

July 17th

Dear Miss Lane

I have been so much of my time across the river, and occupied regulating the military ferry at Georgetown, which Genl. Mansfield has placed under my charge that I have not been able to finish my note to you until just now. I am very glad the President is getting well, and I hope he will go to Bedford, which no doubt will do him good. –Give my best regards to the lovely and gentle Miss Harriet Buchanan, it must be a great pleasure to you to have her with you. The papers will tell you all about the forward movement of our Army, yesterday about 5 p. m, they were in motion, a force of fully 30.000 men – no American ever commanded so large an Army as McDowell does now, as in addition to the 30.000 moving forward, the reserve is said to be 15. to 18.000 and I think 20. to 22.000 are here under Genl. Mansfield besides.

It is supposed we will drive the Confederates or rebels out of Fairfax ch [courthouse] to night and tomorrow or next day we shall reach Manassas junction only 27 miles off. Whether we shall have a very hard fight there, or whether Beauregard will retreat will soon be known, Many, at least some, imagine he will retreat towards Richmond, others that he will make a very hard fight at Manassas - “nous verrons.” - I certainly think he will be beaten if he fights, I hope utterly routed and dispersed. Many of his men, have in my judgment, no desire to fight against U. S. flag, their first love. Wishing you a pleasant summer, dear Miss Lane, I am truly your friend

W.R. Palmer

On last page:

I relent, state that Miss Wilsons residence is No 395. 18th St.

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