

U.S. Hospital  
Chester Penn  
March 19<sup>th</sup> 1863

Dear Ellen,

I must begin this morning to tell you about the reception of our barrels. They came so crowded with good things that we were astonished at their capacity. They were particularly acceptable just now, as a good many of our men are to be sent to their regiments in a few days, & we like to supply them with all the warm clothing they need. The flannel shirts & drawers, hankerchiefs, stockings & vests will be distributed among them among them then. The mittens are pronounced the best that have every been sent to the Army. We gave them to Mrs. Tyler, for the Guard, but she said we had better keep them for some of our men who were going away. One of Walter's pin cushions I gave to Miss Titcomb, who was delighted with it. The other will hang in my little ward-room where all the soldiers can see it, & I shall show them how nicely the pins are put in "just as the soldiers march" & tell them little Walter Dana a Maine boy put them in. One of Walter's needle cases I gave to my Dyphtheria patient who has had recently a very severe attack of Bronchitis, but who is now well enough to sew a little, & is making a vest for himself.

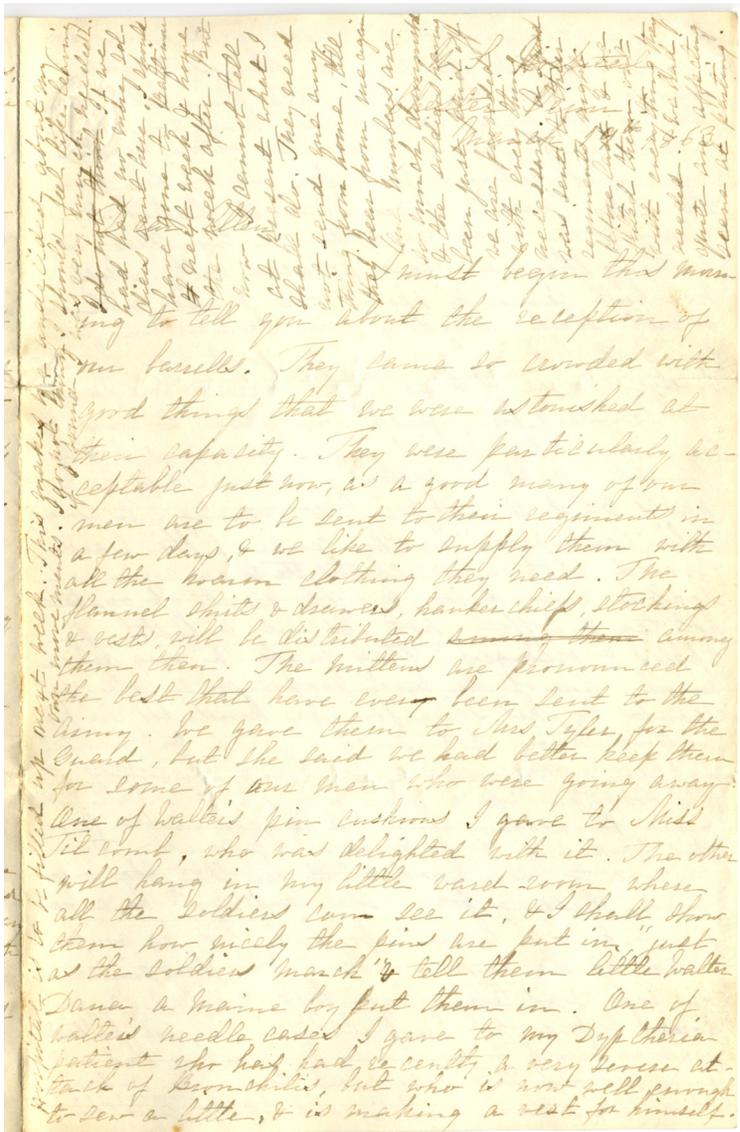
[Sideways on left and at top, continued from last page] Hospital is to be filled up next week. This makes me undecided about my own movements. I do not think I should feel like leaving

if I found I was very much needed.

I do not think If we had had no more soldiers sent here, I should have gone to Baltimore the next week & home the week after. But now I cannot tell at present what I shall do. They need not send me any thing from home, till they hear from me again.

Our numbers are so much diminished & the soldiers having been just paid off we are provided with every thing necessary. A squad was sent to their regiments night before last & we fitted them out with everything they

needed. We had quite an affecting scene at parting.



Contributed to Maine Memory Network by Maine Historical Society  
MMN # 81047  
Date: March 19, 1863  
Description: Rebecca Usher, a nurse at the U.S. General Hospital in Chester, Pennsylvania, wrote to her sister Ellen Usher Bacon of Portland to thank her for the delivery of a box of clothing, and food, and other items for soldiers recovering at the hospital.

He was very much pleased with it. Said he believed all the nicest things came from Maine. That they must have fine little boys there, & very nice ladies, they sent so many nice things to the soldiers. The other needle case Miss Titcomb took for one of her men. The other needle cases I shall distribute among the men in a day or two, there is nothing they are more pleased with. Miss Newhall came & spent one night with us & will start Monday from Germantown for the East but is to make a visit in Cambridge. A jar of Pine Apple came for her in Louise's bbl which she gave to Mrs Tyler. Mrs Tyler added some oranges to them bought 3 gals of oysters & gave Miss Newhall's ward a supper last evening. A long table was spread in the center of the ward covered with white cloths, the men were all seated around it, & with plenty of oysters hot tea & coffee, hot biscuit & butter, Pine Apples & oranges; they made a very delicious meal. One of the men proposed a vote of thanks to Mrs Tyler for her kindness in providing them with such a nice & bountiful supper, & three cheers for her & the ladies of the Hospital which were given with a will which made the welkin ring. A large number from this ward are to be sent away to-night. Give my love to Mary Wood & tell her that the nice warm dressing gown she sent, will be a great comfort to a man who had his leg amputated at the knee joint, a few days since. His wife was telegraphed to & arrived a few hours before the amputation. We all pitied her very much & were sorry her coming had not been delayed till the next day. She sat in Mrs Tyler's room looking out of the window watching

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window  
Mrs Tyler's room looking out of the ^ watching  
[Sideways at left]

Their voices were so choked with feeling, they could hardly speak to bid us good by  
[Sideways at right]  
& Mrs Tyler appeared like a woman parting with her sons. They had better

to see him brought over from the ward. She had been watching a long time, when Mrs Tyler told her she thought he must have been brought over some time when her attention had been called off for a few minutes. Then she left the window & sat down by the register. Presently she was taken with the most excruciating pain in her <sup>right</sup> leg. Mrs Tyler applied all the remedies she could think of without relieving her, & she continued in this state of intense suffering for more than an hour. Mrs Tyler said in speaking of it, that she would rather have been in the amputating room, than with her. It would have been felt trying, she suffered so intensely. It was her husband's right leg that was amputated during this time. A most remarkable case of Sympathy we think. The worsted cap which we found in the pocket of the dressing gown I shall give to the likeliest fellow I can find who is going to his regiment. Mat's Stockings I gave to an Irishman in my ward. Michael Quigley who was very much delighted with them, & especially with the poetry. The dried apples we were very glad of as green apples are two dollars a bushel here. Mothers & Aunt Hannah's we have reserved for our mess, & shall cook them in a day or two, as soon as we have disposed of a few green ones we have on hand. Anna Bacons have already or rather are being served out to the wards daily & are very much praised. The jellies are always acceptable either as drinks, or as appetisers for the wounded & the amputated men. I have given out but one pair of slippers as yet, but shall doubtless have more calls in a few days. Mrs Dana's Harper & Atlantic were a treat as neither of them are taken here. Our mess has had a feast of good things since the barrels came, & our wards have been treated on gen-

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[Sideways at left, continued from page 2]  
send me \$30 from home in the course of a week or two.

gerbread, candy, & crackers. Please give my kind regards to Mrs Deblois, Carrie & Mary Jones, Mrs Dana, Mrs Preble, Mrs Gilman, Mrs Annie Jones & Lizzie, Mrs Pierce, & Mrs Band, & tell them I am very grateful for their kind remembrance of me & my work & that when I get home I shall be delighted to thank them personally, both for myself & for the soldiers. Do not forget to tell Mary Wood that I had a delightful time with Fannie & Mr Eaton in Washington & that I only regretted that I could not see more of them. But I must tell you of our journey home from the Capital. First however I must say that these everybody overwhelmed us with their polite attentions. Our visit was a complete ovation. The President's Levee the next morning after our arrival, was pronounced the most brilliant of the season. We left early Thursday morning with quite an escort under the direction of Capt. Whitney. Mrs Whitney & daughter, Miss Newhall & Laney, Mrs Blake & daughter, Mrs Henry Perley, Dr Perley, Fanny Anderson, & Mary Fessenden. We all took the street cars except Dr Perley & Mrs Blake who rode to the Depot in a carriage. When the horse cars stopped, the conductor told us we had only three minutes to make the connection. We all started on a run & looked more like a flock of geese running in the water, than anything I ever saw. We had just time to purchase our tickets. Some of the ladies were bound for Baltimore to spend the day, & others were going to Annapolis. Mary came merely for the pleasure of riding with me. We parted with them all at Annapolis Junction & proceeded to Baltimore. I wanted to call on Lizzie Woods & all I knew about her place of residence was Hiram's name. So I asked the conductor if he could tell me where Hiram Wood's place of business was?

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He said he believed it was on Calvert Str  
between Lombard & Market. But we had better  
ask the baggage Master. We asked him & he  
gave us the same direction. We supposed when  
the cars stopped we should find carriages  
waiting, but in this we were disappointed, &  
before we had discovered that there were none  
the horse cars had left us. So there we were  
in a strange City, not knowing where to go,  
with our hand bags on our arms. We started  
off however, & soon inquired of a man if he  
could tell us where Calvert Str was? He said  
we must keep on in the direction we had  
taken till we came to Baltimore Str & follow  
that till we found Calvert; that it was about  
a mile from where we were. It was a very  
cold day, but we were not disheartened. We walked  
on briskly till we came to Calvert. Then we  
walked down Calvert inquiring for Lombard  
& when we had found Lombard, we inquired  
for Market. Then we walked down one side &  
up the other, between these two streets ~~and~~ look-  
ing for the sign, but without finding it. Then  
we stepped into a store & asked - The man said  
the firm were well known there, but he thought  
it was on the other street round the corner.  
We walked up to the corner & were asking a  
man if he could show us Hiram Woods' place  
of business? When an old gentleman stepped  
up & asked if we wished to see Hiram Woods  
I said we did & asked do you know him sir?  
He said he thought he ought to, as he married  
his daughter. Then said you are Mr  
Daniel Chase. He said he was. I then introduced  
Louise & myself, telling that we were passing  
through Baltimore & were anxious to see Lizzie  
Woods for a few minutes. He told us to come with  
him & he would put us on board the cars  
which would take us right to his door. & there

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[Sideways at left]  
I shall be in two or three weeks. That my mission here is nearly accomplished for

we would find his sister who would do every thing for us & would go with us to Mrs Woods'. So he put us in the car, giving the conductor directions where to leave us, & saying he would come up if possible. After we were seated in the car we were talking it over & speaking of the little time we had, when a gentleman who sat opposite us, asked if we would prefer to go directly to Mrs Woods? we said we would our time was so limited. Then said he I will go with you right to her door. We found Mrs Woods & Lizzie both at home & very glad to see us. They sent round to the Soup House for Mrs Condon who spends an hour there every day dealing out soup to the poor. She soon came when we had a nice lunch & then left after promising to spend a week there before I left for Maine. We took the street cars again which left us six squares from the Depot, the conductor said we were too late for the train. We jumped from the cars & ran at the top of our speed till we gained the Depot, just in time to purchase our tickets. Once seated in the cars, he asked the conductor if the train stopped in Chester, he said no that we would be obliged to go on to Philadelphia & then take the next train back to Chester, which would make us late home. We resigned ourselves to our fate however thinking it was inevitable when just before we arrived at Chester, the conductor came to us & said he should be obliged to stop there for the other train which was late. We were rejoiced at this, & felt that a signal good fortune had attended us all day, leading us out of all our difficulties. We found every body ready to welcome us at the Hospital, & our wards greatly in need of us. I never saw anything like the generosity & gratitude of the soldiers. Louise's ward has just purchased a complete set of field instruments for their Surgeon for which they gave \$100. & my ward reduced now to seventeen men

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the present. I am perfectly well & enjoying my work. with love to all Bep.

has paid \$70. for a microscope for him. We  
both have the same Surgeon - Dr Morton of Chester  
I told them that it was more than they could  
afford. & that though Dr Morton was a good  
Surgeon & very kind & attentive to his men, yet  
he was well paid for his services, receiving  
\$100. per month, & besides that, the practice was  
a great advantage to him, but I could not di-  
minish their sense of gratitude or obliga-  
tion to him. I am sorry to say that the Guard  
house had been unusually full, since the  
Paymaster came. The other evening two of my  
men were brought home drunk. As I passed  
up the ward on my way to tea, they were try-  
ing to persuade one of them an Irishman  
to go to bed. I stopped a moment & said  
Michael I would go to bed, "It will be a great  
deal better for you. Said he "Lady, you think  
I'm tight but I ain't. I like you better n any  
lady in the world except the old woman."  
I did not wait to hear the conclusion of the  
sentence. I remembered that discretion was the  
better part of valor & hurried on. My Norwegian  
had the other victim. It was very touching to  
see him. They paid got him in bed, but he  
sat up & talked constantly. He called one  
of the men to him, said he, "Come here Junis,  
give me your hand - I am drunk Junis, will you  
please excuse me Junis." Don't go a way from  
me Junis. I love you, you are just like my mother  
Junis. Don't talk while I am drunk, drive  
all those people away & you stay with me my dear  
Junis." The next day he came into my room  
& asked me to excuse him. I asked him how  
it happened. He said he met the other men  
down in town & went into a saloon with them  
& they asked him to take some Larger beer. He  
said said he did not want any, but they coaxed  
him, told him one glass would not hurt him  
called him a child & a baby, till finally  
he thought he would take one glass to please  
them, & then he thought he could take another  
glass, & then he took a glass of wine & very  
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go any where with them again. That he must  
[written in the left margin:]

have recent papers from you every few days am much obliged. I like Mr Stebbins

keep away from men who drank beer or wine  
that they were bad men & he must not go  
any where with them. He is a perfectly guileless  
innocent boy with a high moral nature like  
Ole Bull's. I shall try & look out for him in future  
& not let him have a pass the same day  
with the drinkers. My Old Hunker came to  
me the other day & said when he got his pay  
he wanted me to go down to Chester & have  
my picture taken so he could send it home  
to his wife. If I was only a little taller I should  
look just like her. In the evening I told Mrs  
Tyler I had received a proposition from one  
of my men to go to Chester with him & have  
my picture taken. That I did not know whether  
it would meet her approbation. When I explained  
she laughed heartily. He had some money  
on a sheet but without the picture. before he went  
he brought me a two dollar bill, saying that that  
would pay for part of the tobacco I had given  
him. I told him the tobacco was sent to me  
for him but he insisted upon my keeping it. But  
finally I succeeded in persuading him to take it  
home to make his children a present of it for me.  
Another man for whom I had bought an Arithmatic  
& slate came to the store as he was going & brought me  
two dollars begging me with so much feeling to accept  
it, telling me if I could not keep it for myself to  
give it to some soldier who needed it more than  
he did, that I felt it would be unkind to refuse  
it. He said I reminded him constantly of his wife.  
I told Mrs Tyler I should like to see all their wives  
in a group. as I resembled them all I thought  
they must make an interesting picture.  
I was astounded at Butler's speech where he says  
that we must be careful lest we be found fight-  
ing against God. That paragraph is so replete  
with the great principle of human manhood  
& is so filled with the true spirit of wisdom & of  
Christianity that I was no less surprised than  
delighted with it. I hold his conversion to be  
as remarkable as St Paul's & think he is doubt-  
less the great apostle of American Liberty in  
the nineteenth century. I am reminded of Peter's  
dream. I am told on good authority that our

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[Sideways at left]  
22<sup>nd</sup> of Febr address very much & was very much pleased with the speech of the farmer

[Sideways at right]  
in the Illinois Legislature. That is the kind of men we need at the North.