Jan. 22nd, 1864,
Camp near Harrisonburg, Va.

Dear Miss C.,

Yours of the 8th has been recd. & I hasten to respond. I am thus prompt, because I smart under the severe castigation you administered so well. As you’ve punished me so severely by writing a short letter, I know of no better way to retaliate than by inditing a very long one. I should very much have preferred to receive the punishment “in propria persona” than through the medium of the Post Office. Suffice to say, the “flogging” has had the desired effect, and I make any promise for my future conduct you may demand. As usual I am “au fait” for a “row”, and I warn you that I am “perhaps” a little the “best hand” at a rumpus you ever saw, or “that ever trod Georgia grit.”

So pleasant a picture of home you drew with such skill, that my memory returns with pleasure to hours of happiness spent in your beautiful little city. In these wilds, tho’ there’s where Ashby fell to my right, here’s where Jackson began his brilliant Valley Campaign and at the base of the opposite mountain was erst a favorite resort for the pleasure-seeker, I sigh for the land of the cypress & pine. No beauties of nature, no glorious recollections, naught can content for this cruel separation from home and “all the loved spots my childhood knew”. Do you remember the beautiful stanza of Rogers, in which the remembrance of the past is so beautifully expressed?

“Still o’er those scenes their memory wakes,
And fondly broods with miser care;
Time but the impression stronger makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.”

Ah! What a beautiful tablet memory would be, if only those things were only remembered which were pleasant! Some might be draped in mourning, yet who would wish to heal the wounds that the grave has made, or to forget those ties of love, whose severance had wounded. Recreant to every sensibility of nature would he be, who’d forget the tender ties that bound him to a mother, tho’ the earth had long since received her. The memory of her is present to chide with gentle admonition, to inspire and cheer in despair and to restrain in passion. Who would forget?

I wrote you a few days since when upon the eve of march. As you see by the caption of this letter we are again down amongst the hospitable Dutch, who preserve the customs and habits of the Faderland, and have introduced us to many of them very favorably. We are here for the winter, it is understood, and are now in the midst of a forest of centuries’ growth, and the trees fall around us like the explosion of so many shells. We are preparing for a snow, although traces of the last storm are still on the Blue Ridge, at whose base we are situated. I anticipate a fine time generally until Spring when Early’s command will be recalled to take part in the 2nd Penna. Campaign, which the boys predict with much confidence. By the way I have observed, since my connection with the Army, that where any idea prevails as a general impression it is very likely to prove true in the end. (You must excuse this letter really, as I am disturbed by every member of the mess, who is engaged in preparing a chicken stew). It is generally thought that Lee will attempt a Second Pennsylvania Campaign early in the Spring. It is believed that a campaign in the enemy’s country will speedily wind up the war. If so, we are ready for our part.
Yesterday as rations were scarce, I went to a neighboring farm-house to procure dinner. The family received me very kindly, and soon the hospitable cloth was spread, and I sat down to a dinner of the olden time. We had buckwheat cakes, warm rolls, milk, butter, beef and pork in a variety of ways, turkey, cranberry sauce, sugar and Mocha coffee, etc., etc., etc. How do you like the Bill of fare? Hold on – that’s not all. Magnificent mince pies crowned the feast. And all this with an apology, - “Indeed and double, we have nothing in the pantry.” ------ Your kind invitation to oysters and ice cream is unavoidably declined, regretting the necessity which compels me to do so. ------ I recd. a letter from Lt. Newell a few days since. Poor fellow! he’s still in Baltimore, at West Buildings Hospital, cheerful in spite of his captivity. ----- I do not know that I did right in mentioning a fact concerning Maj. S. My information came from a young gentleman, (with us), whose word is truth. But to state it might possibly injure his reputation, and I would not do that for the world, as he’s a very clever fellow. I must close as the chicken’s ready. Compliments to Miss Mary, Mrs. H., & Miss C.

Yours with esteem,

Eugene S. Mitchell