

Danville Ky

Dec. 12<sup>th</sup> 1862

Dear Mother

I am in sorry enough a plight for writing to you, but somehow have concluded that I will write some, even if I do not finish a letter to you, even I am getting "no better" with great clarity, and a fine prospect of continuing. The day is almost as warm as I am and tonight we shall have a cold foggy rainy time, enough to put the "shakes" into any body's bones. Then, winter will come again, and with a complication of diseases I shall have a serious time. I had an aggravating dream last night, just the meanest dream that could come to the pillow of a northern soldier, sick in desert Danville. I dreamed of seeing "Milla" pairing great nice apples. Just as she was going to give me one I awoke. If I had only waited until I got the apple I should not have cared. I have found such a region as this! Two great armies have passed over what could not be beaten of before, and now there is nothing here, fit for a Christian man, of good character to eat.

It's all Ky - fodder, ham and middlings and every other conceivable <sup>and innumerable</sup> form of smoked swine, any one of which is totally unbearable. Strong coffee is abundant, three times per day! - Ugh! it will do when one is marching, but is intolerable here. As to tea Good Lord! a cup of tea would be in antipast of Heaven! And bread! - I have not seen a month's fuel, except corn-bread and I do detest that now. We do have biscuits, however, tallowy things, that one would not eat at home, but they are the best here and are eaten for the purpose of sustenance. I would like to commit suicide on bread and milk, and earn a month's sickness by eating a dozen apples, or hiding a basket of apples down my gorget. And then to think that the surgeon says I must stay here all winter, or nearly so! Why is not one allowed to go to Tophor at once? But you speak of my coming home, as if you had some lingering hope that I would come. Dismiss it at once, Emma. There is more hope of sunshine at mid night <sup>in our situation</sup> than of such an event. You can see, at once, that such a thing can not, and ought not, to be allowed. The motto of Government, and of the Service is, and ought to be, "justice". Now, if I am well, Government has a just

and indubitable right to my services, in the field. If I am sick, justice demands that I should remain here. It might be very pleasant, and agreeable, for me to return North for a time. I might recover several months sooner, or live several years longer. But this would be defrauding a servant of the government, and Government would rather lose the services of a dozen servants, than defraud one of them, in the least. Now, the Government undertaker at this point, has a sort of lien, on every sick man who is brought here. If he can possibly, be induced to die, and Government has the sole right of planting the corpse, and being paid five times as much as it is worth. Now, if Government wrong a man, and give him an extra chance for life, you see at once, it defrauds this servant. If he is left here, and lives, in spite of Government, Doctor, undertaker & all, why, is it just? Government has done all it could to give him a job, and of course, cannot be blamed. You see how absurd it is, to think of my coming home. Well I guess I can battle with them all here I can, at least, "shuk". If I have to stay here all winter I

for desperate deeds in the spring  
I wish to know what I think of your  
plans. I don't know, they are good, - if this is not  
without the disposing of the farm. You must be sure  
that you fully apprehend, the difference, between living  
on a small and living on the farm, or she may become  
dissatisfied with your plans, hereafter and be very miserable  
on account of it. It will take some time to fix up the new  
place and you must remember, that one easily becomes  
dissatisfied with these transitions. Something must evidently  
be done. Should life and health continue to me for a year  
or at least, life and my present employment, I had in-  
tended to make your folks an offer for the place - with its  
incumbrance. It would be good property and I had relief  
in it, as anything - especially, as I am convinced  
that, if I live through this row, - or escape from it unrip-  
pled, - financial affairs in the nation will be such, that it  
will be best, - nay - my absolute duty, to spend a few  
years at least, as a producer - an agriculturist. Indeed  
I know, this will be the case. In that event, the old place  
is in some - yes, many respects, just the situation I want  
to live. I have but one serious objection to it - its irregular  
form. This, however, is merely chimerical. I may not remain in  
the service a month, indeed, have some thoughts of leaving it  
within that time. If I do remain in it, I may never come out alive, and  
the other plan is undoubtedly, better. You must be very considerate how  
ever and do nothing rash or nothing that you will regret hereafter. I  
am inclined to think that it hurts me almost as much as any one  
to have your people abandon the old place. If I had had death during  
the past year I could have prevented it without any serious outlay or  
loss on my part or theirs. Of course there is no use crying over  
spilled milk and I have no doubt you have arranged things as well  
as they could be arranged under the circumstances. Do not  
however make arrangements to kill yourself with labor and pain  
that are your programme.

Yours Truly

A. W. D. Orange



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