

Camp near Orange Cty, Va.  
August 8<sup>th</sup>, 1863

My dear Miss C,

We are now encamped near the Rapidan, having arrived a few days since. The report is that "all is quiet." How long have we wished for the repose and quiet which that sentence indicates! The weather is intolerably warm, but we are situated in a pleasant grove of a century's growth. The country around furnishes us with some vegetables and green fruit, and our larder at present is well supplied. Would you like to dine with us to-day? Vegetable soup, roast beef, Irish potatoes, green corn, with a dessert of apple and blackberry pies, constitute the Bill of Fare - the pleasure of your company is solicited - We dine at 4 P.M. We are compelled to submit to Fashion through necessity, and eat only twice a day.

The evidences are that in a short time, will again be on the Rappahannock in the vicinity of Fredericksburg. Meade, unless he has been heavily reinforced, is so badly crippled that he will not attempt an advance in this direction, but will prefer the alternative of "changing his base". Acquia Creek will again probably be his base of supplies. It is asserted by the knowing ones that the programme is the withdrawal of Grant's army from Miss. to be transported by land and water to the Peninsula of Virginia. The "Rebellion is crushed with the fall of Richmond", is the cry of the Yankees, and Heaven and Earth will be moved to accomplish it. Such a movement would force Lee into the fortifications of the Capital, where the Yankee army would fritter itself way in vain attempts to "go to Richmond." Such a move may be looked for, and I earnestly hope that such will be the case. If the Southern Public and the Yankee army does not know it, the Army of Northern Virginia does, that Richmond cannot be taken, if there be a sufficient force to garrison the place. Lee's army increased to 100,000 men, could hold the city and successfully repel every attempt to take it. There are many reasons why such a move of the enemy is eminently desirable. Johnson could soon "clean out" the little force left in Miss., and relieve the Great West of the presence of the hated Yankee. To besiege Richmond with the combined forces of Grant and Meade would compel the enemy to take the sickly swamps of the Chickahominy as a camping ground, and drinking stump water and inhaling miasms laden with fever would prove as deadly as the Southern Rifle. But more than all, the enemy would then fight us in a position of our choice, where we would be comparatively safe. We have always attacked the enemy in his own fortifications. Not once have we ever fought behind breastworks. Between the deadly bullet and the fever-freighted swamps the destruction of both Yankee armies would be a work to be done in a very short time.

I have understood from various sources that female patriotism in the South is fast "playing out." I knew long ago that a soldier had grown to be so common that a citizen young man was favored in preference always and controlled the favor of the ladies. But I attributed that generously to the

probability of citizens possessing superior attractions in the cases which established this as a fact in my mind. Now I hear that everything is forgotten – the glorious past of the war and the consequences of our subjugation – by the women of the South – in other words, the “ladies are whipped.” Is this so? Are you despondent too? I know you are not. But are not many of your friends “croaking”? Rumors say the “Old North State” contemplates a retracing of steps and will shortly return under the yoke of the “Old Flag.” In this the women are the prime movers, and I thought it highly probable that the infection had spread to Georgia. So great is the influence of this croaking in N. Carolina, that many desertions take place daily from N.C. Regiments. More than 5,000 have already gone, and every day I hear of more. I believe the women of Georgia can establish a better record than this, and I still have confidence in their self-sacrificing patriotism. Let them emulate the women of the Revolution, all of whom were heroines, from the belle who graced the ball, to the poor ignorant Nancy Harts of the forest. This is a painful subject to me, but I have heard from good authority so much which substantiates the charge of a want of patriotism by the women of the South, that I was forced to advert to it.

Now is the hour of our trial. Let us all be alive to the emergency. The ladies at home have an important mission to perform. Let them frown upon all who are skulking at home, while their brethren are baring their breasts to the storm. Use persuasion with those who hesitate to rejoin their Regiments, and cease to recognize those who refuse. Many good soldiers are now at home, who know the hardship of camp and linger around the family portals at this delightful season to enjoy the pleasant society of the ladies. Remind them of the obligations they owe to their country and their comrades who remain at their post. Exhort them to return by all that is dear on earth or sacred in Heaven, for now is the crisis. A few short months will decide our fate, Slaves or Freemen. Do your part and the true soldier will do his. Oh! If we are conquered, Know that it will be by treachery or cowardice. Subjugation is a dark picture. It is a possibility, and let us exert every nerve to accomplish our independence. Independence will certainly follow, if our duty is done. Much blood must be shed, and many sacrifices made.

“Oh! Freedom, thou art not, as poets dream,  
A fair young girl, of light and delicate limb, and airy tresses,  
But a bearded old man, glorious in beauty,  
Tho’ his brow is scarred with tokens of old wars.”

My compliments to Miss Mary. Write soon & oblige

Yours, &c.,

Eugene S. Mitchell