Camp 26th Va. Regt. Jan. 23rd, 1863

My dear Pat-

I have received your letter just this evening and as you express great anxiety to hear from me directly I will write at once. You say that you have not heard from me for 3 weeks. Well I have written to you twice in that time, but I suppose my letters have miscarried. So don't blame me. It is my pleasure, my highest delight to write to you. We have not been ordered away anywhere and I see no prospects of it - and too, I am grieved to write it, I see no prospects of any furlough being granted. It is strange, passing strange, as you say, that Lee's men can get these furloughs, and they right in front of the enemy, and we are kept bound down here. It is all old Gen. Elzey's fault. He sits in Richmond in his ease and comfort and will not suffer Gen. Wise to grant no leave. He is a Marylander, and I suppose, because his men can't get home, he is determined not to let any of us go to see our families.

I received a letter from R. L. Montague yesterday, but he does not answer me the question I put him "whether under the exemption law my case could be touched". I will send you his note - what he writes I knew before. However, I will make my application, but I am very much afraid it will be rejected as we have very hard horses in way of officers to deal with. I mean the two Generals we are under. If I fail with these I have an appeal to Sec. War, which I shall have to trust to your hands to make. Do you think you can speak or write very ably to him? I expected Dick to be in Richmond before this, but he is too much afraid of the small-pox. I expected to get him to attend to this matter in Richmond for me. If he were here and would represent his inability to attend to my matters and get Montague or Garnett to use their influence, things might go right. Bernard does not owe me anything now, he has paid the \$30 he owed me.

I did not see what Jeff Davis said in Mississippi. We do not get papers regularly and miss seeing a good many things. I am glad you have succeeded in getting some salt - as you said it is cheap, does not cost much more in proportion than the days of yore. I have \$60 or upwards that I wish to send you. My money in Richmond has not been collected. I have been waiting for Dick. I heard from Fuller today through the Surgeon at Howard's Grove Hospital - he wrote to me - Fuller has gotten over his varioloid and is well enough to go to work. I have directed Phillips to go after him and hire him out. Do not let the soldiers take your corn and fodder too near - be sure to save a plenty to serve you - do not be stinted, and in this connection I would advise you not to be taking in any or every kind of soldier that may call upon you. Give them something to eat of course, but there are a plenty of houses in the neighborhood they can spend the nights. Recollect you are by yourself, and some of our soldiers ( I am sorry to say) are devils in human form. They are up to all kinds of vileness. I would not suffer them to remain all night unless I had some male on whom I could depend.

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I see in yesterday's paper an act to repeal the Exemption Act you sent me, I will enclose it to you. If that is passed there can be no exemption for me except through the Sec. War or President Davis. I started up to Col. Page's Headquarters this morning to consult him about this exemption - to know his understanding of it, whether its application was to those in service as well as to those out, but I saw him riding out, I shall see him when he returns. This act to repeal I have just seen this morning, since I wrote the first part of my letter.

You did not write me any tidings from Cousin Pike. Did Cousin J. hear anything of him? I am very much afraid that he has fallen in the many battles that have taken place since the retreat from Yorktown. And the children have grown ugly - you do not love Willie, Bob and Mollie, how can you write so, Pat! Well the poor little things have fallen upon evil times, lost the love of their mother and their papa far away in an army which he is not allowed to leave to go to see them. The poor little things! May God protect them and be a father and a mother to them!

I suppose you have heard all sorts of reports about the small-pox, and maybe heard that we have it in our Regt. We were right smart excited at one time about it, as several varioloid cases occurred, but they were sent away before the disease became infectious - consequently we have had no new cases.

Well, Dearest Pat, I believe I have written all that may be of interest to you and now must bid you farewell. Give my best love to all the little ones - and to you what shall I give? My love you constantly have.

Your affectionate husband

Jos. L. Pollard

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