

In Camp 12 miles south of Montgomery, Ala.

Tuesday, April 25, 1865.

My own Darling Linda:

I hasten to write to let you know of our safe arrival thus far. I suppose we will have an opportunity to send mail homewards when we get to Montgomery. And you will be wanting to hear from me. If you do not ^{hear}, it shall not be my fault. The last two weeks we have been in "the wilderness"—emphatically in "the wilderness." Never before have we traveled thro' such a country—so poor and so piney. The last few days the country has been some better—more populated and more civilized seemingly. The distance from where we started on Fish River is nearly 200 miles—and Greenville is the only town we saw on the way. That is a small affair 34 miles below our present camp. Fortunately we had good weather most of the time. When it did rain, it poured,—and then the roads grew al

most impassable. One day we could only make 5 miles in the mud, and next day only 7 miles. But altogether, we have reason to be thankful that we have got along so well - and had no fighting of consequence. I have had good health, and have avoided stealing. One day Fike wanted me to go out "foraging," and I got off by giving another man my horse to go in my stead. I got very tired walking that day, but I'll walk all the time rather than do what I hate as I do that business. Our officers look upon me as a worthless, unsoldierly fellow, but I don't care. They say nothing to me, but I understand. I have been hoping that this would be our last march, - have been wishing it so much, - but there is no certainty of it. We have had lots of reports, but don't know what to believe. On the 19th, a couple officers joined us from below - They left Mobile a few days after we did, and brought the news that Lee had surrendered to Grant, and that the war

was about played out. The news was communicated to the troops as they were marching along, and cheer after cheer rang along the line and every bellow felt at liberty to fire his gun. It sounded like a battle opening, and some thought it was until they heard the news. When we arrived at Greenville a couple days afterwards, Lee's surrender being confirmed by an official dispatch brought by Gen. Grierson & Gen. Smith, 200 guns were fired in honor of the great event. We have all been feeling good over the prospect of peace at an early day. But last night we had a report that Lincoln has been assassinated. We don't believe it, but fear it may be so, - and dread the consequences - a prolongation of the war. It can do the Rebels no good, if it is true. It will only exasperate our soldiery to such an extent that a war of extermination will be waged. Such is the opinion, at least, of some who ought to know.

We expect to go into Montgomery this afternoon. I will add something to this note after we get there, if I have a chance. I am very anxious to know what we are going to do - what the programme will be. We expect to have the river open from Mobile up to Montgomery and get supplies that way. Don't know though, for certain. Some seem to think we will stop here some time, but I don't think it will be long. I have been so hoping that I would see the war over in a few weeks, I shall be miserably disappointed if the good news we have been getting proves all untrue. It will be almost killing. Still I shall not give it up until I hear farther. I do want to hear all the real news more than I ever did anything in my life. I have been so hopeful that we would soon be together - in love and happiness at home. O how blissful even to think of! May God forbid that our hopes should prove in vain! May is now nearly 10 months old. How interesting and sweet she must be! Would to Heaven that I could see her and talk to her and become acquainted with her so that she would love me. And I am still more anxious to see my Linda - my own darling wife. O may the time hasten on when we shall meet never to sever."

Saturday, April 29, 1865:

We have poor encouragement to unite; yet I will have a letter ready anyway. We expected to find our gunboats and transports here, when we arrived, but they have not yet made their appearance. It is reported that Dick Taylor is below here, blockading the river. All he can accomplish will not amount to much. He will injure the citizens hereabouts more than our army. As long as there is corn and meat in the country, the 16th army corps will not starve. But it is very unpleasant to be cut off from all communication with the rest of the world. I am very anxious to hear from home - and to learn how the peace movement progresses. Here we get nothing but rumors. But the citizens begin to acknowledge that the Rebellion is a failure. That is a symptom of some significance - especially in this heart of Rebelldom.

We camped on a creek below the city until day before yesterday morning. Then our Division marched through Montgomery with all the music and pomp it could scare up, and went into camp 2 miles north of town, in the woods, where we shall remain until we are ordered away! Montgomery is a place about the size of Belleville, though it contains a State House and some finer residences than I ever noticed in that city.

When I wrote Tuesday, I was feeling quite well, but I took cold and have been nearly sick since. Yesterday I lay in bed most of the time, and to-day I still have some fever and aches. This is a singular time of year to be troubled with cold, but I never was near sick with it than I have been the last few days - not excepting that awful time at Eastport, though I do hope it will not last as long as that did. If I can only keep well, and get home and find you and May and mother well, O I

shall never cease to be grateful. I shall be so glad. We shall be so happy - all of us - together at home - never again to take any more of those painful farewells. - It has been a long, long time since I heard from you. You were still at Lizzie's then. I do want a letter so much. So many things may have happened. - May is 10 months old to-day. I do hope I shall get home by the time she is 12 months old, if not before.

I think most of our officers would like to stay their three years out - to have the name of serving three years, - and their pay is increased. But if I could say so, not one day more would any of us remain in the army. I want the thing to end now, and forever. And if half the reports we have are true, the end cannot be very far off. "Let it come, I repeat it, let it come!" Then if anybody should ever again attempt another rebellion, I imagine he would be shut down on

a little more promptly than Jeff. Davis and his co-traitors were, four years ago. — If our boats do not get up before long, I expect part of this Corps will be sent down the river to clear the way. It is certain if we remain here, we will have communication open with Mobile, or some other point. The Alabama river is a stream about like the Cumberland. If the war ends, Railroads will ^{soon} be in running order from here to Huntsville, Mobile, and Vicksburg. At present these roads do us no good. It is unlucky for us that we are caught so far from home when peace is expected any day. But accidents will happen.

Lots of our Officers and soldiers are down town every day. I shall go when I feel better. Kraft went yesterday. Also the Col. Chaplain & others. Nearly all the business houses in town are closed. One hotel and one printing office continue to run. Confederate money is dead while we are here — and it may not be raised again if we leave. Though greenbacks might as well be dead for all the good they do us. — We have 6 months due us, but no immediate prospect of being paid. No doubt it will come some day. — We draw corn meal now instead of crackers. — There is a large mill in town. Excuse this "mixed" letter. Be of good cheer, dear wife. I am ever your true & devoted husband, M. J. Miller.