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Camp Sherman, Black River, Miss.

September 15<sup>th</sup> 1863

Dear Jane I wrote a letter to the boys this forenoon & told them that I was going to write to you this afternoon but I don't know what to say to you. I can hardly collect my thoughts together to write any thing interesting to you.

But I am glad to say one thing to you that is I am well, and hope this may find you all enjoying the same blessing. — well dear Jane I consider it a great blessing to have my health spared, and be permitted to be able to write to you, as that seems to be the only chance of communicating with each other at this <sup>time</sup>, hoping the time will soon roll a round again when we shall have the great privilege of enjoying each others society again, Dear Jane I have the blues badly since I left home this time, the first leaving was nothing when compared <sup>to</sup> the second, it seemed to me to drag out the guts and strain every nerve of all the rail road Engines to move a long on the road back, and we had the good, or bad luck to stick fast on every sand bar on the Mississippi River, taking altogether every thing seemed to be unwilling to move, as much so as I was to come. Dear Jane I was afraid that you might think

that I did not appreciate my condition and the condition of my family. my dear wife that parting was like pulling out the very heart strings of my life, but I had made up my mind with an Iron will to brave the time as well as possible. but nothing will ever be able to erase from my mind the sad time upon parting with you and the children on that morning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of September 1863. and now dear Jane you must excuse me for touching upon this one thing but it lay heavily on my mind. Dear Jane I am glad that I succeeded in securing to you and the children a homestead on which you can live without being at all molested by any one. my mind was all the time uneasy about that before I went home. my great desire at this time is to pay off your Pap. and get rid of that big debt. so that ~~that~~ I could be easy on that thing. I dont see how I am to pay him unless we can sell the farm for the money, which I hope we can do. If that debt was paid I think we could live easier without the farm than we can with the farm and owe the debt. I wrote to Brother Morris yesterday and told him that I wanted him to assist you in finding a man to buy the farm. but dear wife you must use your best judgment as to what you may

think best in the matter. I shall have to leave the most of the management to you. If there is any chance to sell the place I think it would be best to do so soon before there is much interest due on the note that I gave your pap. and if we dont sell it this fall we had better have some more work done in the way of fencing, so as to secure the crops. I want you to write to me and let me know what you think about these things, for I think that you are a far better manager than I am, and I am willing to be governed by your judgment. — Jane sometimes I think that you thought that I wanted to come back here in the place of staying with my family, but you know that there was no possible chance to remain at home without being arrested and after your pap was so kind as to help me in securing you a homestead I would sooner die than to leave him in a condition to pay that debt, by my desertion but if that debt was satisfied I would soon have a ticket for California and you and the children could join me somewhere on the road, and that is the reason why I am so anxious to have that matter settled. I care but little how so he get his money, I am really heart sick of this ungodly war. —

I am not satisfied. I think that I am doing  
wrong in remaining here, but am situated  
so that I cannot help myself at this time, but  
men do get out and I think that I can too  
at least I will try it soon in some way or other  
I will tell you how when I get ready to try  
the experiment, my mind is made up not  
to stay here very long. You must not think very  
strange of what I say, I tell you that I can't  
stay here with a clear conscience. I think that it  
is a crime of the deepest dye to be engaged in the  
shedding of the blood of our fellow man - and  
I am bound not to do it if it is possible to  
prevent it, and I can, dear Jane I am looking  
for a letter from you this day and I do  
want to hear from home the worst way,  
If I get one I will answer it immediately, I have  
but little to write to you at this time having wrote  
to you three times since I come back, and once  
to the boys I have told you all the news, but I  
was idle to day and a little home sick so I thought  
that I would put in my time writing home but  
when I commence writing I get so much excited  
that I can hardly write at all, so you must excuse  
my bad writing and I will try to do better,  
after this, now dear Jane do the best you can  
which I know you will, I must now quit, so  
good Bye, from your loving husband,  
William M Standard, To his wife Jane