There are many rumors as to the falling back of the enemy &c — Last night I was ordered at 7. to report when I had 2 days rations cooked that I might "march immediately against the enemy" — I reported at 9. that we had the rations cooked & were ready. The next morning we were told it was unnecessary and that the rumors who had showed a bold front had retired with the loss of a forage train they had sent out the demonstration having been made to cover the operations of a foraging party who had been captured —

So the men will eat cold victuals (corn bread & bacon) for three days — We have frequent alarms of this kind — & the men are always angry that they are false — I am always glad to be ordered back to camp —

I should not be surprised if our whole army were unlocked for Alex & Miss. before long for I am persuaded the enemy will make their main operations in Miss this winter —

We have not said in any of your more recent letters how dear little "Cousin's" hand is getting on — Do you anticipate for her

a complete restoration of the use of the hand or not?

Your letter of Aug 27 & early in Sept seemed to indicate an apprehension that she might be seriously injured by it —

How I would like to be with you at & now — What sort of presents can you devise for the little ones?

I am promised 20 lbs of sugar for my & Mrs gift from one of the commissaries —

No coffee is to be had except by running the blockade from Nashville which is occasionally done — We shall have to rely on our stock in Montgy —

I have become such a barbarian as to drink coffee at night out of tea cups & without sugar —

Tell McK. I am camped in a grove where I sometimes see fine squirrels up on tree — We have nothing smaller than 12 Pdr shot to shoot them with & so they go free, though occasionally one is killed by a small party of 100 men with rocks &c —

Farewell my dear wife — May God bless you all & the virgin whose blessed delivery we shall so soon celebrate pray for the young mother & her children — Affectionately your husband &c &c —