

George Oscar French (1844-1865)
Civil War Letters – 1865

Transcribed by Dawn Hance; typed by Joann Nichols; edited by Paul Zeller

In Camp Sunday Eve

Jan 8th 1865

Dear Father,

Yours & Ellas of the 1st inst came to hand on the 6th. You have probably seen before this time that I am not “offended” for I have written as often as you & I guess a leetle oftener. And another thing. I am not one of the offending kind. As the most of my distant relatives seem to be (Here I exchange steel for a gold piece) I cant get a word from Aunt Ell, or Aunt Mary or for hearing from Uncle Fay or Dick, that is simply “on possible.” However I must meekly bear my present trials, hoping for better success in the future. -- Was truly glad that Ed [Peter Donnelly’s step-father] had good luck in his undertaking. Of course I done what I could, but would do it for anyone. And any man visiting the Army for such a purpose would find a friend & assistant in every soldier in the Grand Army – I was on picket last night, & have not slept since night before last, consequently cant write much of a letter to night. I am glad very glad to hear that Mother is so much better, had the news been the other way, (as I feared twould be), I should have found my way to Vermont, inside of 10 days. – Lt. Col. Hunsdon assured me I could have a leave for 20 days. As to yourself Father, you must not work if you do not feel able to. Stave it off & I & Will will send you some “soap.” When we are paid off, I shall make you a present of \$100. Will has never written to me since leaving home. Em has written me once since going to her school. I want to ask you. Don’t you think Em is kinda queer? You must tell Alice for me that I thank her for being so good & doing so well, while Mother is sick. I sent you my Rebel watch. I shall not give it to you but you can carry it. I was afraid it would get broke same as the other & so sent it home by Ock [Oscar] Babbitt. I think that Sol Gates must be dead. Corp. Jerry Bolton, our Co. reported dead—was taken same time as Bill [Corp. Jeremiah Bolton from Castleton was captured June 29, 1864, and paroled April 28, 1865. He was mustered out of service May 23, 1865]. Lt. Macomber has rejoined the Regiment. Your description of the characters Chan, Ab & Carl [Barber] would do credit to Dickens. I can get Gov’t socks here, but they are not any good. I cant get any before 15th January hard up for socks at present, & if you don’t need those worse than I do I wish you would send them by Oc [Oscar Babbitt] or Con [Cornelius] OBrien. Ed, Did not seem to comprehend the “situation” here very well. At Hancock Station a squad of Johnnies took the cars for City PT. Ed seemed to think it a great show. You may send my Art [Artillery] drill (Pattens Light) to Will. It may do him some good in learning the ropes. Ella wrote a firstrate letter tell her. I think she is Nice about it. Well I must close. All No. 6 Boys are well. Caution those home guards to be on the alert for the raiders. Tell the Boys to come in out of the Draft.

Write soon

From
Oscar

Camp Before Petersburg

Jan 12th 1865

Father

Yours of the 28th inst just recd & read. When you wrote before you said Will would be in Memphis for 3 days. That is what I meant when I said the 3 days were up. I think that I shall not write to him until he condescends to drop me a line. Particularly as I wrote him last when at home. If he is “pussy” I cant help it. I certainly have given him no cause to be. I recd the muster in Roll all safe. I am so much pleased to know Mother is recovering from her recent sickness. I hope she will be easy & not commence to work too soon. Sister Alice is a dear good girl for exerting herself so much when Mother is unable to work around the house. I wish you would give Smids watch to him & you may carry my Rebel watch, only let Frank [Smid] have his. It seems that I have not a cent now, only that one note against Sela. I did not suppose it was quite played down to that. I wish you would tell me just how much there is for me at home exclusive of what you & Em have got. Em wrote to me for money when I have not a Damned cent for my own use. I suppose she thinks I am made of green backs. I would do all I could for her, but cant do it in a minute. I cannot send you any money by the 20th. Cant tell when I can. In fact don't know as we shall be paid in six months. If you want any money you had better raid Sela's note, and make sure of it. My allotment is broken – broken when I was promoted, so that will be no more trouble to you. You have got the last cent by way of the Circumlocution Office that you will. And if you kill old red you had better eat $\frac{1}{4}$ & salt $\frac{1}{4}$. So you will have only $\frac{1}{2}$ of her to sell.—

In one of your recent letters, you said that I could claim no credit for “self denial.” Now I should like to know what you base this assertion upon. You will say my expenses at Annapolis but what do you know about that. Not so much, I will venture to say as a cat does about Astronomy. God knows I have been without everything this summer since May last, have endured all that it is possible for a man to endure, been dirty, hungry, lousy, through countless dangers, doing my duty and when at last overtaken by fever, worn out and completely disheartened, I went to Annapolis, for the brief period of twenty days. You sent me \$25. and for fear that I should squander it you gave me some great lectures, and When on rejoining the Regt. sooner than I was able to & sooner than the doctor wanted me to save expenses. You wrote me a very long elaborate letter, setting forth what an unparalleled spendthrift I was, and (as in your present letter) cursing the “Black Republican rule”--& the “brutal soldiery.” Now I want to ask if this is fair—as drunk usage—to condemn a fellow in this way? You had not better write to Gen. Washburn about my pay or bounty. I am perfectly satisfied about the \$7 & the \$25 is U.S. Business—Not the State of Vt. or any state Laws, or Money—I suppose you are sorry that I went to Annapolis last summer, and spent so much money and acquired so many “bad habits.” I suppose that you think I was not sick—only bumming around town, perfectly well clothed in purple & fine linen, spending the money that I “had much better burnt” &c Now you see such stuff is all nonsense. Beside it is abusing a fellow the worst way. Just got a Rutland Herald from Carl. Moses Knapp is here to night staying with Tim. Weather is comfortably cool. Shall put a stamp on this for I want it should go through

I will close
Good Night
Lieut Geo. O. French
Oc

P.S. What ever the cost of fixing Smids watch, you can set to me.

[Obviously Ezra Warner French, Oscar's father, did write to Peter Washburn, Adjutant and Inspector General of Vermont and received the following reply.]

Adjutant and Inspector General's Office

Woodstock Jan 18th 1865

E.W. French
Castleton

Sir: I am directed to inform you that G.O. French was commissioned as Lieut June 28, 1864 as shown by the records in this office, at which time his State pay of \$7. would cease as an enlisted man.

The U.S. Government has the right to recover the \$25. Govt. bounty paid him at the time of his enlistment, as commissioned officers are not entitled to the \$100 bounty.

Respectfully Yours
Henry B. Bradley
Clerk in A.G.O.

South of Petersburg Va

Jan 22 1865.

Father, Yours of 17 inst came to hand this morning.—In my last one to you I was very hasty and said perhaps a great deal more than I ought to. But I was excited, and thought it hard under the circumstances to be found fault with. When I know perfectly well that I have done as well as the best of them during the past year. And certainly I cannot see that I do any thing wrong in serving my country at this time, or that I am rendered any more “brutal in so doing.” Taking everything into consideration that instead of blame, I am entitled to some praise for my conduct during the past year. No man can hope to make money, at present Army prices, & without bounty too,—I cannot get out of this thing.—Stay at home young men, who speculate in sheep & substitutes, can make money. But this fact does not prove that I am to blame for being a soldier. Or that the cause of the Union is any the less just. If I ever get out of this scrape alive & whole I shall be content, and would not exchange my consciousness of having done my duty, for all the money that the “gallant” stay at home gentry will make during my absence. There are indications that the 6th Corps is going South. Perhaps to Charleston or Savannah. Also reports that we shall get no pay till March next. If you raise Selahs note, you had better keep 30 to 50 for me—i.e. In case I should send for it before Spring. You say my watch runs fast. It was dirty when I got it, but has run constantly ever since, when it is cleaned & regulated. I would match it against Prestons big clock. It is a better watch than Smids ever was, worth twice as much—Am so glad to learn that Mother is so much better. She must be very careful, and not go to work.—Will has never written me – he could just as well write to me as to Tom, Dick & Harry—all over creation. I got a letter from Aunt Ell. the other day.—all well—Hope you will send the socks by Oc. B. as report is that express boxes only come as far as Fortress Monroe – for the 6th troops. It seems that old Fessenden has got the Treasury Dept. into a “muddle,” & is going to resign, and get out of it himself the best way he can – I don’t expect we shall be paid until we get a new Secretary, & those \$200. millions – 7-30¾ can be brought upon the market and disposed of.

Great times in this Reg’t fighting for the next Major’s Comⁿ [Commission] Capt Rice (a coward) [Capt. James Rice from Montpelier, Co. F, 11th Vermont] Sowles [Capt. George D. Sowles of Alburgh, Co. K, 11th Vermont] and Templeton (Capts) are all in Vermont, charging the governor, and hunting up influential merchants, and Parents (Grand & not Grand) to bring to bear on the poor Governor.—It is to be hoped that with all their charging that some of them will be successful. Meantime the poor Gov. is going to N.Y.—Washington & Canada—Organizing his home Guards—Ft Fisher is ours, & not a doubt seems to exist of the ability of the U.S. to put down the Rebellion. Old Butler has been ordered to report to his wife, at Mass. and all the Army is glad. Fremont, McClellan, Butler, McDowell, Pope, all have gone guilty to grass, an U.S. Grant is rid of so many loggerheads, and dead beats, in the road to victory. It is hoped that Banks will be removed and a man put in his place—that will return the only disaster to ours gains in the campaign of 1864. Rebel papers begin to howl, and like a passel of boys who have all been in a very bad scrape, and are all equally to blame, begin to lay the fault at the doors of each other, forgetting the proverb about “glass houses.” Jeff Davis, seeing plainly seeing that at last the “Confederacy” must fall, Naturally looks for the softest

place to “strike,” and questions himself whether tis best to fall to Eng. or France. As to coming down to the Yankees, that is out of the question. But we shall see (as Grant says) what will happen in 6 months.

Jewett . sent me a piece of poetry, and I will enclose it to Ella—as she sent me a bit when in the Valley—Tim [Barber] does not seem to be very tough, has lost flesh since coming back, & I am afraid that the hardships of a soldiers life have ruined his health. Chronic Diarrhea still hangs onto him and he says he has not felt natural since last Summer. All the rest No. 6 boys are well. I have to acknowledge the receipt of 5 stamps. Will close.

Write soon

Yours, Oc French

Feb 5. 6. P.M. [1865]

Friends at Home

The 5th Corps & two Divisions of the 2nd are fighting at Hatchers run – The cannonading is terrible Our Corps has been under arms all day, ready to go, & reinforce them. If they are repulsed we shall go – It puts a fellow in mind of the ghastly scenes of 1864 to hear that firing.—Mail goes immediately – Shall write and let you know how it comes out.

Well at present

Oscar

In Camp

Feb 9th, 1865.

Friends at home

I wrote you the 5th, but told you I would write and keep you posted in regard to our movements – Well we have made no “movements” since then, at least. Our Div. The 1st Div was in the fight which now appears to have been a sort of a demonstration on the Southside R.R. I don’t know what has been accomplished, although it is reported that we command the roads, and that the Rebs charged to recover our position but were repulsed with great slaughter. It rained and hailed on the 7th inst. and froze as fast as it fell. Many of our boys lay all night on the field and were brought in the 8th covered with a crust of ice an inch and a half thick, many were delirious. The poor fellows suffered awfully, but never a word of complaint. Our Div & the 3d would probably have been called upon, but we hold a very important position and they dare not move us. The 2nd Corps has moved to the left on the new extension, and the 3d Div moves to the left of us, and now occupies ground formerly held by 1st Div. 2nd Corps. The 3d Vt. Battery moved to the left of this place, an hour ago. I have not seen it before, since June 16th when we crossed the James River – Peace Commissioners have amounted to nothing and I think there will be some of the most horrible fighting these lines that the World has ever seen, in less than two months. We all wanted peace – but no recognition scheme would work in this Army. We all expect to hear good tidings from Gen. Sherman in a few days. I got no letters from home or anywhere last week. If you have not raised that remaining note, you had better do it, and send me by mail, a check for \$50. as I am getting short, and shall be obliged to be at some expense in a few days. Tuck is Capt. [Capt. Silas B. Tucker from Northfield, Co. C, 11th Vermont] & Jud Lewis 1st Lieut. [First Lt. Judson A. Lewis from Poultney, Co. C, 11th Vermont]. Walter S. Jones 1st Sergt of Bat. B. is our jun. 2 Lt. [Secons Lt. Walter S. Jones from Shoreham]. Tim had a letter from Eliza yesterday. I see that by recent act an Officers ration is 50¢ instead of 30. as formerly and we are to be exempt from taxation after 1st of March (on income) This is doing little enough for officers in the Army. The Gov’t has already lost some of the best and most capable Officers, Who have resigned and left the service on acc’t of “insufficiency of salary” to maintain their families, at present rates of subsistence.

Well I will close hoping you are all well. No signs of being paid off at present. All the No Six boys are on the square [makes a box and does not say square]

Write Soon

G. Oscar French

[Note the discrepancy in dates for Bill Barber – supposedly he was alive 24 November 1865, but he died 16 November 1865.]

In Camp. Feb. 22nd, 1865.

Father

Yours of the 12th inst. is at hand. I had almost made up my mind that you had forgotten me, as it has been four weeks lacking 3 days since I heard from home. Wills letter I recd and answered some time ago. I think he had better have that "Pattens" for it would be a great help to him, and if it was lost, it only cost 25¢ and could not kill anyone. If you have raised that \$100. from Selah, don't send me any, but keep it a few days. We had notice yesterday that we were to be paid off in a few days. Before the 1st March & I shall have some money to send home once more. Will is in the same "pickle" with all recruits, they are just like a young crow, eat all you will bring them. Trouble is, they don't know how to cook their rations so as to economise. I lived 3 days & nights last summer on ½ a hard tack 1 small ear of corn, and two cups of coffee (clear) with what muddy water we could drink. This was on the Peninsula, from Hanover C.H. [Court House] to Cold Harbor. During the 3 days we marched one day & night laid over one day, fought one day, and built entrenchments two nights. He will learn by and by. We have done what we could to get "tiptoe" out of service, but when men cost \$1500 a piece, it is very difficult to call out any. What do you think of my staying 3 years? I have some notion of it. What could I do at home? Let me know. You speak of the Gates lot but you do not mention the price asked, the no. of acres, the quantity of wood, or anything. Give us the particulars, perhaps we may "fetch the feller" Give me Uncle Rounds P.O. address. I want to write to him. "Jewett" has sent me Tennysons "Enoch Arden" a very pretty poem [?]. You must excuse the penmanship. I am in a hurry. The Johnnies came over in droves. Field & Line Officers & privates. Yesterday a circular from Gen'l Grants Head Qrs. announced the capture of Charleston, S.C. with 200 pieces of artillery &c. So we go. The "Confederacy" is a doomed institution. Her soldiers are leaving her as rats leave a sinking ship. Night before last, a whole Co of a N.C. Regt came in Officers, and all, bringing their arms & equipments. I would pity S.C. if the 6th Corps could once march through it. They would get a slight touch of the Shenandoah Valley. I don't hear from Em, or any one. I want Sister Alice to go to school at the Sem. all summer & I will help to pay expenses, and see that the girl is well dressed so as to take her place where she belongs, among the best. And Sister Al. is hereby respectfully requested to communicate with these HdQrs without delay giving time of commencement, estimated am't of money required to clothe her & furnish books &c to begin upon, and all facts bearing upon the subject in consideration which may be of benefit to the service. Also send in a detailed report of the doings and proceedings of one Smid—In case I do send any money, shall send it by Express & shall write you at the same time, giving am't, time of sending &c. Mother must not be alarmed about any hard feelings on my part for there isn't any, all I care for in the matter is I like to see fair play. I don't believe the Little Gal is nice about it. You must kiss her [Ella] for me. Heard from Bill up to Nov 24th was at Millen Ga. and well with exception of attacks of scurvy in right legs & mouth, he will soon be exchanged if alive. Pvt. William H. Barber died at Andersinville, Ga., November 16,

1864]—Billy Castle will be home on furlough [Pvt. William H. Castle from castleton,
Co. C, 11
th Vermont]. As for myself am all right. Don't weigh but 198.

Love to all Write soon

Geo. O. French

Expect Maj Wood will come & call—You use him well

Oc

In Camp March 5, 1865.

Father

Yours dated 28th Feb came to hand this A.M. You do not tell me what you think of my reenlisting. Please tell. Were paid a few minutes since. I send you a check, No 381 for 200.00. I could not get an opportunity to Express it, was paid in comp'd int. 6 pr. ¢ [per cent] Notes. U. S. The money on Selas note you can use as much of as you think best, and place the rest with this at int, where you think proper. I don't expect to be paid under six mos. again and very likely shall send for money in the course of the Summer. I shall not unless it is necessary. I intend to save all possible from now till Sept. There is pay due me for Jan & Feb. still backs. Everything is enormously high. I paid \$16 for two negligee woolen shirts yesterday, must have some teeth filled, if I can go to City Pont. I had a letter from Will dated Feb 12th. Shall write to Uncle Dick. Am very glad that you allowed Sister Al to "go out" I am certain that she can more than hold her own. I would wish her to go in good comfortable rig though.

I got the letter with the wool. I think I get them all, the trouble is you don't write much. You have not mentioned my letter of Feb 7th [must mean the 9th]. I am in the Co. for duty, my Adjts detail on that job played out about Jan 1st. The old Batt (1st) Adjt went home on leave & played sick & tried to get out of the service, but could not make it work. So came back, to duty again. He is 1st Lieut. & very afraid of bullets.

You seem to think everything Sam says gospel, perhaps it is in some measure. A Regt'l Adjt is not quite as apt to be promoted if he is capable in that capacity, if a "lunkhead" he is either dismissed the service or promoted, just as the Com'd Off. pleases to direct or recommend thus Burrows (a lunk & sot & coward) was promoted to Capt. Bat. M, ran away at the battle of Charlestown, bought a Surgeons certificate of disability & resigned next day [Capt. Hunt W. Burrows of Vernon, Co. M, 11th Vermont, who resigned September 1, 1864]. Our Regt has a brass band & each Offr is taxed \$10.00 to begin with & 5. for each promotion afterward. They propose to take 10. out of me (for pay't of band master &c) but I cant see a [illegible]. In the Defences, cowards were commissioned, & I must wait till we had been in the field 2 mos for my promotion. I earned it twice over, & owe no man thanks for it. I shall pay nothing to support the band. They may recall Capt Rice, Burrows, & Goodrich, & Lieuts Eaton Morrill Wright Maxham &c—and all the old favorites Dead Beats, that have "played [out]" – to pay taxes. This last is the best letter you have written in a long time. Read the poetry of the soldier in the March Mag— I am reading Dickens "Barnaby Rudge" a very large book, & one also very intesting. Have a Rebel song book that I got of one of the boys of the 19th Miss. Vols—on picket Other day. A "Johnny" came in to our Reg. pickets who had lived in Rutland 16 years, & worked for old Barnes, & had served since the war Com^d [Commenced] & was going back to R.—was an Irish man & red headed. I sent Uncle John a Richm'd Examiner the other day.

All the boys are well. guess tiptoe will be home before Spring. Don't hear from Em.

Write [illegible]
Yours
Oscar

Write immediately if you receive this.

Camp South of Petersburg, Va

March 19, 1865

Father

Yours dated the 12th inst is at hand. I am truly glad that the check arrived at home all safe. Some mails have been robbed and I was some what skeered about the safety of my two "centuries." [\$100.00 bills] Enclosed you will find a note for 40. You had better keep it, if I want any money before I am paid again this will do me as well as any, and you can send it back to me. I am very anxious about Mother. cant you do something for her? So as not to have liable to these distressing pull backs? Perhaps I did promise to write to Frank, and the principle reason why I have not done so is from the fact that I did not expect they would ever answer me. I got a line from Will dated 2nd – all well. You must keep Smid at work and make a good boy of him if possible. How does he sagashiate. I have a report that Bill [Barber] is dead. I shall be able to find out in a week or two for certain and shall immediately write to Carl [Bill's brother] or Uncle Chan. [Chauncey Barber – Bill's father] and let them know all that I am able to ascertain. Carl was decidedly careless to neglect business in that manner, he is now over 21 and must shift for himself although I guess Chan could hardly spare him.—I don't believe your Stewart stove operation will meet your expectations, but I hope so. You may not get 12 for old red, as gold is coming down & everything is bound to come down too. Even Jeffs "Cofederacy" and Uncle Sols Louisa is married. It is curious that none of Franks girls get married. I think some of remaining in the service if everything goes well, the most that would hinder me would be the fact that Mother would worry about me. I went to City Point a week ago yesterday, had four teeth filled, \$6 . am to have 6 pictures (vignettes) 5.00, got blouse & pants \$23. dog cheap. As you say if a fellow could get along without paying out much for clothing he could lay up something. Billy Castle has been home and saw the Co of unterrified ones who belong to the old glorious Castor Oil Brigade, go through the manual. It must be truly refreshing, to witness such precious movements.

I think old Johnson made a great splurge at the Inauguration.—

I have read Dickens Barnaby Rudge—a very good story. Mr Sherman has been here don't know but I told you once before.

I think Sister Al is keeping rather late hours out until 9 oclock on the ice. Horrible Al.

Well I must stop as it is most time for Brigade dress parade—I am in Com'd of Bat. K. for 20 days.

G.O. French

Camp South of Petersburg Va March 26, 1865

Friends at Home,

You have heard about the battle of the 25th [Petersburg] and it may please you to know that I am all right. I will not worry you or occupy your time with the particulars. Suffice it to say that I was there and I am again proud to say that I belong to the Vermont Brigade 2d Division, Sixth Army Corps. It is almost miraculous that we lost no more men. But the Johnnies did not fight with their old elasticity & determination. It seems that our Corps must have taken as many as 2000 prisoners. The 9th Corps took about as many more. I have not been able to ascertain the result on the Left, in the 2nd and 5th Corps. But we done all that was required and could have done more if necessary. I am of the opinion that the whole thing was brought on by the Johns pitching into the 9th Corps early in the morning, and that they were everywhere defeated and “gobbled” at last. Only one man was hit in Co. B. T. Jedowin Jr. badly in leg [Pvt. Theophilus Jadowin, Jr., from Milton, Co. C, 11th Vermont]. I was with the skirmish line, joined the Co. (K) at dark. I have sent \$5.00 to Uncle John for a pair of brogans [shoes]. I wish Smid would get them, and you do them up with a stout paper wrapper, tie them, put on 3 ten ct stamps, & direct to Sergt. F.D. Smith, Battery “C” Don’t forget to put on the Corps.” If you direct them to me, or fail to leave the ends open to observation it will cost \$4. for package. They cannot be sent to an Officer by mail. So, send them to the Sergt. I feel stiff as an old stage horse charging and running so much yesterday.—I got a letter from Uncle Charly last night. He is after some “claim” in one of the northern Counties in the Moon, and is (of course) getting mighty rich. I wonder what has become of his “copper mines” in the Fejie Islands? Sheridan men 15000, as bold and reckless troopers as ever drew a blade, are now massed about a mile in the rear of this place. They will cause the Johnnies some trouble in a few days. I expect when Sheridan comes up this way, the dust will fly some. I ought to have had a letter from you to day I must close. Hoping this may find you all in good health.—

G.O. French

Lieut Dick, Battery H.

March 28th 1865

Friends at Home

I sent you a memorial yesterday. I think a great deal of it. If you can get it framed & choose to do so, you can. A good quality of frame would become it very well. You will hear of our “skedaddle” with the Johnnies in the paper.—Simonds from Hydeville that used to work with you on Shermans Mill, is in Bat K. & had his shin badly bruised by a piece of shell the other day but will come out all right [Corp. Sylvester Simons from Castleton, Co. K, 11th Vermont].—Tom Williams from Hydeville was taken prisoner on the picket-line yesterday morning [Pvt. Thomas Williams from Castleton Co. C, 11th Vermont, was captured March 27 and was paroled March 30, 1864]. All the damage that I received was a ball on the scabbard of my sword that makes it hard to put up or draw out. On acc'ts of the “Lent” Jedowin—a poor boy from Milton Vt lost his leg the 25th Some of the Vermont Cavalry has been up here to day. They had a rough ride through Va. and done a vast am't of damages. It is expected that Sheridan will go south in a few days. It is reported also that he has asked for the Sixth Corps to go with him. Every man is ordered to have 50 rounds cartridge and 4 days rations. I have expected a letter from home now for a no. of days. I saw Enoch Johnson yesterday. Said he had forwarded his resignation. Thought he would go home & rusticate—The Majors health is very poor. Mine is very good.

Don't Write
Yours in a hurry
G.O. French

[This was the last letter that George Oscar French wrote home. He was killed the next day, Sunday, 2 April 1865 at Petersburg, while valiantly leading a charge, about 3 weeks before his 21st birthday and exactly a week before Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Courthouse.]

Camp South of Petersburg Va

April 1st 1865

Father

Yours dated the 26th of March is at hand. I also had one from Will the night before last dated 19th. All well. You speak of Smid as being a good “sawyer” I would really like to have his picture on a metallic plate, (so as not to break I expect he is quite a boy. What does Armstrong want to give him a month? I wish our house met with Ems idea of a proper dignity so that she could stay at home & give Al & Smid a chance. I would like to have her Al board at Sela’s and then she could give her whole time & attention to her studies. When you speak of the “old line Com, I don’t exactly “twig” who it can be – Fields perhaps. And so you are not to keep a portion of Old Red! I think it would pay much better in the long run and much healthier to eat than pork. Pete never calls on me, but I see him frequently & always recognize him. I don’t know how much Tim has sent to Frank this pay’t. Hardly think it the sum of \$120. Frank seems to be somewhat restricted in his finances, & Tim lets him have all of his State pay, and they seem to be very very friendly. That is Meekers note. I wrote it without interest because it is only a temporary thing, & he has let me have money once or twice. It is safer at home than with me. You say the Spring is forward there. It is equally so here. Last 28th a large Army moved out onto the left and there has been some very desperate fighting since, though with what result, I am unable to learn. I mistrust however that all is well with us, as it is reported that Sheridan had captured the Southside road, and had struck for Gordonsville. There has been nothing done in this Corps but picket firing since the 27th. We were going to charge the enemys works in front of Fort Welsh yesterday at 4. A.M. But a deserter, from the 106 N.Y.V. 3d Div informed the enemy of the fact & the thing was abandoned. The whole Corps was to mass. The 2d Div being in the Centre, & advanced. The Vermont Brigade was to be the directing column. The 1st & 3d Divisions on the right & left respectively, in Echelon, and so we were to go. There would have been dreadful slaughter. However I think the Sixth Corps would have went in.—Curious circumstances about the sheep eating each others wool. I never heard of such a thing. Have written you so many letters this week that I cant find much to say. I think I shall write to B. or F. someday—when I get some letter paper. I take it that Aunt Melissa & Ell are quite literary characters. Sister Ella can have the song book, she must take care of it, it used to belong to the 19th Miss Vols. I am surprised that Bro Frank could accuse my Little Sister of telling a lie. I guess Smid isn’t nice about it. Wind is blowing pretty hard to day. I am tired out, have been up nights & day for a week, in the rain & all but my health is good.

Oc

[Written across back page] Am now enjoyed in reading Dickens David Copperfield. Like it very much. Am so glad to hear that Mother is improving. Hoping she will be careful
Oc

[Written across front page] Tell the Illustrious members of the Castor Oil Brigade to look out for Hent Peck—May be a raider you know & very desperate.

Oc