

Camp Gregg, Va.,
Mch. 27th, 1863

Dear Miss C.

Your very kind letter was received a few days since, and I hasten to reply. My haste to answer is abundant proof that I appreciate the letter notwithstanding its delay.

I must write too amidst cares and anxieties and consequently, currente calamo. We are packing up in obedience to a Gen. order, and all is bustle and confusion. The aforesaid order announces in very unpleasant terms the determination of the Gen. Commanding to begin speedy hostilities and to prosecute the war to an early and honorable conclusion. In other words the spring campaign is fairly opened, and the deep mouthed cannons proclaim it loudly this morning. We fully appreciate the coming change in our life, and look forward with no small degree of solicitude to hard marches, an unhealthy proximity to bullets, few delays and short rations. We are to be deprived of tents, etc., and allowed one blanket and a haversack. Our life here has been indeed pleasant, but it is shortly to be numbered amongst the "things that were"-

"A schoolboy's dream, the wonder of an hour"-

A few days since upon the occasion of a visit to another part of the Army, I witnessed a most agreeable little episode. The rebels and Federals had congregated upon the respective banks of the Rappahannock, and a Federal band was discoursing fine music to the enraptured crowd. The Band towards the end of the performance, played our national air, "Dixie", when the air resounded with the shouts of the rebels. Then followed "Yankee Doodle", when the welkin rang with Federal applause. Next was the old pathetic "Home, Sweet Home", which both parties vied with each other in cheering vociferously. It was an affecting scene, and aroused a feeling, which above all others, is the strongest in the soldier. I had often read of the wonderful effect of the pibroch's notes upon the Highlander, and have frequently seen a beautiful little picture "The Soldiers Dream", but never before witnessed so remarkable a scene, in which every participant was so deeply affected. This certainly illustrated that though the gentler passions are hardly ever exercised amongst soldiers, they only sleep, and the best way to approach a man, is to touch the finer chords of human nature.

From absent members of the company, I often get some curious documents, such as petitions to the Sec. of War for discharge, which are referred to Company Commanders. I have one in particular which I know would interest you, and I would enclose it now but it is badly worn. It will rank with "Widow Bedott" and "Artemas Ward". I will copy it entire for your intellectual benefit, and as my wits are about "gin out." I only wish I could give you a fac-simile of the petitioner's chirography.

War Department,
Richmond, Va.

Mr. Ginral G.W. Smith, or Secriterry of War: sir, I draw your attention to this matter as all millers ar exempt I think I ought to be exempt to I have a steem griss and saw mill here in a part of the country whar thar is no saw mill in near 40 milds squar and no gris in a bout 20 milds squar. It seams that my mill is as mutch importont as any mill in the contry. It is a pore part of the country. Thar ar a great many wimmin an childrun here whos husbands has left them and they can hardly live. Thar is but few of them that has got anybody to go to mill for them. My mill has been stoped ever sens last March. I left it

then to go to the army, and I am not able to hire anybody to wrun it and if I was able thar ar no boddly to hier. Thar ante an inginere to be got. This mill is all I one. I hav werked for it, and now the rust is eeting it up. I have not ben able to do dewty sense the 24th of of June last and I don't no when I will be. I am at home on a furlow an on a expence to the Guvvermunt and myselfe. So I think it would bee better fer me to bee discharged and wrun my mill fer the bennyfit of the wimmin and childrun. If I could not git a discharg, I would bee glad to get permishun to stay at home an wrun my mill until all millers ar orderd out then I would bee willin to go Agane my helth would be better. I hav got the dropcy so bad that I can't expose myselfe. The Docter say that it wont do fer me to expose myselfe in a long time yit and I am tied of liing in hospittles. You can do do what you think nessary about it an giv an anser as soon as you git this. I hav ritten to the Govner about it an he sayed that he thought I would be exempt but he could not discharg me, because I belonged to the Confedrit army. If he could he would.

Pleas send me an anser as soon as you git this.

I belong to the 45 reg. Company J, Geo. Vol.

Yours respelly

(signed)

J F Anders

Mr. Smith pleas han this to the Head Quarters, if you ar not the write won.

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jones Co Ba.

There you have it – entire. It needs no comments, but speaks for itself. It is only a specimen of the many papers we receive.

I must close rather abruptly, and with an apology for so uninteresting a communication that certainly cannot be dignified with the term correspondence. In future I will try to do better.

My respects to Miss Mary.

Very respectfully,

Your obdt. servt.

E.S. Mitchell