

Gordonsville Hospital

Jan 27<sup>th</sup> 1864

My Dear Mary

Mr. & Mrs. Stewart called on Monday last 25<sup>th</sup> Jan and delivered your letter. I was truly delighted to hear so directly from home as I have not heard anything at all since your Pa wrote from W. I have felt very anxious to hear as I was afraid your Pa was not sufficiently recovered to turn out in the cold. I can fully realize his anxiety to get home who he could be comfortable & have those around him whom he loves & who know how to minister to his comfort better than any strangers however willing could probably do. I hope by this time you have received two, if not three letters, as this is my fourth letter home. The first was sent by Mrs. Bartlett, the second by (---?---) Elaine. The third by E. Custard, whom I hope has reached home by this time, as he set out for home the 26<sup>th</sup>. Charles has much to be thankful for in this kind attention shown him by his companions in arms, and other friends; very few day pass without some friend calling, some days, three or four, persons will call. Custard wrote saying he expects to go home and offered to bring anything he Charles wished from home. I wrote specifying the articles he needed. His Custard's furlough did not come as soon as he expected and he sent this letter by Cline, and wrote to Charles saying that if he had thought of anything more that he wished from home to let him hear from him, and he would bring it. I then wrote and named the fronts. I am entirely out of stimulants havi8ng used all the wine and whiskey, I brought. I hear of none coming here yet. I am looking every day for a gallon from Col. Nadenbousch; I will have to pay 65\$ for it. Mr. Ijams was very unwell, and going home asked the Col to attend to the matter for him. Col said he would send it as soon as he could meet with a safe opportunity. Charles is doing, so far as anyone can tell very well. He holds his flesh very well, has a very good appetite, and is in good spirits. I do not mean that he does not lose any flesh; for he does; I mean that he does not become emaciated as you might suppose. He is so delighted that I am with him. He wishes me to stay and go with him to Uncle John's. I hope he will be able to be moved before the time you wish me to come home, but I think it very doubtful. I would like to see him in the house of some friend before I leave him. I fear the effect upon his spirits would be very injurious if I leave him too soon. I am very well & have a fine appetite. Stand the fatigue very well. I lie down and sleep all night long, and rarely ever hear a car although they are running, and (---?---), nearly all night. I caught some cold as the weather moderated not by any imprudence of mine and had a very sore throat for three or four days. I was very much afraid the right side of my throat would gather, but it did not. I only staid in my room twenty four hours. I am not quite well and the weather is delightful more like May than January. I get along in the eating line very well. Mrs. Buchanan is very kind to me, and the servants are very obliging. Your Brother has not used any of the (---?---) tea, or butter since I came; I make coffee for us in the morning, and always tea for myself, and frequently for him in the evening. I have not used quite all the coffee Mr. Tabb brought over the first time he came. I can sit down and drink for my breakfast two mugs of coffee without one drop of cream and really enjoy it. I would not drink coffee every morning only to let him have some tea in the evening. The tea they have here is miserable stuff. They call it blk tea but it tastes like anything else more than tea. I applied

to Mrs. B about ten days ago for some butter, and sugar to keep for his use she gave it to me very (---?fully); the butter was right nice winter butter and the sugar beautiful brown sugar. The butter is gone; I have kept the sugar for his tea and used my brown sugar for his coffee as it was not so nice; the brown sugar they have now is not near as good. I am to get more butter, & sugar, this evening. He does not care about his peaches except in pies. I stew and season the fruit and Mrs. B has it baked for me. I have about two and a half times (---?---). They had plenty of dried fruit her but used it very extravagantly and it is gone. Any kind of dry fruit makes good pies. If you had an opportunity you might send some apples, or peaches, as you thing best. I doubt whether you can do it. He has eaten of his cakes along until they are nearly gone. I had apples until now. Hope I shall get more in few days. Mrs. Comfort came today and brought my soap, and (---?---) (---?---) glass so I shall be able to see myself once more. Bourboun called once since I came and brought bread & apples, another time sent bread & butter by a servant. He called again today and said he would send some more things in a few days. I intend to ask them to send me milk occasionally. I could make him rice milk (for they have plenty of rice) and milk toast. It is not to be had near the hospital. If you get this before Custard leaves send me a little indigo do not forget. You might think among the multitude of people about this place that a person would form a great many acquaintances but is not so. Each one seems to be going his own way and cares for no one else, passing and repassing without so much as a bow. I think there is less (---?---) among those who call themselves gentlemen here than any place I have ever been. Say to your Pa the man's leg that was (---?---) as Charles's was had to be taken off last week. C told me this eve when I took his supper that the Dr. had examined his leg and said it was doing very well he can begin to raise his knee a little himself which shows that the muscles are uniting and gaining strength. And here let me say that some whiskey made its appearance this evening. What sort of stuff it is I do not know. Dr. Libby surgeon in charge returned on last (---?---) and I tell you he has turned over a good many new bones things had gone very much astray during his absence. On Monday the wounded in Ward C were taken to Ward F, and the ward thoroughly cleaned; on Tuesday evening they were brought back; taken to the other end of the ward, and put on fresh beds. This means I had a clean shirt, and clean pillow cases for C, and they all looked very comfortable. Today the patients from Ward F were brought in, and Ward F cleaned, I understand they are to remain in Ward E. There are but nine wounded here now. They are at the upper end of the ward where the others were moved from. Your Pa will understand all this. We have had our room cleaned today. (---?---) (---?---) has been trying ever since I came to have it done, but they would not give him anyone to do it. The (---?---) in her complaint to Dr. Libby this morning. He told her it should be done immediately and sent a man to do it. So we sit by comfortable little fire in a clean room tonight.

I suspect you are tired of Hospital news so I will turn to something else. I have not heard that Cousin Flora has gone home yet I suspect she is stopping to attend Willy Anna Nicholas wedding. (---?---) Ewing told me she expects to be married to a Cousin of (---?---) (---?---) also married (---?---) Just while I think of it let me say (---?---) wants our glove patterns, the one that suits me will suit her. Do not forget. I had almost forgotten to tell you that my old friend James Campbell came up yesterday purposefully to see C & myself. Told me he determined to come as soon as he heard that I was here. He is looking very well and says he enjoys good health. I am rather surprised but glad to hear that your Pa wishes or rather thinks he can send you to school again. I suppose he is influences somewhat by what Captain Abe Lake



said. I do hope you will not be prevented. I wish I could be there to help you, and to fit your dresses. Do not fear but that you will be as well dressed as other people There is the greatest outcry for goods of every kind. If you can procure it I think you ought to have a straw hat they are woven by everyone; ladies older than I wear them. Some wear white but the majority wear blk hats, trimmed with velvet ribbons or cut velvet some have the double of blk silk bound with green or pink, any color you fancy. People wear whatever they can get. You, or I, may wear any collar we have, or, make them out of any material we have, and we will look as well as others. The Bishop's gown is in my upper drawers in my room in that box of edges, the tape & braid are also there, the other ruffles is upstairs in the second drawer, the (---?---) muslin in the upper drawer. The pld muslin, and lining are in the box in my room; a good may nice linen pieces are in that (---?---) bag. Use what you need of such things as are in the house. (---?---) I will say your brother enjoys his dried beef so much. He made his breakfast on it this morning with bread, butter, boiled eggs, & coffee. I have not been any (---?---) bread since I came; generally it is very good, sometimes beautiful bread. I shall be sorry when it gives out on his account which it will do before a great while. I used the last of my brown sugar this morning. I almost doubt the prospects of sending you (---?---) letters. If I thought she would object I would not on any account do it. I have heard from them since they returned. I hope their fare will be better from this out as they have a new cook and dining room servant. They enjoyed their box very much and I suppose the things must have kept well as they say they feasted for some time. I do feel so uneasy about Cornelia; I am afraid her cough having affected her in the way it has may settle on her lungs. I sent you her last letter. I thing she ought to have told (---?---) (---?---) how she was affected. I am going to tell Laura to do it, and to forbid Nelia going out to night meetings while she has such a cough. I promised your Pa I would in my next say something in reference to the charge for board. I have not seen Dr. Libby myself and do not think I shall say anything to him on the subject. Mrs. Likens has some conversation with him yesterday on the subject. He said the price fixed was two dollars per day. She told him her son had not used but very little of Government rations since she came; that mainly all the food he had eaten had come from home, and she thought she was entitled to his rations, besides, food she has furnished bottle4 wine & whiskey, He said there was only so much allowed and when so many came in the rations run out and you had to furnish more. She says she will not pay it unless compelled. It seems to be the opinion her that the charge is for private benefit. Mrs. Le goes to the mess table and .....

PS Charles joins me in love to you all. Says kiss Willis for him and talk to him about him. I expect you will think this is a very mixed up letter. I have written at intervals and not as subjects occurred to my mind. I have wasted some paper but did not discover it until too late. Goodbye Mother

*This letter was written by Mary Creighton Wilson Tabb to her daughter Mary Park Tabb. It was written from the military hospital apparently in Gordonsville, VA. before the death of Charles William Tabb on February 15<sup>th</sup> 1864.*