

GROW, I HEAR THAT YOU WISH ALSO A LIST OF WHAT WE MIGHT REQUIRE SENT FROM HOME SO I HAVE DOTTED DOWN SOME ITEMS.

I WOULD WISH YOU COULD SEND US SOME LUXURIES, LIKE SOCKS OR CLEAN SHIRTS, FOR EVERY NIGHT WE HAVE TO DRY OUR FOOTWEAR ON STICKS BY THE FIRE. FOOD ITEMS SUCH AS JAM AND OTHER SUSTAINABLES THAT KEEP WELL ON LONG JOURNEYS, RECENTLY I HAVE BEEN SETTING FORTH WITH FOUR BOILED EGGS IN MY POCKETS FOR NOTHING KEEPS ON A MARCH LIKE AN EGG, BUT I DON'T ALWAYS HAVE TIME TO COOK THEM AND WE HAVE TO SURVIVE ON HARD TACK AND WATER.

YESTERDAY BILLY HAD AN INTERESTING RUN IN TWO OF COMPANY B'S CARD SHARKS WHO LASSED HIM INTO A GAME OF POKER WHICH AS YOU KNOW BILLY HAS NO IDEA HOW TO PLAY WELL SOMEHOW FARMER TOM (OF THE PIG PICKET FAME BACK IN JACKSONVILLE) GOT WIND OF IT AND BEING DUTY CORPORAL THAT NIGHT ROUNDED UP ME AND TWO OTHERS TO GO BALE 'HIS' BOY OUT. THE SHARKS HAD JUST FLEECE THE POOR KID OUT OF ALL HIS MEAGRE PAY AND A WATCH WHEN THE CLICKING OF ENFIELD MUSKETS BROUGHT THEM TO THEIR CHRISTIAN DUTY AND FLED THE SCENE LEAVING THEIR SPOILS AND A RED FACED BILLY LOOKING UP HOPELESSLY INTO FARMER TOM'S AMUSED FACE, THE NEXT DAY HE SOUGHT OUT THE TWO PERPETRATORS AND WITH A NUDGE AND A WINK OFFERED TO SELL THEM BACK THE CARDS THEY HAD LEFT BEHIND.

OUTSIDE OUR TENT THE RAIN IS STILL DARTING DOWN IN THE DARKNESS, ALL IS UNCERTAINTY; IT LOOKS AS IF WE WILL RUN WITH OUR TAILS BETWEEN OUR LEGS ALL THE WAY TO RICHMOND WITHOUT MAKING ANOTHER STAND, AND I MIGHT ASK WHAT SORT OF SOLDIERING IS THAT, NUMBERLESS DAYS OF MARCHING AND FATIGUE ONLY TO ALLOW THE YANKEE'S TO INVEST THE CITY AND POUND IT WITH THEIR SUPERIOR GUNS AND THEN ASSAULT WITH THEIR SUPERIOR NUMBERS, THE CAPTAIN SAYS IT IS SHEER FOLLY NOT TO FIGHT BEFORE REACHING RICHMOND FOR IF THE YANKEE'S GET TO A SIEGE THEY WILL WIN.

I TRUST ALL IS WELL AT HOME DESPITE OUR TROUBLES HERE, I AN BILLY ARE WELL AND HEALTHY AND I AM PLEASED TO SAY THAT APART FROM A SMALL MOUSTACHE I HAVE KEPT MY BEARD AT BAY FOR I FIND THE PROSPECT OF PICKING LICE OUT OF MY HAIR, UNIFORM AND BEARD, NOT A BIT TO MY LIKING. I CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR YOUR SAFETY AND HEALTH AND FOR OUR ARMIES SALVATION FROM WHAT MAY BE A VERY DISASTROUS SITUATION, I AM SORRY I CANNOT GIVE YOU MUCH JOY THIS POST EXCEPT THAT NEWS FROM THE WEST SEEMS TO BE GOOD, GENERAL JACKSON BY ALL ACCOUNTS IS GIVING THE ENEMY SALT FOR BREAKFAST AND WE ALL HOPE THAT HE COMES EAST.

THE MAIL WAGON IS TRUNDLING UP SO I MUST CLOSE NOW; I HOPE TO WRITE AGAIN WITH MORE FAVOURABLE NEWS SOON. WITH MUCH LOVE TO ALL FRIENDS, CONFUSION TO ALL ENEMIES AND GOD HELP US ALL I REMAIN

YOUR BROTHER, JD PROVAN

