Dear Miss Chloe,

The events of the past week are [plead] as an excuse for not answering your very welcome and interesting letter sooner. The length of your letters is no objection, adding to rather than decreasing their interest, and bear in mind in future, that to the general rule you established I am an exception, professing both to be a gentleman and an admirer of your sparkling style, however long your letters.

We were interrupted Friday night of last week by orders to march whither we knew not. Marching all night we arrived at this place, where we’ve since remained in rather idleness. Details to skirmish and to picket [engross] our time. We are in the entrenchments awaiting the enemy, who hugs the river closely, and seems to be in no haste to give battle. Some desultory firing is occasionally heard to our left, but apart from this the prospect is one of serene quietude. The Balloon goes up and goes down, the Yanks march and countermarch, troops cross and recross, wagons and couriers hurry to and fro; yet in all this we see no indication of battle. The surface is unruffled by a wave, the calmness of the scene is unbroken. The enemy is invited to the attack but remains still. The […] cheer defiance, yet the hills on the Stafford shore look [sadly] quiet. At this juncture as much as I dread the carnage of battle, I accept the […] of the immortal Stonewall: “My trust is in God; I wish they would come!” The bloody atrocities of the enemy, the war they wage against defenseless districts, impoverishing whole sections by a system of unexampled pillage and [plundered] and inciting servile insurrection, have fired my soul, and I care not how soon they come. Our triumph is sure. This Army must never be whipped, whatever the odds, and Hooker in the developments the ensuing fortnight will reproduce Burnside or Pope and on a grander scale. From certain movements I rather think that the [Annual Manassas Races] will come off in a short time. I expect to be present and will give a faithful report.

Beyond the present memory really a period of happiness, around which cluster the associations of a joyful childhood. My sunny home is [before] me. I remember the blissful days of peace, when everybody was happy, --- how delightful was this season then. Your “cherry-bouquets” have awakened these recollections, which like the music of the old Bard, are “sweet and mournful to the soul”, I sigh for their return. Accept my thanks for the cherries which came to Camp Gregg. I accept the will for the deed.

I am happy to state that considerable religious interest has been manifested amongst the troops generally. Many conversations have been made and the general moral effect is excellent. Christians are proverbially the best soldiers. Oh! What a glorious thing it would be were every Southern Soldier a Christian! The duration of the war would be set, and I believe that a happy peace would soon […] our struggles.
Our Division is now commanded by Maj. Gen. Pender. A. P. Hill has assumed command of a Corps with the rank of Lt. Gen. He richly deserves this promotion. He has taken a [c…] in every fight in Virginia, and has won the confidence of the troops --- second only to the lamented Jackson. Let us hope that the mantle of that chieftain has fallen upon his shoulders.

There are now three Corps in this army commanded respectively be Longstreet, Ewell, and. A.P. Hill.

You must pardon the abrupt termination of this letter, as I must go on skirmish. Write soon. Long letter rec’d without apologies. Convey my compliments to Miss Mary.

With sentiments of highest regard,

I remain,

E.S. Mitchell

45 Ga.,

[...]’s Brigade

Pender’s Division