not think I mean to blame you for I do not I know we are differently constituted and I know very well the anxiety I felt to hear from you while the children were sick also of your health as to my present health it is not as good as when I last wrote or at least I do not feel as well as I did then what the reason is I can not tell yet I apprehend no danger I shall try to take as good care of my self as I possibly can I think perhaps I may have hurt myself by going to the mess room for meals as we sometimes have to wait in the cold for half hour or nearly and since Friday last it has been quite cold resembling very much the cold windy days in Feb. & March at home it snowed two or three inches on Friday and last night froze ice two inches thick you can judge by this of the climate I often think of the poor soldiers standing on guard or in their shelter tents those who have not had a trial of it hardly know how to appreciate the comforts of home the sun shines brightly to day but only in places exposed to the sun and sheltered from the wind does it thaw at all I shall not go for meals any more at present I think it will be better for me to have less and stay in the tent and my appetite is not very craving so a little will do very well I try to make my self as contented as possible in my present condition which might be much worse than it is and now I hope you will not worry as much as you have about me for I am much better than I have been but to tell you the truth I do not think I shall get well as fast or as soon as I was at first in hopes I should. our Captain

[December 7, 1862, continued]

visited us yesterday or called on us I should have said and it seemed very much like seeing a friend as I trust we each did he was just from the Regt. Nat was well and the others whom you know the assistant Surgeon was with him he told me not to come back until well he brought me a letter from you of the 12 ult. and a note from Nat I intend to send a letter to him to morrow I will send his note in this Denis Snyder was here yesterday he said he was some better Will. Wellman is decidedly better and the other boys from our Co. who are in this Hosp. are also better Fred thinks he will start for home in two weeks if nothing happens I will write more to send with this

Monday morning Dec 8th 1862

how are you all at home this morning I do earnestly hope you are well and enjoying yourself I wish I could be there long enough to bring water for you to wash though with my present feelings it would be hard to carry a pail of water from the pump to the house but I feel it would be a pleasure for me to help and not come grudgingly as often in times past when I thought my work was of more importance than the house work I often think of the past and if I am so happy as to return home I think it will be a pleasure for me to assist you whenever I can comfort and happiness is to be preferred to some in pecuniary concerns at the sacrifice of the former will you please to tell me of your trouble in getting along with Edgar it will not be mentioned by me I had strong hopes that he would be very attending to you now that you were alone and try to mitigate your loneliness if he would do better by paying him for his time do so for I want you to have it as easy as you can does Olivia stay with you now and have you heard from John lately if Newton has deserted again I hope he will profit by his past experience and not get trapped again I can not recommend his way of getting discharged nor can I censure a person as strongly as before I come here. you complained of not getting my letters often enough I do not know as you get them all or as I write as many as Mr Bailey but I think he has no stronger regards for his family than your humble servant W. F. C. I have forgotten the exact number I wrote before I left camp but I think this is the 5th since I come here I have rec'd 15 from besides two notes one by Mr B the other by Nat the last one rec'd of your late written was the one written at Fathers I have looked anxiously for tidings direct from you and they will no doubt come soon I feel better to day than yesterday Will. Wellman is also better it is a fine morning and will be much warmer to day keep up good courage I shall write soon try and have the stock wintered well no more at this time though I would like to write much good morning to you all your husband W. F. C.

Yorkshire Sunday Dec 7th

My Dear Husband

I will endeavor to converse a few minutes with you by way of the silent pen feeling thankful we have this means left us for I can assure you it is very pleasant for me to receive a letter written by the hand of one so dear to me knowing his heart is in the words he writes We are having very cold weather now we seldom have colder it begins to freeze a little in the cellar but I am in hopes to keep the frost from the potatoes how I worry about you O if it is as cold there as here you will suffer terribly but do be careful of your health for her sake who waiteth & watcheth anxiously for the return of her William I hope you are no worse & now do not exert yourself to wait on others still I would have you do as you would be done by I suppose Frederick Wellman is there before now I wrote to him to have him take care of you if he would & help you to get home & he should be paid if money would pay him but I told him to let you see the letter so I presume you know all about it by this time if you could get your discharge and be at home it would be better for you than 20 dollars a month there never mind the bounty Now William if I am wicked then I am but I do want you to tell them you cannot stand it for I know you cant. It will certainly be your death if you go to the Regt again you will be nothing but a bill of expense to them if you stay Try so hard to get home

We have killed hogs last monday they were not very good but it cant be helped I fed them 35 bush of grain but they did not do very well write to me every mail if you can for I do not know how to wait any longer than from one mail to another & when it skips by and I do not get one I am in a perfect worry till another mail Wm. you may not believe it but my heart is with you almost constantly I do not think there is another woman in this neighborhood who remembers their absent Husband any more tenderly than does your Mary but I will forbear for you will think me selfish I dreamed of you last night & how I wish that a part of my dream were reality for I thought you were with us once again and I hope the time will soon come that this may be the case---Lucretia Beach is quite sick with the typhoid fever there is not much sickness around here but I hear Roswell Spauldings little ones have got the dyptheria as well as quite a number of others in their vicinity I wish you would tell me if you want the cattle grained if they are not marked and if you want the yearlings grained and which ones are coming in next spring Edgar has bought a colt and wants to winter it here & wants to know what you will winter it for to hay only he buy his own grain it is a this years colt please tell just what you think

O William do be careful & write often I will send you money if you will only write please tell me if you have got any stamps or any money from me & I will send you paper and envelopes if you wish Good Bye for this time with a thousand good wishes and as many kisses if I could send them I hope to hear from you tomorrow tell me if F. Wellman let you read the letter I sent him I write to him to do so Mr Bailey is at Point Lookout Maryland Mr Freeman is with him

[MJC, December 7, 1862, continued]

Accept of my hearts purest love

M J Chittenden

Monday morning Not as cold as yesterday but quite wintry yet I wrote yesterday in quite a hurry for I did not have time to write much Clyde is not very well and I had to take care of him nearly all the time I did not intend to say anything to you about it but I thought if I were in your place I should rather know. he has got the sore throat but I am in hopes it is nothing more than canker I have just sent for the Doctor and I will do all for him that can be done do not worry for my candid opinion is that it is nothing more than canker he is sleeping very easy now and I hope he is no worse I will write every mail so that you will be well informed Now William I do not want you to worry at all for it will make it no better and will make you worse I think Clyde will soon be better and if not we must try to be resigned to the will of God. the rest of us are quite well Lucretia Beach is not as well this morning Do write often I fear this will find you worse but I hope & pray that it may find you better Good Bye my dear and may Heaven's Choicest blessings rest on you

M.

William the Doctor is here he says Clyde has got the Dyphtheria but he says he thinks he will get along if nothing happens do not worry for "He doeth all things well

Good Bye my dear

[undated fragment from Harewood Hospital, Washington, D.C., December 1862]

your pleasure as to sending a box to me but if you should do not send a large one for I do not know how long I shall stay here perhaps not till I get it but if I had of known how long I should have been here I would have had one sent before this time if you send one direct Harwood Hospital Washington DC and it will come safe I think your letter was mailed the 5 I got it the 8 also one from Fathers Folks of the same dates. I have paper envelopes & stamps enough at least for the recd. 3 stamps from our folks in their last also one in each former letter monday I went to Town for quire of paper & a pack of envelopes I sold one half to one of the company so if you send paper to me I should prefer to have it filled with kind and encouraging words as in time past yesterday morning I was told by a citizen from town that all the physicians left the day before for Fredericksburgh and it is thought the two armies are fighting now but it may be false we heard last night that the President had made another proclamation offering the southern confederacy the privilege of coming back as they wer and abolishing slavery within the next thirty years or that is they may it was told here but I hardly believe it I cannot write much mor as I want it to go by to days mail but shall write again soon Fred Wellman started for the Reg't. yesterday but could go no further than Alexandria he thinks he will start for home next monday but he will not though Will is gaining fast my love to you all kiss the boys for pa and my best wishes to your Father & Mother and all other friends I have not forgotten them although I have not kept my promise farewell for the present

Wm. F Chittenden

Tuesday morning 1/2 past 12 Dec 9th

Dear William

I will try and pass off some of these lonely hours in writing to you I am sitting up with Little Clyde Orcelia is staying here but she was up till midnight last night with Lucretia and I told her I could set up well enough but I wanted some one here for fear Clyde would be worse for the Doctor said it would be nothing strange if he should be taken worse suddenly and not live but a few hours but I do not think he is any worse I have been sleeping about an hour & a half but I have to give him medicine quite often and I do not want to neglect him so I guess I shall not try and sleep any more the Dr is coming again this morning and I hope he will pronounce him better I sent for Mother to come here last night but E J's folks sent for her yesterday morning and she was down there Myrta was quite sick but I did not learn what ailed her your father was here just dark last night he came up after the Barley he was intending to start for Buffalo this morning but he said he did not know what to do about going now Clyde was sick (but I guess he will go) I wanted Mandana to come up and stay with me till Clyde was better but she said perhaps I might get some one else till he got back but I do not know who I could get for now Mother is down to the Center Olivia will have to be at home but I shall get along some way. I mean to try to lean on the arm of Jesus and he will bear me up under every coming trial I want to feel to leave my little one in the arms of the Good Father knowing that He will do all things well Let us William try and give all our hearts to God knowing that all earthly joys are but for a moment and let us lay up all our treasures in heaven that we may one day find them in that paradise where sorrow never enters

William

As I know your anxious heart will be filled with hope & fear till you hear from your little Clyde again I will finish this and send it by the Doctor (I am writing with Clyde in my lap so you must excuse poor writing) for he is coming again to day he said yesterday that he could tell how it would turn with him yet. he thought it looked rather a better color than the day before but he said he was not out of danger But William this is the strangest disease I ever saw one hour Clyde will be around to play & the next he will seem very sick—I just stoped writing long enough to swab his throat which is a very hard job I am alone with the children in the house most of the time Edgar is out down to work & your folks have none of them been there except your father when he came up after the barley & there has none of my folks been here till last night father came up and brought Olivia & then went down to set up with Myrta she has got the Dyphtheria too Olivia set up with Lydia Bull nearly all night but she went off and left me this morning before the work was done up & she knew I was pretty well used up & that Clyde wanted me to hold him a good deal I told her I thought she was quite sisterly but she only answered me very unkindly and went off but I intend to

[MJC, December 9, 1862, continued]

make the best of it I can I have one comfort I know there is one who will never leave nor forsake me if I but put my trust in Him which I mean to try to do I feel sorry on your part to be so far from your little one when he is sick but God will give you strength sufficient for every trial if you but lean on him and I should be thrice glad to lean on your bosom for a resting place when sad and weary & some one to counsel with whose heart would echo back every anxious throb of mine but as God hath seen fit that it should be otherwise let us trust in His strength & wisdom to work all these things together for our good I recd your letter of the 1st 2nd & was glad to hear that you was better

You must excuse me for this time

The Doctor is here now & says he thinks Clyde is better to day & I sincerely hope this may be the case I shall do my best for him so do not worry & will be sure to keep you well informed I just received a letter from you in which you thought to laugh a little at me for writing to a young man but I am all right & hope you are & sometime if you ever see me I shall tell you a little more than I can write the reason of my being so alarmed about you but not now You do not think my letters tend to cheer you & do not like the tenor of them perhaps I had not better write so often (I guess I shall though) I want you to write just as often and a little more so—Did you have N Eeverts bows and staple or ring have you sold your hay knife

No more now but I will write again in a day or two if I could I can write any thing that will interest you I will take good care of the children and do not worry (done in a hurry) Good Bye

M J Chittenden

Yorkshire Sunday Dec 14th 1862

To the Absent

It is sunday and Mandana & myself are along with the children Clyde is asleep in the cradle by my side & Hiram is at the table trying to eat some toast & Mandana is preparing for supper for I expect Edgar home about 5 oclock & think Mother will come with him. They have gone to Myrta's funeral "she is dead" she died yesterday morning about 8 o clock Harriet & E. J. are well nigh prostrated beneath this rod of affliction Our folks are all gone but Marilla I do not know where they left her Nancy has gone & I would have been glad to have gone but could not & now William I know you will want to know how the children are & I will tell you as well as I can I do not know and all I can do is to Judge by their appearances the Doctor said yesterday he thought they were both better, but Hiram's throat is swelled pretty bad it hurts him a good deal. & Clyde is a sick child he wants to lay in the cradle the most of the time and he sleeps a good deal he is very cross but the Doctor says most of children are with this disease but I let him do just as he wants to as far as I can & not let him injure himself he has eat a very little to day and last night eat quite a supper for him I am in hopes he is in reality better but do not know I expect the Dr some time to day and I will let you know how he thinks the children are I have had to give Medicine once an hour and once in two hours ever since last monday (six days) and until last night I had given it to them nearly every time myself but I had got so worn out, that it seemed as though I could not stand it & father was here & Jane Hall & Wyman and set up so I went to bed & rested quite well I have not had my clothes off for the past week but once and I stand it quite well but I miss you now I can tell you. if you thought it would do any good you had better try & get discharged & come home when the Wellman boys come but do as you think best I have a great deal to write you but you must wait until I have more time.

Evening the Doctor has been here and says he thinks Hiram is better and Clyde not so well his throat does not look as well as yesterday but he thinks he may get along if nothing happens but William you must try and be prepared for whatever awaits you Our little Clyde may leave us for a brighter home & God helping me I mean to try and be prepared for each coming trial Mother is here with me to night

Monday morning I am quite well to day considering how little chance to sleep I would be very glad to say the children was better but I could not and tell it as I think for my dear I fear we shall not all be again permitted to meet on this side the grave if you could I think it would be advisable to try and get a furlough and come home but you you must act your own pleasure Clyde will either be better or else done with earth and its sorrows long before this could reach you & you get home

Do as you think best

I have not time to write more

M J C

[MJC, December 15, 1862, continued]

The Dr is here he thinks Hiram is getting along very well & he thinks Clyde will get along if every thing works favorably We will hope for the best and by God's grace assisting us try & be prepared for the worst write often and I will do the same

E J & Hattie are here

Hattie is most sick

[undated letter from Hiram M. Chittenden to William F. Chittenden, apparently included in Mary J. Chittenden's letter of December 14-15, 1862—see William F. Chittenden's letter of December 19, 1862.]

Dear pa come home and see little Hiram & Clyde I take all the medicine the Doctor gives me so I can get well & see pa when he comes home I will kiss you if you will come home and see me. I want to see my pa pretty bad Good Bye //// From your little Hiram

Hiram wanted to write to pa so I took hold of his hand and helped him write pleas to accept of yo

Harwood Hospital Dec 19th 1862

Dear Mary

I have just recd your letter of the 14-15 and have left my tent for a more secluded spot where none but God can witness my grief and to write a few lines feeling that I could not controll my feelings sufficiently to do so in my tent. I first read Hiram's letter not without dropping a few tears as I remembered the dear little ones as last I saw them and how Hiram called pa to come back. but hoped to find better news inside than I did but will try and not murmur at the dealings of providence O Mary do put your trust in God for nothing else can sustain you could you look into my heart now you would see how deeply I feel for you but I will as we are prompted by nature to do hope to the last but full well I know that ere this time our little Clyde has left for pure _____ than is afforded to mortals here or is better one consoling thought we have our loss if our little are taken from us dearly as we love them it will be their great gain this may well be called a vale of tears sorrow and suffering await us day by day and if but prepared for better twould be to reign with Christ at home and we have the cheering promise to suport us and for all suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not for of such is the kingdom of heaven and except ye become as such ye shall not enter the kingdom of eternal happiness O for that child like simplicity that purity of heart which in the sight of god is of great price I feel that I can sympathize with E. J. folks but their little Myrta has gone to sing with Jesus and they have now that which will draw their hearts heavenward as nothing else can. I can write nothing to encourage you but wish you to carry all your cares to the lamb of God and so live that we may meet our little ones where sickness pain & sin will never disturb is more O Mary how can you think your William does not want to return to his home but it is impossible for me to at present if I can get a furlow I shall do so at the earliest moment but it often takes a long time to get one if entitled to if I can get my discharge I shall do it but I cannot do it now I fear you think I do not feel as anxious to be at home as you do that I should but if it wer offered wealth honor or a discharge I should be by your side verry soon you may think by my letters of late that I have hardly considered our little ones sickness as I should but I have tried to do nothing to discourage you O my dear how gladly would I lay down my life for them if the sacrifice would be called for though their Fathers heart is not as free from sin as theirs is nor am I prepared to meet my God it begins to be duskish

W. F. C.

Saturday morning Dec. 20

good morning Mary and a greeting to my little ones if alive I cannot express my feelings in words and in imagination I have followed you through each trying ordeal through you may have passed would I could be with you that our tears might mingle together and to sooth each others aching heart O it is sad to hear such news so far from home and no way to hasten to them but I can only point you to the redeemer of sinful man for sustaining grace do not try to bear your afflictions alone for they will crush you to the earth after I went to bed last night I was thinking of you and how hard it would be for you all alone under such sorrows and it seemed as though my heart would break I could feel no worse if by your side even if to follow our little boy to his last resting place O what a pleasure to have kissed him once more but we will try to meet in heaven. I slept soundly last night and feel much refreshed I had hoped I might have dreamed of home or had some presentiment of the reality of tho it might be sad but I have had no dream of home for some time but I have hopes this morning that our little ones are alive and better if not I know they are better off and freed from a world of sin and pain I will not write much more at present I sent a letter to you yesterday and had not intended to send another untill monday next but when I read yours I thought I would write immediately for I know you will feel more anxious than ever to hear from me but I fear I can not write any thing to encourage or comfort you but for the sake of all that is dear to you take good care of your health. I will try to feel as resigned as possible to what ever may await us and try and lift my heart to God in prayers for grace to guide us with a murmer through every trying scene I shall write as soon as I get another accep of my love kiss my darlings for me if spared and give my best wishes to all friends from one who wishes he was by your side whose whole heart is yours

W. F. Chittenden

[undated fragment, circa December 1862]

deeply as a fond husband can with his chosen companion under your affliction would I could be by your side to comfort you and care for our darling child but I know you will see him well cared for I have not a fear in that respect. but when I think of you (alone in one sense) my heart almost bursts with grief we know not what sore trials are before us and it may be well that we do not but that dreadful scourge Dyptheria is more dreaded by me than most any other that flesh is heir to but he that ordered it promised that all things should work to gather for our good if we but put our trust in him as our savior the giver of every blessing it is through his mercies that we have been spared thus long to enjoy each other society and of our dear children O my dear Mary may his grace sustain you through every trial though they may be severe and before this reaches you our darling boy around whom so many of our fond hopes have clustered may lay in the cold embrace of death never more to respond to our call in his playful way I often fancy I can see him with his little brother at their play with his pleasant laugh of joyous delight and O may God in his mercy grant to spare each of our lives to meet again it is hard for me to reconcile my wicked heart to say his will be done but may this sin not be laid to my charge. when I commenced to write this afternoon I did not think of finishing it at present but I knew how anxious you would be to hear from me so I determined to finish it so as to send it by tomorrows mail. your letters come through as quick as could be expected your last was mailed the 9 onely three days why can we not hear often from each other I do not feel to complain but feel thankful that I am remembered by so worthy a woman I do not think there are any more true than my own chosen Mary, and surely none are remembered more tenderly by their absent friends I am writing on the half sheet you sent thinking you intended it for me to use in that way but I now have 10 sheets of paper and as many envelopes and stamps I feel verry greatful to you for every kindness it greatly mitigates ones loneliness to know that he is remembered by a true woman you said you was afraid that I was worse but do not worry about me for I am getting along finely keep up good courage under every trial and O my dear Mary though your William is not a christian yet it is his earnest desire that you may ever put your trust in God you can there find help at all times and amidst the sorest trials. as to our business I hardly think you will have grain enough to grain the steers and yearlings and have any left for springs work it will be best however to keep them all thriving even if we should have some to buy I hardly know how to advise you now if I could see in what condition they wer in I could tell you better I think it would be best to give the cattle and sheep straw in the day times but not to confine them to closely to it though they will do as well to eat their feed clean as to keeping Edgars colt I fear you will not have the hay to spare there are I suppose 10 head of cattle 27 or 28 sheep which will require considerable feed to keep them untill grass again grows and if you fall short I fear it will be a hard matter to find any verry handy to be got and you may be alone or nearly so but this is looking far into the future I do not intend however that you shall have the

[undated fragment, circa December 1862, continued]

care of the farm and stock upon your mind after this winter if I should not return I think it would be best to let all out or sell the stock for I can see that it is wearing upon your health faster than you admit. but as to the catt I feel willing to leave the answer with you and as in all other things I shall feel satisfied. you may think strange that I do not try to get a discharge or that I do not feel verry anxious to return to my family but could you know all my feelings towards those so dear to me you would not blame me but I fear it would be a difficult understanding even at present as to my wages and bounty I would gladly give all for a discharge for I realize that I am loosing more than I shall as have gained if I have to stay here long believe this place has no charms for and strong as may be your desire for me to come home it cannot exceed my own wer I offered the wealth of the richest man in Washington and stay from you or the privilege of returning home, it would not be long before I would be by your side so ardent is my desire for home that money has little weight in my thoughts I see that

[with both sides of the sheet filled, Chittenden continues writing in the margins]
my dear I almost dread the next news I shall hear but will hope it may be well. I wish you would get a little of extract of smartweed you might find it to be a verry efficient remedy verry often I have seen many cures in the regt with it you can get it at machias as to your letter you have I doubt not received a hint of it before this time he showed it to me & I told him he had better let me have it & he done so it was all right Will is gaining but not as fast as we thought he would it would be hard to tell when they will start for home it may be well not to mention some things I have written one more word of caution take good care of your health & the children and do not worry any about me for I can take care of myself even at present I have had some verry pleasant dreams of you of late what a pleasure it would be if I could rest by your side or on your bosem instead of alone tonight . . . and you will let me know all about home affairs even though the news should cause my heart to break but we will hope and pray the Lord will not lay his chastening rod to heavily upon us though we merit not the kindness we daily receive & Mary trust me I will use my utmost powers to get my discharge but I want to go cautious as there are so many who are playing deception that the doctors are very careful one thing as you wish it I will not go back to the regt. unless sent I have thought I would rather be there than here but my hardships would be greater I guess you will be glad when I stop for I fear you will not find it to pay the reading but my mind has been far away with you I shall have to close or get more paper but I shall not have time to write another sheet so you must not blame me I will write often

[undated fragment, apparently circa December 1862]

it is now bed time and I hope my dear ones are all well and sleeping sweetly O how much I hope you do not have to watch by our darlings sick bed but I can hardly expect that as it is but four days since the missive you sent me was in your hand O may God spare each of your lives is your husbands fervent prayer Mary are you comfortable for all things can you keep warm or is there any thing you need which you have not got if so get it *[written in margins:]* if you would please him who loves you better than life itself ever your till death us part you will find this quite an Enigma but excuse for the present farewell Dear ones

W. F. Chittenden

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

I will now let you know about our debts all the debts I have paid is Charles Lowe 61 dollars 30 cts Dillingham & Co 10 dollars Wright & Cole 8 dollars Wiltsie 1 dollar and I have paid out some money for things of late which was needed for the family & I have paid some for work I let father take \$10 to pay the taxes how much they are I do not know & I have 21 now which I am saving for the benefit of the absent one if he wants it I will tell you a little how I have had to be last week after Mandana went home I was alone except evenings only when Mother or some neighbor came in, with both the children sick but God gave me strength to bear it and Rhoda Colton is here now and if money will pay her I shall keep her till Clyde is better than he is now I know you will want me to do so I wrote a line to Rhoda & she come as soon as she learned how I was situated for which God will reward her I want you to write often and if you think you can get your discharge by staying I will wait patiently do not judge me too harshly I will do all I can for the little ones

Little Stella Spaulding is dead and now both of their little ones are in Heaven and their home is desolate let us thank God that this is not the case with our home

I must close for Clyde is crying for Ma

M J C

Harewood Hospital Dec. 26th 1862

Loved Friends at home

I have just rec'd yours of the 20th so full of cheering news from the sick ones and of love and tenderness from one dearer than life itself to me my own sweet Mary I began to feel quite anxious to hear from you again as it has been four days since I heard from you but the mail did not come yesterday perhaps because it was Christmas I hope you had a merry time & I know if the boys continue to get better that that it will afford you more comfort than the most sestal scenes on earth though you probably had to stay at home we wer provided with a verry good dinner yesterday all that a sick (except apetite) or well man could wish hogs exemp boiled Ham roast turkey chicken pie mashed potatoes pies cake _____ bread butter & cheese (poor writing but you will have found it out before you read this) but one kiss from my sweet Mary & little ones is worth more to me than the greatest luxuries of earth I hope soon to realise the exquisite sweetness of that love which is mine & to you may sweet reality banish dreams of domestic hapiness and pleasures but I do not want you to be to expectant for I may be disappointed but at present I think there is a fair prospect of a good many furlows being granted soon as there is a report that all who are disabled or unfit for the service ar to be discharged those who will not be able to get to their regts. within thirty days to be furlowed and I know of one who will not be fit for service in thirty days & I think not in three years (as I mean _____), but I do not think it advisable to aply for a discharge at present as I have been in the Hospital but a little over 5 weeks and no proof of disability but a slender constitution and that is not sufficient grounds for a discharge at present men ar held if the least possible chance of there being able for the service again but the graft of soft soaping is one of value here I have seen men as well and healthy as when they entered the service discharged just because they could tell a pitiful story or at best they admit it as soon as free an old man past 45 I should judge who belonged to our ward complained of a loss of eyesight and thus got a discharge but no sooner than the papers were in his hands and he had got his pay he told that his eyesight was as good as when he enlisted and did not bother him in shooting or reading just before he was so blind he could walk around but none wished him back for we can sympathize with each other. I believe I will not write any news that are in circulation so mostly it is unimportant. I was glad to hear of the debts you had paid I wish we had the means to consel every obligation against us for to be out of debt is out of danger and a greater chance to follow independent inclination but we have every reason to be thankful for the many blessings we have enjoyed both social & temporal but in our prosperity we are apt to forget from whence the blessings flow but unlike us our heavenly father is ever watchful over us in prosperity as well as adversity in answer to your question if I wanted you to let me know of the children sickness you done as I wished you to do before I left home & I feel much better than if you had not let me know anything about it & if they had been taken away I should have felt that you had wronged me I cannot but admire the frankness which you have manifested in our correspondence (no flattery I assure you). tell Father or Mother if they say anything to you again about writing the truth & the whole truth that you done as I wished you to do & the motive was a right one but I think in regard to myself it is much different I knew you had enough to worry you during my absence without thinking that I was sick this is the reason of my past conduct but since I have been here I have dealt frankly with you I have not had any diareah since I have been here but on the contrary have been quite costive but not enough so to occasion

December 26, 1862, continued

great inconvenience as to your sickness I suppose you had rather it would be so than otherwise but you have my tenderest sympathies for you I hope before this time you are well & before - - -
- I may be by your side it will give give me pleasure hereafter to alleviate if in any way I can your suffering and I hope that hereafter to live more to make others happy and comfortable than for self you will excuse me for not being more interesting but I do not feel much like writing you have my best wishes for a happy New Year kiss the little ones for their pa I hope they are still on the gain I had 3 more oranges given to me they are in my haversack now would they wer in the hands of my 3 dearest friends & they may yet be good night to you all

W. F. Chittenden

Saturday morning [December] 27 quite well hope to hear from you soon I will write to the boys soon but I have a _____ this morning but it will not last long except of my best wishes from your friend and companion

W. F. Chittenden

Sunday Dec 28th

Dear William

It is the close of a beautiful Sabbath day and I find myself seated by the stand trying to prepare a little note to send to the absent one of whose health & prosperity I long so much to hear & whose image is ever present with me. Clyde is gaining some I think although he cannot improve very fast with such a swelling on his neck the Doctor was here yesterday but he thought it would not do to open till tomorrow or next day he thinks the swelling will be a benefit to him in the long run--for the disease will the sooner get out of his system Clyde is asleep in his cradle & Hiram is giving uncle Charlie some apples (O how I wish you had some) and Rhoda is sitting by the window reading in the Ladies Books and Edgar is at the Barn doing chores and you can tell very well what Mary is doing & I wish I were a little Bird I would very soon find out what my William was doing & how he was O Wm. you can hardly tell how much better I should feel if you would tell me what ailed you & all your symptoms you need not think any one reads my letters but myself for no one has ever opened a letter from you but once Your folks opened one when you was sick but they soon found out that would not answer I have told all the folks yours & mine that Williams letters must never be opened by no one but me if this is wrong so let it be I will not allow it at any rate so do not fear to write to me just what you wish & do tell me what ails you and how you are do not refuse me this I have recd. your letter of the 18th and as I told you in my other the one of the 19th 20th O my Dear how thankful we should be that our little ones are alive But William strange as it may seem to you never once since they have been sick have I breathed a prayer to God for their recovery But O how ardently I plead for strength to bear all my grief without a murmur! how could I ask for those little ones to live in this cruel sinful world how much rather would I see them laid in the silent tomb than torn from my arms in early manhood to go to the battle field and how often I have thought I would sooner part with them than with my William so far away, and if this sacrifice was called for I should have tried not to murmur But God has spared them thus thus far and I pray my Father it may be for some noble purpose. I recd. a letter from John last monday and answered it last week. I recd. one from A. E. Stringham a week ago last friday but have not answered it yet and do not know when I can Rhoda says Charles Stringham is in the army again. every one for their notion but if my man gets home once I do not think he will go a second time at least if he lets me boss the job I dreamed a few nights ago that you came home on a short furlow and the thoughts of your leaving so soon again spoiled my visit and now I will tell you just how I feel about your coming home on a furlow if your health is like to be ruined before you can get a discharge never wait for a moment but as soon as you can get a furlow come home but if your health will admit I had rather wait longer than to have you come home to leave me again for the seat of war

[MJC, December 28, 1862, continued]

Now William do not entertain for one moment a thought that Mary's heart ever thinks of blaming you that you do not come home Oh! that my heart was spread open to your view I have no thoughts of you but love and trust O Wm. did you know how fully you possessed my heart you would not write as you do at times seeming almost to think Mary blames you for every little thing which I know you are no more to blame for than the dead O William let us lay all these little things aside and let nothing but peace and love dwell between us Good Night with kiss and a thousand bright wishes and loving embraces when I have a chance

M J C ---

Yorkshire Thursday Jan 1st 1863

My Dearest Friend

"I wish you a happy New Year—I have had as happy a one as I could alone. there has been no one here to day except Father & Edgar but I have not felt very lonesome for I have recd. your letter of the 22nd & 23rd to day and it seemed much like a visit I recd one last Tuesday from you and now let me tell you a little how I felt when I read it I was a good mind not to write again very soon to think you would imagine I felt hard to you. you just knew better all the time I do not know what I said to make you think any such thing & to tell the truth when I recd your letter I felt pretty bad but I made up my mind that would not do so I gave it up and cheered up as soon as possible Now I want you to just remember if you write in that way any more you will get a good whipping that is if I can get a chance to do it but I shall not say how hard I will whip you but wait till you get home and see)—. but I guess this will do and perhaps I may as well say here that I might not have noticed so much if it had not been for some things which have happened of late but you know when one is in trouble they notice everything more keenly than ever Now I have a good deal to tell you & I do not know hardly how to wait but I will forbear till I see you if I do not have to wait too long I wrote two letters to you and kept them at home but if you do not come home soon I shall send them to you Now William dont you ever think I feel hard to you again for I have never had a hard thought toward you since you left our fireside I will not write any more now for I must get supper on the table O how much I wish you was here to eat with us—Good afternoon and I will write more this evening

New Years Evening

William—It is now evening and I thought I would try and write a little more so as to have this ready for I expect Edgar will go to the Center tomorrow and I want to send it What I have written on the other page is not worth the reading but never mind it is all in a lifetime Little Clydie is gaining as fast as can be expected but he cannot walk a step yet he has not walked any since three weeks ago to day or tomorrow the swelling on his neck runs wonderfully yet and everyone thinks it is all that saved his life if it had not have come out on the out side it seems as though he could not have lived but God saw fit to spare his life for what He alone knoweth may He grant in his infinite mercy that it may be for good and not evil O Wm. how I have tried to be resigned about my Children I have tried to say "Father thy will be done" and if God had taken my little ones to dwell with him I should have tried not to murmur for I should have felt that they were freed from a world of sin but still I think I feel truly thankful that I have them yet with me But my Dear this is truly a world of sorrow; trouble and disappointment await us everywhere but God is the same yesterday to day

[MJC, January 1, 1863, continued]

and forever He changes not though all earthly friends forsake and prove unkind
God will never leave us even though we at times forget Him---

Jan 2nd

Good Morning---how I wish I could say it instead of writing it but I will not complain as long as I can hear from you so often some of the women in this neighborhood do not hear from their Husbands oftener than once a week or fortnight I should almost go wild if I could not hear from you oftener I told you in my last that I did not feel anxious about your getting a furlough but rather you would wait and get a discharge but if you could not get a discharge and could get a furlough I say come home but I will tell you how I feel about it You know better about things there than I do and your Mary is perfectly willing to trust to your judgment in regards to coming home---but William it seems as if they knew just how you were they would discharge you as long as you have tried so hard to keep with the Regiment and staid with it until your comrades had to carry you in their arms to a Hospital and now instead of gaining are growing worse all the time if they knew how slender you was & that you could never stand a soldiers life as well as I do they would not keep you there so long an expense to Government---for I know if you should get a little better and go to the Regt again you would be clear down again in less than two weeks and sent to a Hospital again if not to your grave but many a poor soldier has been kept thus till their life was gone and a grave in southland was their fate and there is nothing that so enrages the North more than to see their sick and disabled soldiers kept from home when of no earthly benefit to the army there has been so many kept till there was no earthly help for them but I will forbear for it almost chills my blood when I think how our soldiers are treated although you have said nothing of it yet I can read and O of what heart-rending scenes do I read in the papers O may God grant in his mercy that this cruel war may soon end--And now my dear I do hope you will be able to get a furlough and come home if not a discharge but I mean to put my trust in God and try and be prepared for whatever awaits me but my daily prayer is that my Wm. may return to me ere his health is ruined forever or a grave far away is closed over his form---You may think I am getting discouraged I am not for my faith in God is strong--and I mean to keep up good courage and hope to the last---I knew when you left home that you would never give up till obliged to and now to think it is over 3 three months since you was taken with the cough and you done duty till you added to your cold & cough till you was entirely used up and then the camp diseases followed It was the 29th day of September that I saw you last and then you had a cough---Now I do think it is wicked for them to keep you there longer---but we shall have to wait patiently till they see fit to let you go---never forgetting to carry all our burdens to Jesus for he will help us to bear them more easily I will have to close as the little ones want to get up now Good Bye till I hear from you again

[MJC, January 2, 1863, continued]

Accept this from your ever affectionate wife

M J Chittenden

Camp Distribution Apr. 7th 1863

My Dear Mary

thinking you are anxious to hear from your absent friend I will try to write a few lines to you though I fear I shall not be able to interest you but could I see you I could tell you a great deal which I will not attempt to write. you will of course want to know of my health it is not as good as when I left home and to write as I think I fear it never will be but my dear do not feel discouraged but trust in God for all needful strength I feel rather despondent of late perhaps it is because I am not well and partly from my situation. I am now at what is called straglers camp or camp distribution the place where all the soldiers are sent to be classed of and sent to the different corps to which they belong for instance we all belonging to Segils corps the 11th are assigned one row of tents in the camp and the others likewise and when a sufficient number belonging to one of the various corps have arrived they are sent to their respective commands the 11 left friday last and probably wil in a day or two again I expect to have to go to my regt and if I am able to get there it will probably be the best thing I can do we shall have to walk from here to Alexandria 4 miles and I do not feel that I can walk a mile but I shall take care of my self you will want to know how I came here and I will tell you we were sent to convalescent camp Friday a call for all that come in on the Proclamation to step in front of the line then the surgeon took the names of all who wer fit to join their regiments when he came to me he felt of my pults looked at my toung and went on I was then sent to the barracks my name, co. regt. taken and I supposed I was to remain there a while in about two hours we wer told we should have to go to our regts that afternoon I remonstrated and told them I was unable to do so and asked for an examination we wer told that when we got to the other camp we could be examined the next day we went to the surgeon (resembling verry much a monkey) he told one of the sick men that he would not send him to the barracks if he knew he would die in five minutes when my turn came he ordered a dose of no 148 and a pill of quinine not even feeling of my pults or examining me in the least but you need not ask me if I took it this is all the examination I have had and probably all I shall get here but we are told that at Acquia creek a thorough examination takes place and none but well and sound men are accepted the others are discharged or sent to the hospital to do duty but I think that if I can get to the regt that it will be as well for me but it is hard telling what is to be our fate however courage is nessessary for our trials I saw John was with him as much as an hour he looks well in fact I never saw him looking better he says he is well suited in his situation and thinks the work will last 3 or 4 months longer I divided with him the things I brough from home & gave a .25 bill I find it to be the general opinion the war will soon be closed many more are of that opinion than at any previous time and it seems that the rebellion was on its last legs but it is hard telling we have been disapointed and may be again but we will hope and pray that at not verry far off day peace may smile on our now destroyed country you can not tell how

[April 7, 1863, continued]

much I want to hear from you but do not know when I can as I can not tell when we shall leave here or where we shal go but you can write a little each day and as soon as I am settled I will write and I may write sooner I think of you often and hope you are well in every respect be verry careful of your self for your is of great value to you in enjoying yourself and in taking care of your family tell Hiram and Clyde that Pa thinks of them verry often and would be verry glad to see them if he could and hope soon to clasp them to my arms with their dear mother. I dare not write to you as I feel for I am in a lonely place but if I was well would not mind it but I hope nothing serious will happen to me and that I may yet be blessed with health and spared to again see those so dear to me you all seem nearer if possible than ever and of this you may think strange that my love needs so great a seperation from the objects of its affection for me to know its extent but you have my love and my fondest hopes of domestic happiness in the future _____ around you and our little ones. I have bought me a blanket for 1.84 and will send you 2.00 for you may want some before you can get any. good by for the present I will write soon accept this with my love

W F Chittenden

PS Mary will you please write the adres of John Manley you will find it on that large envelope I may make _____ keep as much of this to your self as you deem advisable W F C

Yorkshire April 9th

"Tis evening's hour and o'er the earth
Night her dark mantle gently spreads
And thousands stars bedeck the sky,
And o'er the earth their glory shed

But all alone I sit to night
With heart so sad I can but mourn
For he whose love was my delight
Far! to the cruel wars has gone

Ah! ah! that sad that bitter hour
When from my arms he went away
Ne'er while my reason holds her powers
Can I forget that parting day

The parting kiss, the fond embrace
The last warm presence of the hand
The sad "Good Bye" and faint "God bless
You" while I fight for freedom's land.

O should he ne'er return again
To cheer my lonely home and heart
Not far behind would I remain
But meet him soon, Where friends ne'er part

But all my cares I'll cast on Him
"Who watchest with a fathers care"
And "Bring him to my arms again"
To God; shall be my daily prayer.

[Mary J. Chittenden]

[undated fragment, apparently written some time after Chittenden saw "John" at Camp Distribution in April 1863]

and it was hardly time for another letter my heart aches when I think of your hardships and I think you are doubly afflicted but keep up good courage and hope for the best and I hope that I may soon be with you though it may be a long time I think it quite probable that I with others may soon be sent to some northern Hospital but can not tell for certain nor how soon John thought it would be better for me to go to Philladelphia or New York than to remain here he preferred the Hospital at Phill. to the latter I will do the best I can to keep you aprised of my where abouts and take good care of my health as can be done you may wish to know my intentions for the future I am perfectly satisfied that I shall never be able to do duty in the reg't. and it would be but folly for me to undertake it a useless sacrifice of a life that might be of use to my family it is my intention to keep from the *[here Chittenden makes several dashes, thus:] - - - - -* and get *[again, his dashes, with a note written upside down: confidential unflinching confidence in Jenny:] - - - - -* suply as you like do with the visitor the undertaking may be a hard one but perseverance may acomplish it you must think strange if I do not write more particularly as to my health I may represent things bad but take as I mean *[note, written upside down: but all right]* I have not written heretofore any worse than I have been I have been verry sick and am not as well as a fortnight ago no more at this time from your true friend and companion

W. F. Chittenden

Apr 23rd 7 o clock

Just finished breakfast & I will try and write a little more before sending it to the office Philebus Cook staid here last night and I want to send this down to the Center by him—I recd. a letter from John last evening he is well he says he has been permanently detailed with 24 others to do carpenter work there & can stay till the close of the war if he chooses (some are lucky) but do not infer from this that I am discouraged for if nothing happens I think you will be at home before he does Mr Dill. is one of the lucky ones too but my dear do not blame me for your present condition for when I urged you to stay it was through pure love for you nothing less they say it is always the darkest hour just before morning—may it prove so with us—Nothing in particular from the farm affairs only we milk one more cow than when you left 'The old cow' I do not think we shall spare any hay father was here yesterday and trimmed the orchard—I want you to write often for I cannot hear from you too often—I have not heard any thing from your folks this week—John Cheney has bought the John Bishop place—I do not know where Roswell folks are going—I have not got the paper yet this week if I had I would send it to you No very good news from the army yet but we will hope and trust in God who is the ruler of Nations

You will please excuse me for this time I will write again as soon as I hear from you excuse brevity & haste

Please accept this poor effort at poetry *[dated April 9]* for it come from the heart if not very good Little Clyde is asleep & Hiram is standing by my side he wants me to tell pa that we have made some sugar & he wants you to come home & get some with my best wishes for your spiritual & temporal walfare I will close from your unworthy Mary

Enclosed is a Diarhea cure which I cut from the Tribune and which may be of use to you & others

Friday Apr. 24th, 1863
Eleventh Corps Hospital
Second Division

Dear Mary and children

As I have a little spare time I will improve it by writing a few lines to you for I feel verry anxious to hear of your welfare and how you are getting along you can immagine how anxious I feel about you when you consider that it has been almost a month since I left home and I have not heard a word from you but each day brings me nearer the time when I shall be greeted with a message from the hand and heart of my dearest if I am ever so happy as to be but I do not dispair and though I have little to encourage me here yet I try to be as helpful as I can well be knowing it to be for my interest I have not been out of doors but little to day or yesterday as it has been quite rainy these hard rain storms makes me think of you and if you have to be out in the cold to do the chores but I hope this is not the case be verry careful of your health if you have not already got them you had better get you a pair of shoes and if the children need any this spring get them do not fear the expense for there will be some way provided so that we shall not suffer there is not much news to write about that I know of but I have not seen to days paper they are so high 10 cts apiece that I cannot afford to buy but it is verry bad weather for military operations at present our brigade was expected back last night but I have not learned whether they are back or not I expected that if there was any mail for me that Nat would be over to day as it is but little more than a mile in a direct course to our old camp grounds but I guess I shall have to wait a while longer which I will try to do patiently if you have the Tribune of Apr 11th please save it I hardly know what to write except that I long verry much to see you but this has been harped on so much that you are no doubt tired of it but many hearts will be glad when this cruel war is over every night when I go to bed I think of that dear household band far far away from here and fancy I can see two little boys giving their mother their accustomed good night kiss after saying their evening prayer you can prehaps immagine a fathers feelings for

[the rest of the letter is missing]

Yorkshire Apr 30th, 63

My dear William

I recd. your's of the 20th 21st & 22nd this P.M. while eating supper—but I did not eat any more till after reading that welcome missive And now Wm. I will try and answer it although it will be but poorly done--and you will excuse me my dear if I unburden my full heart to the ear of my only true earthly friend---for I feel that I am alone in this world, sad and lonely--tired of the burdens of life--- gladly would I lay me down to rest where the "wicked cease from troubling" if I had no little ones to need a "mothers care"---You said in your letter that it seemed to you at times that we should never all meet again below I have often thought since you left "Our Home" that if you ever returned ere then death might leave his footprints in our little circle---But God is good & he will withhold from us no good thing" For one I can truly say that if it were not for the hope of your return life would have but few charms for me---the coming summer will have naught of happiness for me if you do not return---Since you left I have taken but little comfort except when I would lay aside the cares of life and go before my maker and pray him to comfort me with his spirit---You will think strange for one so wicked as I to talk so but "God is merciful" and he will not turn a deaf ear to the vilest sinner (which is me) if they come penitently before him---O Wm. I think I am truly thankful that you have adopted a rule to go alone and commune with God--for Wm. I think that if we do not pray we can never be true christians--and O my dear if we are so happy as to ever meet again below I hope we may be willing to deny ourselves and take up our cross and do our every duty We are in a world of changes and when we wake in the morning we cannot tell what the day will bring forth---but if our peace is made with God it will make but little influence with us

O Wm. I will hope and pray that you may speedily return and while life lasts this shall be my daily petition to God until answered which I feel quite confident will be some day But God knows best and let us trust our all with him feeling that he knoweth best what is for our good

And now Wm. I will tell you a little about the farm Edgar has got through work he finished to day he has worked 1 1/2 days more than his time If he was gentle with the cows I would keep him a week or two longer but he was so harsh with the old cow that I could not get near her for a while & when he milked her she kicked a perfect storm---The largest heifer has got a calf & Edgar is so cross to her that I see to her my self so you see he is but little help about the chores he will not go after the sheep nor see to them unless he takes a notion and I have got so I do not pretend to ask him but go my self---so you see I have all I can tend to---the cosset sheep has a pair of twin lambs & there is one more with the flock--we lost one to day--it was a very nice lamb I never saw a nicer but it was dead when I found it I was very sorry but I cannot very well go to see to them more than twice a day "morning & night" I have to look out for my self a little for I am not very well my shoulder is some better but it troubles me a good

[MJC, April 30, 1863, continued]

deal yet--and I know not what would become of the things if my health was gone--
—I have staid alone evenings nearly all the time except this week since you left--
—We have not made but little sugar 100 lbs at the most there has not been but
one good run but I guess it will be enough to last---Your father came up this
morning and brought the kettle he staid about 3 quarters of an hour Mandena
was with him she said Augusta was better than when you left home your mother
is not very well it is the first time any of them has been here since you left your
father wants four or five hundred of hay how much shall I ask per tun or shall I
ask nothing how cheap shall I sell that wagon if I can sell it how much are those
dry heifers worth

We have taken those potatoes out to day there was about 16 bushels
they were not rotted any---Stephen Langmade said that Dr Vanarman told him
that he was going to have you discharged as soon as possible and sent home I
should try to see him if I were you & see if he could not do something for you---
keep up good courage my dear and I will try and do the same and pray 'The
Father' to spare us to each other and O I will try and not forget to ask him to help
us to live more devoted to him should we meet again than we ever have done
The boys are usually well---Good Night my love for I am tired very---I will try
and send this tomorrow if I have a chance accept this from Mary

Thursday---rather better this morning do not worry about home for all will
come out straight yet Go to God with all your troubles and plead with him each
day to deliver you from your present condition pray that we may soon meet
again and your Mary will join in your plea each morning & evening Good By

May 13th 2 PM.

Mary I do not know but what you will think I am a long time in preparing this for you but I have been wait for something encouraging as to my discharge but I have nothing verry direct yet but think that I shall be discharged soon from what I have hearded from different sources & to day one of the surgeons said he would see Vanarnam this afternoon and have it attended to as soon as possible he spoke of his own will and know nothing of his intentions in regard to me I have hearded the boys say that it is the intentions in the reg't. to have it done as soon as possible so I think that if all things work favorable that I may be at home before a long time elapses but it will taken some time to get the papers unless they come quicker than others do for some men have been waiting over a month & have not got them yet but we will wait patiently I think from prospects at present that I may be at home by the first of June but there is nothing certain as yet so do not be disapointed if I do not come but keep up good courage we may soon be united again I think it best to sell one of the heiffers that are not coming in but hardly know what they would be worth I think there should be a difference in the price of them an honest man would be willing to pay you what they are worth that is all I want in adition to what I have written about Wymans working the place was this he said he would draw the rails before the house to build the pasture fence on the lower side and I was to lay it up he said he would fix the fence around the lot I believe this is all and as we talked I will not write any more at present but will soon I hope this may find you all well but I fear you will find it a task to read this but excuse all mistakes you need not send any money use your own judgement in managing and I shall be satisfied yours Truely with my love to you all do not say any thing about my coming home onely as you think best

W. F. Chittenden

Second Divission 11th Army Corps
Hospital Va May 16th 1863

Dear Companion

I will improve the presant oportunity by writing a few lines to you concerning my health and other things my health is not verry good but I am no worse than I have been of late and hope to live to be better again and to get home to my family but I cannot tell yet when I shall have an examination but I hope to soon but at presant the Doctors have all they can do to attend to the sick and wounded those that were left on the battle field in the enemys hands have been parolled and began to come in day before yesterday and many limbs have been amputated since then John Murns of our company had a leg taken of yesterday and there are suffering soldiers on every side of us. Captain Cheeney and A. M. Keller wer here yesterday they both said the Doctor told them that he should have me discharged as soon as possible but I cannot give you any more encouragement then this at presant but we will still continue to hope and pray that we may be spared to each other and soon meet again. I received your kind and ever wellcome letter of the 6-7 Thursday night and glad was I to hear as favorable news from you I think you have got along well with lambs I am glad the boys take them so well but pa would rather see his & Mas little lambs than any others kiss them for me it is my wishes that you dispose of the cows as you think best I have long feared that you have to much to do and to many cares upon your mind and try your best to take care of your health for you are the main stay now I am glad you have got some money to use and have paid Edgar but I wish he could have felt enough interested in a sisters wellfare to have helped you untill you had got through with the spring work but as it is not so we must make the best of it but I hope we shall be better situated before long it is hard to have to depend on others. I have got my pay for six months or nearly paid on thursday Colonell A. G. Rice of Ellicottville is with the Reg't. now and I shall send an Allotment bill by him and \$15.00 in money and have him send it to you after he gets to Ellicottville I was paid Seventy Six Dollars and twenty five cts. and will keep the ballance by me for I know not how much I may need use the money as you think best. I have got 5 letters from you for which I am verry thankfull they have cheered me much I have never blamed you because I have not got letters from you for I know it was not your fault I will write again in a few days and hope to have something more encouraging but do not be disapointed if they are not all that we could wish. I cannot get any postage stamps here and I have but one left so I shall have to mark soldiers letter hereafter keep up good courage and never dispair accept of this from your sincere friend my best respects to all of our friends and relatives

William F. Chittenden
Mary J. Chittenden

Sunday afternoon May 17th

Dear Mary

yesterday when I wrote this I intended to send this by Colonel Rice but he has gone and did not stop here so I think I shall express it as I do not know when I shall get away from here Dr Vanarnam has been here to day I had a short talk with him concerning my discharge he said he had no doubt as to the final result of it but it would take time as the Doctors here were so busy with the wounded that for a while at least other things would have to be neglected he said the certificate would have to come from one of the Hospital surgeons as I am from his contrroll and advised me to excercise as much patience as possible as it would be for my interest to do so and he would do all that he could for me to get me discharged as soon as possible I doubt not that he is sincere but there are rules which they have to follow so my dear we must try to be as patient as possible and trust in providence to bring all things about for our good and I hope for his glory. I know how anxious you feel that I should get home as soon as possible and I thing you will consider that all I can do will be done but that is little with some of the Doctors it will not answer to say any thing and so you see we have to be as patient and contented as possible although at times it seems rather hard but it is the onely way I feel as anxious to get home on your account as my own but do keep as cheerful as possible and take good care of your health I hope you may all be blessed with with whatever may add to your comfort or happiness and soon I hope to enjoy the comforts of home with you the doctor said he was going to the landing in a few days and would express my money for me. as soon as I send it I will write and let you know how to manage to get it it might be as well to send it in a letter but many loose by so doing and I would rather not run to much risk James Lingenfetter lost all the money he had paid to him and 5 dollars that he had before 23 or 24 dollars it was stole from him the first night his allotment was not in his pocket book so that was saved there are many here who lack the principal nessessary for an honest life but it seems hard to rob sick or wounded men but it has been often done for one I do not want more than belongs to me but that I intend to have and keep if I can. again I will urge you to be contented and cheerful and trust all in the hands of God hoping this may find you all well I will close by bidding you all an affectionate good bye yours truely

W. F. Chittenden

Second Division
11th Army Corps Hospital
May 20th 1863.

Dear ones at home

I received your letter of the 13th written at E Js last night and will endeavor to reply to it in time for the afternoon mail I was verry glad to learn you wer well and though you said the children wer not well yet I am glad they are no worse and hope before this reaches you they will be much better. I have had many anxious feelings for you and them. I have feared that they would have a hard time before they wer well of the humor in their blood but you will have to doctor them as best you can and I hope in time they will get well of it. I myself have been badly troubled since I left home with biles. I have not been free from them three days at a time and some time have had 5 at a time but I have got used to it and do not mind them as much as I did at first I let them along untill they are ready to open and I find it to be the best way but after all they are hard to bear and I hope if I am so lucky as to get home again to be able to cleanse my blood and free myself of those patience triers you will I doubt not laugh at my writing and composition for it is verry ludicrous, and if I keep on as I have been you will not care to receive a letter from me again verry soon but each time I receive a letter from you it is accompanied with an urgent request to write often and long I know verry well that I have more time than you have to write and it furnishes a good pastime for me in fact it is about the best way I have of spending the lonely hours for a great many times when I have commenced to write I have felt so lonely and discouraged that it seemed as though I could hardly write as you have no doubt thought by the way I have written but you will of course excuse all mistakes which you may find hereafter as doubtless you have done in times past I have felt relieved in my mind after writing awhile for it is like conversing with my dearest friend it is a great privilege which we have left us and wer it not for this my condition would seem doubly hard to bear. tell Hiram that pa was verry glad to hear that they had planted some potatoes I dare say he helped his Ma about it all he could but tell him that pa does not want him to let his ma do to much work but he must hire some one to do it and Pa will send him some money to pay for the work I hope to be home to help dig them and then Hiram & Clyde if they are well can pick them up in their little basket wont that be fine I suppose they take great pleasure with their little lambs this warm weather will make them feel verry keen and I think it will be hard for him to catch them tell him how much pa wants him to be a good little man and I expect he will do as ma tells him and be verry kind to that little flaxen haired brother of his for pa feels verry much pleased with his little boys and loves to see them do right. if pa comes home again he will try to take pleasure in pleasing them we will go down to Grand Pas and I hope have a good visit togather you must try to amuse them every way you can for by so doing I think you will increase your own enjoyment. I was glad to hear that you wer down to the center to trade and I hope you traded all you

[May 20, 1863, continued]

wanted to and not on account of the means deprive yourself of comforts for though you have in times past doubted my willingness to provide for my family yet I think if you knew my heart you would see me in another light but I will plead my case no farther yet I hope if my life is spared to be blessed with the means to supply every want of my family without having to work as hard as we have done not that I despise labor for I would be very glad to work hard every day if well in exchange for my present situation but I do not think that I wish to complain I think it would be very wrong for me to do so when so many are suffering so much more than I do but I ought rather to feel very thankful that I have been spared through so many dangers while others have fallen and I hope it has been for some good purpose but we know not for what we are spared yet my heart is big with hopes for the future and O. I hope not to be disappointed in some of them for I think they are for good. yesterday I wrote a letter to Fathers folks it is the second that I have written to them and all that I have heard from is what you have written I presume they have thought I have forgotten them but it is not so when you write again tell all the news you know of either of friends or neighbors for any thing will be interesting coming from you if you have heard any thing of Newton let me know I fear he will have trouble yet but I hope he may get along well though I think it would have been better for him to have ret under the Proclamation but he probably thought different the Army is a hard place but the honest soldier fares better than the traitor and is respected far more if I could have seen him I would have advised him to returned for I think he could have enjoyed himself much better and since the passage of the late bill in the Canadian Parliament it makes it unsafe for deserters or men who left the country to avoid the draft to remain there this is no more than I have expected yet I wish him no harm. the weather is getting to be quite warm and all things show signs of spring the leaves are out nicely and the trees and the grass is looking green where the ground is fertile enough to afford life for it but the country has few charms for me I prefer the land of my birth to the sunny South or at least of the old Dominion State but I believe that the backward condition of things here are to be attributed to the blighting curse which I think every where attends slavery had free labor been the onely system tolerated it would have been for better. I have not heard from Nat since he left for Washington he promised to write as soon as he found where he would stay you have probably heard from him by Nancy before this time I think from the way he was getting along when he left that he would get well as soon as could be expected but his wound will no doubt trouble him for some time. I think I was to hasty in my statement of the time as to when I thought I should be at home if I am discharged I have not been examined yet nor do I know when I shall be but I want to write all I can to encourage you and when I wrote that I hoped to be home by the first of June I thought it would be so from what I had been told but patience is

[May 20, 1863, continued]

nessessary here the surgeons are all busy attending to the wounded they have not got through with the amputations that are nessessary other business will have to be neglected untill their wants are attended to and this is for one though I feel verry anxious yet I am willing to wait untill they are made as comfortable as they can be here one of the Doctors told me last night when he was around visiting the sick that he thought they could get me out of this place before many days I told him I hoped it might be so I think we should keep up each others courage and I will write often and as good news as I have you will be glad to see the end accept of my best wishes for my dear family

Truely yours
Wm F Chittenden

Yorkshire May 22nd 1863

William

It is evening again and although I am some what tired yet I will try to commence a little missive for the absent one this evening—I have been riding most all day to day—We first went to the Center where I got your letter of the 16 & 17th which I was very glad to get—but was sorry to hear your health was not better—but Wm. keep up good courage all may yet be well. And now to my journey again I went from the Center to Arcade and then to Mr C. Bull's I went with Wyman's folks to Arcade I went over to your Fathers a few minutes to let them hear from you—(but Wm. I did not hardly feel it my duty after all) but I thought I would do as I would like to be done by Your Mother seemed very glad to hear you was no worse & wished me to remember her to you—she has had the Dyptheria she says very bad (Ah Wm. will she not know something how to pity her little grand children now) but no more of this for the memory of those sad days when my little ones were so sick and I almost sick & friendless watched over their suffering forms wasting with disease (both night & day) brings the blinding tear-drops to my eyes & opens anew the wound my already suffering heart recd. then

But I pray God to help me to forgive—even as I wish to be forgiven—And O Wm. if through all those dark hours I had trusted in God as I should & had breathed no harsh words to them who should have been my friends I would be glad but the past cannot be recalled—Your folks were expecting Phebe To day or tomorrow & wanted me to come down but I do not want to go—Good Night

Sunday May 24th

Pleasant but very warm to day—I am to fathers Hattie & E.J. Nancy & myself & children are here to day—but I am sitting alone in the little room where we have had so many pleasant visits but Alas I can not see the one I long so much to see but instead I must use the silent pen—But Wm. I think I am truly thankful that we can write to each other it affords me much comfort to receive those kind missives from the one who is dearer than all this world beside to me—But I live in hopes if it were not for the hope of your return my heart would sink beneath the load it carries I do not wish to burden your mind with my cares but I feel sad to have you sick so far away from home But God is good and let us trust him to the end

Just been eating dinner but it did not taste as good as if Wm. had been here with me but I am not going to despair for it is not the best way. it is about 2 oclock P.M. & I must soon return home for little "Billy" as we call our pet lamb will want his milk & then it takes one a good while to do the chores. Nancy has heard from Nat but once since he went to Washington I fear he is worse or dead, but O I hope not for her sake

[MJC, May 24, 1863, continued]

If you have not sent your money I think it would be as well to send it in letters a little at a time—but just as you think best—I want your advice how to use the money

I shall not need more than 10.00 to pay our debts aside of what is owing me to pay our debts and keep a little by me Now do advise me about what to do with the money—'for I have enough care now' Do you hear any thing from Nat do tell us—I have sent you one stamp & I will send two in this & if you get them safe I will send more Please excuse all mistakes poor writing & composition and

_____ I will try and be patient in regard to your absence for when I think how many hearts are almost broken for their loved ones who they can never behold again I try to feel thankful that God has spared your life thus far and at his throne of grace plead for your return Hoping this will find you better in regard to health and more encouraged about coming home I will close by bidding you an affectionate Good Bye

Accept this from your true friend & wife Jennie
To her true friend & Husband William

Second Division 11th Army Corps
Hospital. May 24th, 1863

Dear Mary

I will spend a few moments at the close of this Holy Sabbath day in conversing with the one so dear to me through the silent pen feeling thankful that we have means left us of conveying our thoughts to each other my mind has been with you much of the time to day and it would have been such a pleasure to me to have spent it in the company of my dear family as one onely can discribe who is in like situation. but I have tried to be thankful that we are no worse of and I think we have strong reasons to be verry grateful for the blessings we have so long enjoyed I feel that we have been greatly blessed in many things and though we have found thorns amongst the flowers of lifes pathway yet as you said we are greatly to blame for their being there but my dear we can learn a lesson that will be of use to us in future life if we should be so happy as to meet again and I feel to day that we have tried to live to much on our own strength to live in the full enjoyments of the blessings designed for us you will say how glad I am to hear Wm. but how much rather would I have him say less and live nearer to his God and my dear mary I have promised my God to try by his grace assisting me to live nearer to him but not in my own strength for though the spirit is willing the flesh is weak how many times befor have I made similar resolves and as often have they been broken but I hope to be forgiven through the merits of Christ and if so happy as to return to my dear family to unite with you in the service of our heavenly master and I hope that I may never more discourage you from doing your christian duties it is not my wish to do it but you know what my past conduct has been to your sorrow the bugle has just sounded for meeting and I will dress myself and try to go for it is the 3d time that I have had that privilege since I left home after meeting have had a verry good sermon from Hebrews 4 chapt last verse there wer many in attendance for this Hospital has grown fast since I came here. hoping you are well I will bid you an affectionate good night

W. F. Chittenden

Thursday May 27th 1863
Second Divission 11th Army Corps Hos

well Mary the tidings for which I have so long looked for with so much anxiety come to hand last night your letter of the 20 & 21st breathing so much of love and friendship for your absent though I see not forgotten friend and I will write a little to day in answer to it which I would send had I not sent one last night but I write so often that you will think my letters not worth the postage as you will have to pay it now that we can get no stamps here but I will change the subject I was glad to learn that you wer well and the children as well as you say they are but my joy was mingled with sorrow to hear that Hiram was so unwell you can immagine how I feel better than I can tell you but I hope he is as you say getting better I have had many doubts about his getting along well as he was so verry bad of when I left home you know not how I felt when I left home that morning (I hope not for the last time) but it seems like tearing ones heart strings asunder to bid adieu to friends so dear but I hope our separation will not be long and that the boys will get better soon their sores may be of advantage to them in the end as it is thought better to have it on the outside than in but they must suffer severely. I know ful well that you will do all you can for them and I have no suggestions to offer but to spare no pains for their relief though I do not want you to injure your self tell them that pa will come home just as soon as he possibly can for I want to see them verry much and if I ever get home I will do all that I can for them. remember Mary that I want you to at all times let me know just how you all are for I want to know that things are just as you say they are I have always believed what you have written and shall continue to do so but I do not blame you in the least for not telling me as your motives wer good but I will caution you as to looking so much on the dark side of lifes picture. for though we may never meet again yet it will not be best for us to look for such a result but do be as cheerful as you can at all times and trust in the Lord for he has promised to be merciful to those who trust in him and do for them as will be for their good I feel to trust my all in his hands but when I think of the sinfulness of my nature I fear that I fell out by the way and I know that this is wrong and the tempting of satan whom I have served so long but I hope for the last do not feel uneasy about the farm affairs if things do not come along as we could like to have them do not let it trouble you. I know you have a heavy load upon your mind as well as your hands full but cheerfulness is a great restirative to exhausted nature but you may say why preach up cheerfulness when you have taken away what might promote it and laid heavy burdens upon my shoulders but forgive your erring husband will you not Mary. you said you had not had a chance to sell either of the heifers but do not dispair for you may before long and you said the two heifers that give milk troubled you about milking and wer so that they would leak their milk I do not know what advice to give you as to them but you can judge to what will be best to do with them or ask the advice of your Father or others and I shall cheerfully concur if you could sell either of the four for work in haying time to some one that could be relied uppon it would be well

[May 27, 1863, continued]

and if the opportunity presents itself I would reduce the stock so that what is left can be kept thriving I think should I come home it would be best to buy a horse and try to get along somewhat easier than we have done you can tell what will be best to do as well as I can that old waggon seems to be hard to get rid of but it is good for the old iron at any time if you can get 5 dollars in such pay as you would like you can let it go if the iron would not be worth more but who has made so good an offer I fear you have undertaken more in the garden than than you ought to have done but you will have some help with you yet you say I would laugh at the way you had done the work if I saw it but I would not I assure you but I would love you O so much for you are a deserving Girl and I know it and hope to be able to reward you I think you have got along with hiring as little as I expected you could for there was considerable to be done but you did not say what E J allowed for the Hay or if he done it willingly does Olivia help you as a sister should you have said nothing of late about her you will have learned before you get this that I was to hasty in giving you my opinion of the prospects of my return home but if I was hasty it was to encourage you for if there is any thing that I could do to cheer you it will be done with the greatest pleasure but I will write hereafter no more than I know I have none to write to day and will write some more and send it tomorrow if nothing prevents my doing so with my best wishes for your welfare I will bid you good bye

William

Thursday 10 AM 28th 1863

Well my Dear Friends how are you this fine morning well I hope would be the response wer you enabled to give it from your lips. as to my health it is about as it has been of late no worse I hope and think so but I am far from being well and when I say this you will not be allarmed nor infer I hope that I am in danger but as you say to me keep up good courage for this will be for your good as well as a comfort to me. I hope you will be blessed with good health for if ever you need it now and do not fail to use every means you can to promote it for yourself as well that of the children you will not for the purpose of being sparing of expenses hesitate to use whatever you need if you did make enough sugar to last there will be some way I believe for us to get more with out any privations to us whatever and we aught to consider that all we can have is enough to eat drink and wear in life and we should not desire more than what will make us comfortable and leave our children with the means so that they would not be obliged to labor as hard as we have done not that I wish them to live without labor for I do not believe it would be for their good and should our lives be spared I have no fears but that we shall be blessed with enough if we do our duty aright when I look on the past I can see that we have been prospered beyond what we may have deserved and hope we are gretful to the giver of all good for what we have enjoyed. you must excuse me for not writing so as to interest you more and will of course when you consider who is the writer no more this forenoon wish I could take a peep into your home if onely for a short time

Friday morning May 29th 1863

verry pleasant the mornings & evenings here are quite comfortable but the mid day is so warm that to me it is almost oppressive and the nights are the extremes of the days but we manage to get along verry well I hope the weather is warm enough with you so that you are comfortable but I judge from what you say that the season is rather backward though it may be as well in the end for you know we have the promise of seed time and harvest and let us have faith in the promises of God and live so as to merit the aproving smiles of providence. I have nothing new to write this morning as regards my coming home verry soon yet do not dispair for I have good courage although at times the way seems rather dark there was a number of discharges granted yesterday but I was not called upon for an examination the doctor in charge is of a singular turn and some particular cases meet with his sympathy verry readily but he knows little or nothing about me as he has never examined me at all but his time expires next monday and then he will go home and the probable successor understands my case well and this morning he told me that if he was in charge he should make out my papers for disability imediately and said as much if he wer apointed so I think we have reasons to hope for success in good time. I have not sent any money or allotment yet as I have had no good chance as yet the number of the

[May 29, 1863, continued]

check is 3969 drawn May 14th I will send you some money the first opportunity I have if you need any to use you can get it & pay when you get some from me. I was about to urge you to write oftener but will not for I know you have all you can do and I do not want you to sit up so late when you are tired for the sake of writing to me my love to you all kiss the boys for pa I hope to be with you soon if spared the pleasure

W F Chittenden

Second Division Hospital May 30th

My Dear Friends at home

I have just recd your kind and ever wellcome letter of the 22 & 24 which of course was read with pleasure but you said nothing about your health but judging from circumstances I think you are no worse I mean the children I am glad you had a chance to get away from your cares if no longer than for a day I hope you had a pleasant ride and traded all you wanted It would have been pleasant for me to have been your company but I may have that pleasure soon I am glad you went over to Fathers although as you say I do not think but that they could come to see you much easier though no doubt Father has his hands full and hardly think he can spare the time to visit but I hope you will entertain no hard feelings towards towards them but think of the past no more than you can help I am sorry to hear that Mother has been so sick but I hope she is better now I feel sorry to hear that you feel so lonely on my account I wish you to enjoy your self well at home and abroad to be sure you would have felt better and perhaps enjoyed your self better at your Fathers last sunday If I could have been with you and it would have been a a great pleasure to have been with you whether at home or abroad

I sent a letter last night to you but as I got one from you to day and have more favorable news to write to day than yesterday I thought I would send another to day my papers of disability are made out and if nothing happens I hope to soon be ready for a homeward journey but how long it will be before I shall get my papers I onely went befor the Dr had to undergo no examination at all as Dr Vanarnam went with me and told him the particulars of my case. I think it best perhaps for you to write no more unless I ask you to I shall write as often as I have done so as to keep you informed and be with my dear family as soon as possible. I have heard nothing from Nat since he left for Washington he said he would write to me as soon as he could I hope he is no worse for when he left here he said he felt better and thought he should get along as soon as could be expected. I do not know what Hospital he is in but can easily find out I think Captain Cheeney will see him and he will be back next week. if I get a little better I shall find him & I think I shall any way I feel to sympathize with Nancy but hope he is no worse I will find out all I concerning him I think John will be here again tomorrow he said he would be over again soon if he does not come I shall write to him as he wished me to do if I was worse or discharged I can think of not much more to write to day so I will close by again asking you to keep up good courage putting all your trust in God who has ever been kind to us hoping this will find you all in good health I bid you all a good bye feeling more cheerful myself

William F Chittenden.

[John H. Wheeler to Mary J. Chittenden]

Alexandria Va
Tuesday Jan 26th 1864

Dear Sister

Your kind note came to hand Sunday and found me in good health. I had just come in from picket and calculated to answer it that afternoon, but before I had time to write we received marching orders and by 7 PM we were on board the cars bag & baggage for Alexandria where we arrived about midnight

We are detached from the Army to guard the trains while going out to the front & I think I shall like the change well. It may keep us out of next summer's campaign as some one will have to do this duty and why not us as well as others

Now about the wedding you spoke of. I think I can guess who told you that I continued to write to a certain young lady after she was married. They were right so far as this. I wrote one letter to the lady in question after I heard of her marriage and directed it in care of her husband thus showing that I knew of her marriage at the time of writing it, and now comes, a propos, the answer to your question in regard to the package

I well knew of the Lady's changing her mind at the time I sent for the package (which you know was early in the year), and my reason for sending for the package was this. I wanted to get hold of my letters which she had in her possession and I knew of no way to do it unless I offered an exchange and I could not do that without sending for said package containing her letters, and this is what I had reference to when I asked you to do an errand for me last winter, but I happened to think of Wms being at home and thought I would have him bring them to me and I would send them by mail. On receiving said package I wrote to the Lady concerning the exchange & recd. no answer and made up my mind not to say any thing more about it, and wait the result of events, and when I heard of her marriage I thought I would write once more thinking she perhaps might not have recd. my former letter. She answered saying "she would gladly exchange if she had it in her power to do so but said she had destroyed my letters and hoped I would do the same by her."

I have no doubt but what your reasons in regard to the course affairs took are in the main correct. I thought so the first time I visited her after coming home on furlough and I was still more fully convinced the last time I visited her. You probably remember when that was, I came back about sundown Sunday with said likenesses

I found a good excuse for leaving her so early, and the excuse I gave you although it was true was not the real one

*[John H. Wheeler to Mary J. Chittenden,
January 26, 1864, continued]*

I had no idea when I left home first that things would work as they did. I did not suppose that riding out with a girl twice would cause them to fall in love with so homely a fellow as me but strange things happen in this strange world. Keep this letter to yourself if you please and write soon as convenient. Give my best wishes to Wm and all the friends and accept this from your affectionate brother

J H Wheeler
Co H 44th Regt
NYSV