

Chaffin's Farm
Sunday Evening Sept. 28th, 1862

My dear Pat:

As you will see I have returned from the expedition of which Gen. Wise expected so much, and accomplished so little. Yes, I have returned and am now seated in my tent to write to and commune with my absent One far away. We were absent exactly a week and travelled through that portion of the County and of Charles City that has been laid waste by the enemy. It was indeed a distressing sight to see so many beautiful farms left almost a waste, so many once happy families now broken up, and fields of corn completely destroyed. We started from this Post Saturday morning before last, and the first night reached Bradley's Store in Charles City, about 18 miles distant. We went by Malvern Hill, the scene of the last battle fought around Richmond, and all the way from the lines of the enemy this side of there. We could distinctly see traces of the enemy in their hurried retreat along the roads - burnt up wagons, ambulance wheels cut to pieces, thrown away clothing, and cartridge boxes, all attest the hurry of the foe. We went in 2 miles of Harrison's Landing, their last resting place after their defeat, and then turned off to the left towards the Chickahominy. This we reached the next day and encamped on the high grounds before reaching the flats. Here we were to rest until two bridges were built across the twin streams of the Chickahominy. This we went to work to complete and had not entirely finished when orders came that we must retrace our steps. We were ordered back to Chaffin's Farm. So Wise's great expedition had failed with the exception of getting up some forage. We all felt relieved and were anxious to get back to our old resting place. I have heard no news since my return, except what you already know. The great battle fought by Gen. Lee in Maryland and our heavy loss and the falling back of our army to this side of the Potomac. The fight that Jackson had with the enemy after his recrossing the river, and the great slaughter he inflicted upon the enemy. It is said that Lee has only temporarily recrossed the river to refresh his troops and get accessions when he will attempt the relief of Maryland again. I am thinking though that the fighting for this campaign is finished, and that next spring will witness another trial of strength between the contending parties. We hear that Charlie Harrison and Thomas Fountleroy's son were killed in the late battles. I saw Mr. R. H. Bagby this afternoon. He preached for us. He stated that he was at the Association but did not see you. Were you not there? Ah! I should like to have been with you to attend the gathering of old acquaintances. He said there were a great many persons there - where do they come from! I thought that so many were in the army that the attendance would be slim.

I have not heard from you personally for so long! How are you getting on? How are the children and how is the farm, what of a crop of corn, of potatoes, etc. I would write for you to come to Richmond but there is such a difficulty in getting there - almost as great a difficulty in getting a furlough to go there as to go home that I do not know what to do about it. I would give anything now to see you and the children but Oh how long, how long will it be before I can once more return to my dear old home (it may be never - is not this a sad thought).

Has Dick or Cousin Jack made no effort to get any salt? Tell one or the other that I am depending on them. I must be remembered. Dick, both, I believe have money of mine in their hands. I have one hundred dollars with me

which I wish you to have for pocket money, which I will send by Dick when he comes over.

Monday Morning.

This morning I was taken with a chill - and feel the effects of it now. I hope though I am not going to have the ague and fever. The late trip to Charles City and sleeping on the wet ground must have given it to me. If I am very sick I shall go to Richmond and send for you. Tell Dick to come over and bring us some more vegetables and if you have any bacon to spare send me a piece. Send also my waistcoat and flannel shirts. I have never felt healthier in my life until this morning. Now I must close by sending you and the children my best and warmest love. My prayers are always with you, and may the Lord still protect you, me and our dear little children.

