

DIARY OF W. H. TURNER, M. D., 1863

Edited by Mildred Throne

In the early months of 1863 Grant was preparing for the attack on Vicksburg, the strongest bastion of the Confederate army on the Mississippi. From January until the surrender of the city on July 4, 1863, military and naval operations around the beleaguered city were almost constantly in progress. In addition to the wounded, there were many soldiers suffering from the various "camp diseases" brought on by living and fighting in the swamps along the Mississippi. The need for hospitals and for removal of the soldiers was great. "Floating hospitals" had been inaugurated by the Western Sanitary Commission after the battles of Donelson and Shiloh in 1862. Now these hospital boats were called into service for the troops surrounding Vicksburg.¹

Permanently stationed at Milliken's Bend, about eighteen miles up the river from Vicksburg, was the hospital steamboat *Nashville*, "fitted up to accommodate one thousand patients," while two other boats, the *City of Memphis* and the *D. A. January*, were engaged in bringing the wounded and the sick to the *Nashville*, or in transporting them farther up the river to Memphis and St. Louis for hospital care. Each boat was supplied with a corps of army surgeons and several women nurses supplied by the Sanitary Commission.²

It was to one of these boats that Dr. William H. Turner of Keokuk was ordered by Grant in March of 1863. Turner, a brother of Annie Turner Wittenmyer, had been appointed Assistant Surgeon of the Second Iowa Infantry in 1862, at the age of 28.³ A native of Ohio, Turner had come to Iowa in 1852 with his parents. Before that date, however, he had worked for a time as a pilot on the Ohio River, he had attended college at Mays-

¹ For the siege of Vicksburg, see Otto Eisenschiml and Ralph Newman, *The American Iliad: The Epic Story of the Civil War . . .* (Indianapolis, 1947), 415-56; U. S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant* (2 vols., New York, 1885), 1:422-570. For the work of the Sanitary Commission, see [Jacob Gilbert Forman], *The Western Sanitary Commission: A Sketch . . .* (St. Louis, 1864).

² [Forman], *Western Sanitary Commission . . .*, 75-6.

³ *Roster and Record of Iowa Soldiers in the War of Rebellion . . .* (6 vols., Des Moines, 1908-1911), 1:99.

ville, Kentucky, and had begun the study of medicine. This study he continued under the guidance of Dr. John F. Sanford at the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Keokuk. He was graduated from the Iowa Medical College in 1856. He practiced medicine in Keokuk for about three years, and then moved to Jackson Township in Lee County, where he engaged in both medicine and farming. Dr. Turner died in 1900.⁴

For about two months during his war services Dr. Turner kept a journal in which he set down his experiences on the *City of Memphis* on the Mississippi before the fall of Vicksburg. This journal was presented to the State Historical Society of Iowa by Mrs. Cora Eversmeyer of Muscatine.

[March 3, 1863] At Corinth. Received Orders from Gen'l Grant to report in person to him at Youngs Point, La.⁵ I started on the 4th. had a very pleasant trip on the cars there was several ladies on board who wer [sic] on their way to Memphis to work in hospitals at that place and below. Nothing worthy of note transpired on the road. We arrived at Jackson Tenn near 11 a.m it is quite a city and has at one time done a large business for an inland town it is at present the head Quarters of Genl Sullivan⁶ and is strongly fortified We started near 1 p.m I was greatly Impressed to see such a strong guard on the road at every Bridge or small Village there was a detachment of soldiers. The country is very rough and the land so far as I am able to judge is rather poor and has been poorly cultivated, in many places the crops of corn wer still standing in the field the country appears to be poorly supplied with Barns or even out houses of any Kind for stock or for taking care of grain. As we came near Memphis we saw some very fine dwellings built on the modern style I should have said that all or nearly so in the interior wer built after the Old Colonial fashion. arrived at Memphis at 7½ P. M. put up at the Gayosa House for the night it is one of the finest houses in the City. large roomy and well furnished the accommodations are good the proprietor gentlemanly and always ready to lend his help to make his customers comfortable. The table is good and furnished with a variety far greater than I expected as the city is under

⁴ *Portrait and Biographical Album of Lee County, Iowa* (Chicago, 1887), 361; *Annals of Iowa* (third series), 5:80 (April, 1901).

⁵ Young's Point, Louisiana, was across the Mississippi and a few miles above Vicksburg. Grant had moved his headquarters to Young's Point on Jan. 29, 1863. Grant, *Personal Memoirs . . .*, 1:441.

⁶ Brigadier-General J. C. Sullivan.

strict Marshall Law and but little commerce carried on except through the Military Department

The City is much larger than I expected it will number near 40,000 Inhabitants has a fine location high and rolling and from all appearances healthy we have some fine hospitals here and more in course of erection to receive patients from the army below I start this evening 5 o'clock for the Point on the Empire City a small Stern Wheel boat I have Government Transportation and have to pay 1.50 cts per day for board (or in other words my fare is included with my board) The accommodations wer tolerably good but not up to the fare. on the boat I met with 4 other Surgeons who wer ordered to report at the Same place Drs Burns, Hastings, Brunt and Smith we had a pleasant time of it for they wer all gentlemen and full of fun.

[March 6] The Miss River is high in many places over the banks everything looks Dull and in fact is dull on our passage down we saw but little appearance of life on Shore the plantations all appeared to be deserted fences down stock free to roam at will. Helena I believe is the first town of any Size after you leave Memphis. the town is 85 miles below the latter place on the Arkansas Side of the river. Is situated under the Bluff is low and wet it contains near 2,000 inhabitants many fine business houses and has been a place of business at one time it has the appearance of being a very unhealthy place It is Garrisoned at present by our forces Gen'l Prentice⁷ is in command there at present we Stopped there but a Short time.

From here down the plantations are more numerous and of a better character many of [them] very extensive and have the appearance of a Small Village the Negro quarters neat I saw but few but what wer good houses and neatly whitewashed which gives them a favorable appearance The Shores Still have that lonesom[e] appearance We Seldom See anybody and in many places the bottoms are one vast sheet of water for miles on either side I suppose this is unusual and has happened this year through the negligence of the planters in Keeping up Levee they have other and more important work on hand to pay any attention to their farms the Levees are broken in many places where the land is not covered with water it is [covered] with a rank weed called cotton weed and is adorned with a yel-

⁷ General B. M. Prentiss.

low flower. this weed is said to follow cotton one would Suppose it true for it covers all the land within sight cotton or no cotton.

We have one passenger on board [who] is very anxious to make some money on the rout[e] by playing cards he felt very bad to think we all belonged [to] the class of men that don't gamble

[March 7] To day we passed the mouth of White River and Arkansas at the former place we wer hailed and Searched by one of our Gunboats Some of the passengers wer badly frightened as the boat fired a shot across our bow they supposed we wer attacked by gurillas we was detained but a short time next place was the Arkansas river there is quite a village at the Mouth called Napoleon the place is nearly deserted it has a very bad name and judging from its appearance it deserves it the Marine hospital for the benefit of the Steamboatmen of the lower Miss is Situated here it is a fine looking building I think the location poorly selected the Surrounding country is low and in the Spring must be very wet. it has never been used by either army for a Millitary hospital. this is one of the points where we have always had trouble with Gurilla parties just below here we wer hailed by a Squad of blacks on shore prudence forbade our commander landing for them he hadn't forgotten the way our fathers were deceived by the Indians. The next place of note was Greenville Miss the place so noted for gurillas this [is] one of the neatest towns on the river Composed of a class of finely built frame Houses neatly built and Situated in a pleasant place it also has the appearance of being deserted

[March 8] We arrived here this morning at the Celebrated town of Providence made notorious by being Situated near a small Lake by that name, and also for a Canal that was dug by our forces from the river into the Lake There has never been but two greater failures to my Knowledge than the Providence Canal One was the Canal at Vicksburg and the other the Army of the Potomac the great cause of the failure was an oversight of commander in letting the water in before the work was finished and flooding the whole Country driving out the workmen leaving the work unfinished and no chance to operate.⁸ The town is Small and situated on

⁸ The cutting of a canal from the Mississippi River to Lake Providence, a fairly large lake just west of the Mississippi in the northeastern corner of Louisiana, was one of the many efforts Grant was making, without much hope of success, to find a way to by-pass and surround Vicksburg. In the early months of 1863 various canal projects were tried. The one from the Mississippi to Lake Providence was supposed to enable boats to go from the Mississippi through the lake, thence through a series

very low land it was at one time a place of considerable business We stoped here but a Short time then proceeded on our way down the river I Should here remark that the Miss River is very crooked, in many places we can See across the point and [it] is at least 30 miles round one place in particular it [is] 60 miles around and not over 10 across.

The next place of note is Millikens bend this is the place where our troops wer landed or a portion of them this [is] a low section of country 18 miles above Vicksburg one of our army corps is here they have a very disagreeable camp wood and water plenty it is almost impossible for them to move around. and of course very unhealthy. from here we go down to the point [Young's Point] which is 12 miles there is troops all along the Shore down opposite Vicksburg and I understand that we have forces Stil[l] lower down. This [is] I think one of the hardest camps that I have Seen Since I entered the Service, the river is at least 2 feet higher than the camp which our troops occupy which of course makes it muddy [sic] then besides all that they are poorly Supplied with Vegetables and as a consequence have Scurvy at the best I consider it a dear expedition and one that will cost us many valuable lives.

We landed at the lower landing at 11 A. M. I reported immediately to the Medical Director Dr Hewitt for duty while there I met with my old friends Dr's Turner⁹ & Grinsted who wer at that time in charge of the Hospital Steamer City of Memphis they made a request for me immediately and I was ordered on that boat for duty. I felt very grateful [sic] to Dr Turner for his gentlemanly conduct towards me and also his wife who I can call a perfect lady and kind Woman. here I should also mention Drs Graff and Burns [Byrns] both perfect gentlemen I became very much attached to them during my Stay on the boat. While we wer laying there I had a fine chance to view the City of Vicksburg it is Situated on a Bluff Some 100 or more feet above the level of the river it is a poor looking place yet it is one of Millitary importance I Suppose it can be made one of the Strongest places in the west and is likely [to be so] at the present time, there is Strong looking fortifications on the bluffs Surrounding the city.

of bayous and the Tensas, Washita, and Red rivers, rejoining the Mississippi at the mouth of the Red, some four hundred miles below Vicksburg. Although as early as February Grant had little hope of the success of this maneuver, he "let the work go on, believing employment was better than idleness for the men." Grant, *Personal Memoirs* . . . , 1:448.

⁹Dr. W. D. Turner, not to be confused with the author of this journal.

The celebrated canal is located here just opposite the city it has cost many thousands of dollars and I doubt not many lives and has proved one of the most Shameful failures that has ever come off Since Adam was a little boy Yet it is in keeping with many of our old uncles Speculations and just as long as he lets his boys do just as they please he will have to foot the bills of Such foolery.

I received orders this evening to receive the patients as they came on board we commenced about 4 P. M. and continued to receive until near 12 M when we had on board 400 men Mostly cases of Diarrhea Some of them very low Some of them died that night one or two while they were being brought on board I think it an unpardonable Sin to move men in Such a condition yet it appears to be the fashion of nearly all of our Surgeons to Shove their patients off their hands if they think they are going to die, in this case they were dragged through the mud and came in exhausted from the exertions and many never recovered from the prostration between 12 and 1 the levee broke just below cam[p] and caused quite a Stampede among the troops and caused us to tumble out in double-quick to receive the sick we kept on receiving until we had on board near 700 by this time [it] was morning

[March 9] We then run up to the Hospital [boat] Nashvill[e] and shipped all the convalescents on board of her and received in return a load of Sick Men in other words men that were half dead and dying, from there we started for Memphis. Now comes my first experience of a Physic[ian] or its practice on board of a Steamboat. it is quite a change I had been used to a Small regimental hospital now I am in charge of a hundred and fifty men that I never saw before afflicted in all Manners Shapes and form and all anxious to try the effects of a change and their new Doctor one consolation I have I can give them any diet that I wish We Start from the bend at 10 P. M. Now all is bustle among the Drs Drs Byrns, Graff and Myself take Charge of the lower wards Dr Grinsted and W. D. Turner of the upper. every patient has a long Set Story to tell you of his Disease and if you would let him it would take at least one hour to hear him through and he feels highly insulted if you don't stand and hear him out and Says that these army drs dont care for the privates We had quite a pleasant trip up we lost 38 of our men unloaded Spent one day at Memphis and Started back

[March 11] On our way down again we can see gurrillas on the Shore but they dont molest us the river is Still rising and has covered much of the country Helena is what you might call a city of mud and water it is almost impossible to get through the streets our troops occupy the high ground back of town we took on coal here and then left for the Point at which place we arrived on the 12th later in the evening we found things just about as we left them Mud Some deeper and more water. in the evening Our forces started out [on] what we called a Dummy in this instance it was an old Barge so rigged as to resemble a gun boat and draw the fire of the enemy it Succeeded admarably for I dont believe there was a gun in their works that was idle it was a Splendid Sight it presented one continuous blaze of fire for many minutes until it had passed their batteries The trick was a compleet Success it Showed how Strong their batteries wer and with what ac[c]uracy they Shot, they hit the dummy but 5 or 6 times out [of] 2 or 3 hundred Shots.¹⁰

[March 12] We lay all day here I visited the Canal they are Still on it. the embankment is giving away in many places, it is full of water and there is a very Strong current through the whole length of it. The great wonder to me is that they can find Men with Brass Sufficient in their faces to work on the humbug I would certainly resign before I would do so They have 2 Dredging Machin[e]s at work lifting mud from the bottom of the canal it looks very foolish to clean out one portion while there is large trees in other portions that it would be almost impossible to remove even if the water was deep enough for navigation I went down the works until I was opposite Vicks-burg I got a fine View of the place and its fortifications I mean its river works it is quite dangerous to remain there long for they are in the habit [of] Sending Shells over there when they want you to leave I didnt wait for that invitation.

On My return I for the first time saw Shelter Tents in use I had often heard of them now I had a chance of seeing them Occupied by troops. I will acknowledge that I cant do the things justice but I will say this much that if I had command of an Army and my Q. M. Should furnish me Such Tents I would have him removed from his position and if he didn't take

¹⁰ This was the prelude to the running of the Vicksburg blockade by the Union troops in barges and gunboats. The canal projects failing, Grant adopted this desperate measure in order to get south of Vicksburg. For the story of this "dummy" gunboat, see Eisenschiml and Newman, *American Iliad* . . ., 424.

them away with him I would order him Shot and the tents burned for the purpose of saving life. They are just large enough to hold two men very uncomfortably in good weather provided they keep drawn up, and lay close. in bad weather they won't hold themselves, a man can't Sit within 20 yds of it in a good tent without getting wet, it leaks at top, sides, and bottom just the looks of one of them is enough for me without Sleeping in one of them I notice that the boys enjoy very poor health compared with those who are quartered in good tents Then there is one more thing that I noticed I saw no officers quartered in them, even them that recommended them highly that speaks bad for our generous commanders. I know the men feel highly complimented over it for I heard them say so.

Our boys have a very hard time of it they are encampt on [a] very wet low Mudy place the Levee is the only Dry place within miles of here. Yet our boys appear to enjoy themselves there is plenty of Diarrhea and Flux and many of them Dying the only place they have for burial is the Levee and that is becoming filled up if Our Army Stays here for a few months it will [be] one vast body of Coffins. I returned to My boat and found that we wer ordered to take on Some patients we received near 150 and lay until morning

[March 13] we recieved [sic] a few more during day and in the evening run up to the floating hospital Nashville where we finished our load which was 450 patients we left then at 9, P. M. for St Louis our patients wer very Sick many of them wer very much reduced and in fact in dying condition when we received them nothing of importance occured during our up trip we had a pleasant time Saw Several Squads of geurillas on the bank.

[March 16] Arrived on the morning of the 16 at Memphis where we lay but a few hours and Started again I said we had a pleasant trip we had but plenty of work on all Such loads there is Some who are feigning sickness while in fact there is nothing the matter with them I have 5 or 6 of them in my ward and for the first day or two they gave much trouble I Soon found I must do Something and too [sic] their utter astonishment instead of receiving a prescription I told them to get up and go to work. Oh What a Squall raised they refused and took worse on the Spot and Kept getting worse until their groans and grunts and constant running to Privy annoyed the rest of the boys who wer very low I went to them and

wanted to know why they didnt go to work they declared themselves too sick Very well I Said I took 3 out of the number who had said but little gave them buckets and told them they must furnish the Sick with water and help feed them the others I [put] under Special care of the guard with orders to be put on low Diet Tea and toast and nothing else except for dinner then they could have Some Soup and nothing else and if they Stole anything else tie them up I dont believe that I ever saw men improve faster in my life, at first the change appeared to make them worse and they Sent for Dr W. D. Turner he cut their diet down to one 1/2 of what I had allowed them that was just the trick two meals cured them they Sent for me and told me they were much better and would do any light work that I wished them too. I told them they were entirely too weak for work they must remain on low Diet at least one day longer. that was to much for them they began to beg and I released them, and a better set of men I never say they were all good nurses and done their work well. That was a new trick on the boat and it took well. The other Surgeons soon tried it with good effect I could generally get them to work by talking Some wer to hard in the face. One who was not acquainted in the army would Say that I was cruel. just let me explain it, in every regiment there is some men who are perfect Scamps and always have been, the army hasn't improved them a particle they become homesick and will Stoop to anything to accomplish their object these men wer of that Stamp and I knew it at first Sight

We are loosing many of our patients none out of my ward however I think it owing to Ventilation my ward is well Ventilated I keep the whole Deck opened Many of my boys grumble at it but I will give them plenty of air I have two boys that are perfect curiosities they are both Drumers near 16 yrs old and have been Sick for Sometime they both had a dream and wer both going to die next day in the after noon I tried my best to Divert their minds but found it useless and tried anodines with stimulents but found all to fail. I gave them Brandy freely almost to intoxication without any effect then I gave both a hot bath with plenty of Pepper with plenty of friction on the Skin all this time they wer as limber as rags speechless and motionless after 4 hours work I got them both revived and out of the notion [of] dying here let [me] mention Mrs Brooks one of the lady Nurses on the boat She is a fine woman and one of the best nurses

that I have ever Seen too her exertion in the Cases mentioned I am greatly indebted for I think they would certainly have died She has a Son in the army

We have two other ladies on board both over the age of Sweet Sixteen Miss Hadly and Miss Walker of Chicago they are very fine girls and always ready to help when needed they wer very much interested in these boys and fixed them up many little things to eat. Mrs. [W.] D. Turner was more like a mother than a Stranger She done all in her power to make us comfortable and also looked after the fare of many of the very Sick men.

[March 18] We arrived at Cairo on the evening of 18th we Stayed here for Sometime and took on some Coal here we also bought Vegetables for the Sick there was nothing worthy of note transpired During our Stay here one thing I will mention it is common in the army [that] the boys are nearly crazy after Onions Eggs and Potatoes they will give almost any price for them and it is a wonder to me why more of them are not shipped to them it will pay well and be a great accommodation [to] our troops We have had pleasant weather ever since we Started up

[March 20] we arrived at St Louis on the 20th and our load was soon taken off our loss comeing up was 41 and at that number I thought it Small but Many appeared to think it large we are once more free from work and all feel tired and ready for any fun or rest We Went to the St Louis Theater and [like] all other fools never provided ourselves with Provost Passes the Police Soon found us and gave us a very Clever and pressing invitation to visit his head quarters and assured us that the play would not Stop or even be interupted by our leaving after much persuasion we wer left to enjoy ourselves at our pleasure. We did so and returned to the boat when the play was over.

We lay at the wharf Some 3 or 4 days with nothing to do and at liberty to do as we pleased Dr Graff and I were constant associates I think him one of the finest Young Men of My acquaintance. I will not enter into any of the particulars of our Stay here but just Say we had [a] jovial time generally Our boat was undergoing repairs the [men] was very free with their Money and by the time we left many of them wer Straped of their two months pay which they had just received.

We here settled our Mess bill and organized an independent one and laid in our Supplies for the trip. the mess consisted of 5 Doctors 4 Women

Steward and two Clerks Drs Turner Grinsted Turner Byrns and Graff Mrs Turner Miss Hadly, Walker, and Mrs Brooks Now for the first time in my life I had to put on Cod Fish looks and actions even in my chat. I made Some Mistakes and Some of them very ridiculous ones Such as helping Myself Pouring My Tea out into the Saucer when it was hot helping Myself to fruit and putting it on my plate taking butter with my own Knife and all Such trick[s] ignorantly done and done in good faith. . . . We had Some Company going Down Drs of course for we are now allowed to carry passengers.

[March 25] We Started on the 25th for Vicksburg Our trip down was pleasant we had Music both Vocal and instrumental. Games of Whist, Eucher, Cribbage Sixty Six, Chess and Backgammon. Our down trips are always jovial and full of mirth nothing of importance transpired worthy of note on our way down except the report that Several boats wer fired into by guerrillas we Saw Several parties out on Shore of the regular Butternut Clan but they let us pass unmolested. They appear to [have] Some respect for Hospital boats and Gunboats but they are loosing respect for the latter and I Shouldn't be surprised if they would fire into them Soon but just at present they respect them they are posted all along the river from Cairo to Vicksburg.

[March 29] We reached [Young's] Point on the 29 things but little changed Some movement of troops on hand but to what point I dont know but think for Grand Gulf.¹¹ The river is Some higher than before and many of the Sick are in hard looking places We got an order Soon after we landed to move all the Sick from Youngs Point up to the Floating Hospital Nashville and leave them retaining all on board who wer to be Sent north we took on board 900 You had better believe we had a great time with them Every one expected to receive prompt treatment and his meals at the regular hours and of course he didn't get it So we got a bad name We had them on board for 24 hours before we could find room for them on the other boat we Shipped them at last and received 550 from the Same boat and orders to take them to St. Louis and then return to Memphis and receive sick for St Louis

We had a hard trip of it the weather was wet and cold it was almost impossible to keep the boys warm most of them wer much emaciated with

¹¹ Grand Gulf, Mississippi, on the river some 20 miles below Vicksburg.

the Diarrhea it made them fretful and discontented that made it hard on us and it was the time that our patience was sorely tried 2 out of the 5 failed got mad talked cross and sharp to their patients. that was bad for them for the more you irritate such men the worse and the more trouble they give you My partner Dr Byrns and myself kept in a good humor he got off one or two little hard words but soon got over it and we kept everything quiet in our wards I was called the good natured man by all. The Mortality was large we lost many 43 I believe At Memphis we had to take on coal and stores for the sick we received a considerable quantity of Sanitary Stores which was very exceptible [acceptable] to the Sick.¹²

[April 3] We leave here April 3 in this load of patients there is 4 of my old acquaintances and old customers as a matter of course we were glad to see each other and had quite a chat I met many that I have met before and some of my old school mates there was nothing of importance occurred one thing I have noticed among the patients they are nearly crazy after Onions Potatoes and Eggs the latter they will give 5 cts apiece for freely and anxious to get them at that price they give us much trouble we can hardly keep the peddlers off they will smuggle such things on board to sell Many boys are killed by them and the Surgeon never finds it out until his patient is dead We run out of coal on our way up and had to take on wood which we did at Commerce Mo We were on a race with the Steamer New Kentucky the speed of the boats was nearly equal and as a natural consequence it got up considerable excitement and we [did not] wish to be detained any longer at the [wood] Yard than we could possibly help So nurses Doctors Officers and many of the convalescents turned out and carried wood we took on 75 cords then continued our journey. We was so sore for several days that we could hardly move Our consolation was good we joined our object [and] beat the boat up

[April 7] we arrived on morning of the 7th unloaded our sick supplied our boat with stores and waited two days for orders from Asst Surgeon Gen'l [R. C.] Wood During the interval we enjoyed our selves in the City each one to his fancy it was generally at some place of amusement such as the Theater

[April 9] We left on the 9 for Memphis with several Surgeons on board

¹² These were supplies of food, clothing, bedding, and bandages furnished to the army by the Sanitary Commission. See [Forman], *The Western Sanitary Commission* . . . , *passim*.

ordered to that place for duty we had a very pleasant trip down at Cairo we took on Coal and left for Memphis on the 11

One thing I will mention here for fear I forget it. It is this I have taken particular notice for Some time [that] nearly all the army Surgeons drink and many of [them] to excess I will say at least half of them Many of them neglect their duties I think it hard for Such men to hold positions especially ones of such responsibility yet the higher the Rank the more they neglect their business. This won't hold good with our Inspectors for they are Sober Men and so far as I have Seen so is the Director but in a Majority of cases it will hold good I saw 8 Surgeons Drink out of 10 and it was a very poor day for drinking and they had a very poor drink I Suppose it was all right

[April 12-13] We arrived at Memphis on the 12 received our load on the 13 which consisted Mostly of very Sick Men from the hospitals in the City we received 600 before we received our load of patients we rambled over the City Sight Seeing the first place of importance that we visited was Court Square it is a beautifull place laid out with taste. well shaded with Choice shrubery in the Center it Contains the Bust of Jackson with Some very appropriate mottos one of them is The Union Must and Shall be preserved While the rebbs wer in possession of the p[l]ace one of them tried to knock the letters off with his bayonet I Suppose his comrads or Officers became asshamed of that kind of work and made him quit The Park is filled with Grey Squirrels very tame which gives it a very picturesque appearance.

While we wer in the Park Several Ladies came in I supposed from their looks and actions that they wer daughters of Dixie They looked on us with perfect contempt. We in return treated them with perfect indifference talked and laughed just as though we wer alone they Soon left us thinking I Suppose that we was very poor judges of beauty or perfectly ignorant of the rules of Society I never Saw so great a variety of Flowers in my life for the Time of year nearly every house (Dwelling) is Surrounded with them. And what is worse for the young Soldier he will Seldom pass one of these fine flower gardens without Seeing a pair of bright Eyes peering through a window at him. . . . On the Streets [we] met many of the citizens and a Sourer looking set I never Saw. When we met ladies, I believe it was a rule with them to put on the most contemptuous look they had with

them. Nearly all the business done here is done through the Military dept and Some few private Stores. then there is that Class of Rogues called jews with their Stocks of Clothing. I think from what I can see the Citizens are very much dissatisfied with the present rule but will have to make the best of it. None of the Citizens appear [to] feel at home you can see them in Small groups on nearly every Street earnestly chatting We will leave this place for the present and return [to] Hospital S B City of Memphis

We Start for St. Louis with our load nothing of importance occured during our up trip one unaccostomed to this Kind of [trip] would find plenty to interest them and could find Many little anacdotes which would interest the Public and some of them would likely be instructive and would explain why Surgeons get Such hard names.

I will here give an inside view of my ward it contains 175 men all called Sick and many of them are Some not Diarrhea is the prevailing [disease] then we have diseases of nearly every class and then we have some who are home Sick and have nothing else then there is another class commonly called Shirks and are ready for anything but fight these two last variety are the ones that give the Surgeon his trouble and bad name he must be first attended too have the most Comfortable bed best to eat then Do at least 2/3ds of the grumblng or he will give you a hard name Now I have plenty of just Such men and I am the poorest man in the world to humor people and for that reason I have a hard name among Such men

We are Scarce of nurses up Stairs I Sent all of mine up but just enough to have one of the old ones on duty all the time for a boss then took 10 or 12 out of the wards and Made them work. it gave me great trouble they claimed to be Sick Men and came on board for the purpose [of] treatment and not work My argument was that I was their Surgeon and it was my business to prescribe for them my prescription was exercise and they must take it My order was Supreme in my ward We have Some lively times especially at mealtime every one is ordered to his bunk and Must receive his Meals from the nurses nothing would Surprise you moie than to see them eat men that can hardly walk alone will eat all they can get with the most ravenous appetite and will always complain of being hungry you could hardly believe that a Man that you wer looking for his death every hour would eat all you would give him. That is one of the hardes[t] things that I have to contend with I can't Stand and hear a man beg for food when

I know he feels all he Says and likely more too You will not find one out of 10 of these old chronic cases of Diarrhea but what have a morbid Appetite in fact you seldom See a Soldier Cant eat if he can move

We have Some very Sick men this trip and lost Many not more [than] I think would have Died if they had been left in Hospital in Memphis Some it injured and others benefitted on the whole I think we came out a little ahead We found fine facillities for feeding patients and plenty to feed them on we carry our Beef alive and Butch[e]r as we need Nothing worthy of note occured on our up trip we had pleasant weather and a quick trip. . . .

We lay her[e] 3 days for repairs on the boat which I think was wrong as we could have done without the work we spent our time as usual in the City we wer all anxious for news from the East Hoocker¹³ we all think will do something for his section of the Country

[April 15] We Start on the 15th for Memphis after another load of Sick from that point. We have many passengers all Dr's and Women We had quite a pleasant time of it all free and easy having good time generally. We had quite a pleasant trip down and found all things ready for loading it began to rain and continued to do So for two or three days we had to receive one load in very dissagreeable weather we heard at this time that Grant was moving below Vicksburg with nearly all of his force it created quite an excitement especially among the rebbs they couldnt understand what his object was. Why he Should leave Vicksburg and expose the remanent of his force to the mercy of the Garrison at that place.

[April 24] Such another load of men I never saw 700 all told and 2/3 of them Convalescents and a real jolly set can eat all they can carry and some more they are Said to be men that are unable to Stand the Service and Many [do not] like their looks for they look like Men that wer to mean for anything then others Deserve a discharge and will likely get it. They are all anxious for a trip up the river and are very anxious to know what the Doctor thinks of their case we had a great time with them it takes all of us to Keep them Straight and then we often fail I had 250 under my charge and they are the hardest Men I ever had anything to do with never Satisfied with their treatment or their diet always grumbling one of them thought he would force things to Suit him and knocked my Wardmaster

¹³ Maj.-Gen. Joseph Hooker had recently been placed in command of the Army of the Potomac, replacing Maj.-Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside after the Union defeat at Fredericksburg.

down and attempted to beat him but I happened to come in and Stopped the fun by taking the man and placing him under guard with Roaps around his arms and leggs I had to keep him for half [a] day I will be well pleased when we get rid of this load We lost Several none however in my ward we had a pleasant trip up nothing of importance occured on our way up worthy of note I met one of my old neighbors John Sowthes, he has turned out to be quite a different man he preaches and is Said to be a man of Some influense and property when I knew him he was a regular Sot and one of the meanest Kind

[April 30] we arrived at St Louis on the 30th We always Stay here for two or three days it is quite a job of work to supply our boat with Stores and get everything in trim for the reception of another load of Sick We have to Send all our Stores (Clothes) out for wash and repairs which takes from 2 to 3 days That gave us time for exercise in the City and a chance for getting some fancy Meals at Resterants and you better believe we enjoyed it

[May 3] We Started for Millikens Bend on the 3d of May all anxious for the news from the Seat of war below we heard many vague rumors but Nothing definite there was considerable Stir on the river nearly every boat that passed [on] the river was fired into from the Shore by guerrillas and many of the boys was affraid we would be Saluted by them We had quite a time our company was good all lively and Mirth prevailed all the way down. Our old boat was hailed and warned not to proceed beyond the mouth of the Arkansas river unless under the protection of a Gunboat we thought our flag of yellow bunting Sufficient protection, but Commander of Gunboat laying below us thought different & forbade us to proceed