My dear Miss C,

Once more upon Va. soil, I shall renew with infinite pleasure a correspondence which a brief and eventful campaign in the enemy’s country had suspended. Of that campaign the public prints have informed you; its details are before the world, and the wails of mourning and sorrow are heard once more through the land. The fatiguing marches, the ravages of almost famine and the suffering from a lack of clothing of the rebel army, are all forgotten in the bloody drama, which terminated the campaign at Gettysburg. Lee was forced to retire by reason of his communication being cut off, rendering his supplies uncertain and throwing his numerous wounded an easy prey into the enemy’s hands. Sullenly the Army retired. The march was made during a season of stormy weather. Here the endurance and fortitude of the men were subjected to the severest test. All were poorly clad – many were barefooted, and the road was traced in blood. Having recrossed to the South bank of the Potomac, the men were enlivened, and many thanks to Him who ruleth, were fervently uttered. I am happy to state that the condition of the Army is much improved, having almost entirely refilled its thinned ranks by returning members. Proud and defiant, the rebels are still confident of victory and prepared for battle. We quietly await the approach of the enemy, who is reported in force at Warrenton, and we know that the laurels the mendacious Yankees have woven around Meade’s brow, will wither in the scorching sirocco of death that will sweep the cowardly abolition ranks.

Our losses in Penna. were heavy, and Georgia in particular mourns the loss of many gallant sons, who’ve sealed with their life’s blood their devotion to the most glorious cause ever left to the arbitrament of the sword. Our aggregate loss will reach 15,000, by far the heaviest ever before sustained by this army in a single engagement. In the first two days’ fights the Yankee loss was at least 15 to our one. Their loss in officers was alarming. As we held the battlefields of July 1st and 2nd we had an opportunity of judging the relative losses sustained. A foolish charge upon the strong position the enemy had assumed on the third day, which was attributable to the drunkenness of General officers, resulted in the vain sacrifice of many lives. But for this charge our loss would not amount to one-fifth of what it was. The errors of the past (if indeed they were errors), must be forgotten, and everybody must be nerved for the dreadful future. Now is the hour of our trial. Through this ordeal, and all is safe. A train of disasters has overtaken us, but we are not worthy of freedom if we are not willing to endure all. We are not to be conquered by Vicksburgs and Port Hudsons. The gallant defense of these places will fill bright pages in a history that must live forever, and demonstrate the fact that nought save Omnipotence can effect our subjugation. Then we should not despond while a corporal’s guard is left to bear our battle-flag, which has waved in triumph o’er so many bloody fields. The gallant dead of so many battles have illustrated the South, and in honor to their memory let us not prove recreant to the holy cause in which they have fallen. Alas! I fear that unnatural draughts have been made upon Southern chivalry by this spirit of avarice and extortion rife in the land. If any croaker presumes to express himself, in your presence, that “it’s time to compromise” “we are whipped”, &c., tell him for me that he’s a coward, and deserves to be a slave and serve his Yankee masters.
I forgot to acknowledge in the proper place that I recd. yours of June 26th a few days since, for which, all thanks. A friend of mine from the 8th Ga. informs me that Capt. Lewis was wounded slightly in a skirmish at Funkstown, Md. Convey my profoundest respects to Miss Mary. Write soon.

Very respectfully,

Your obdt. servt.

E.S. Mitchell