

Davis Mill. Miss January 11th. 1863.

My Dear Wife

I have just received two letters from you, one of the 14th and one of the 19th ult. I need not say to you that I was delighted to hear from you. 45 days have passed since I left you, and not a line till tonight, and although I have felt confident you were all right, still I was not certain, and the assurance by letter has made me feel good. I was very glad to get a letter from Roger, and hope he will write me as often as you do, and I hope you will write me a little oftener, say twice every week. A large number of letters have been received today by the Boys, and you ought to have been here to notice the good humor produced, by the reception of good news from home. It is reported that we have scarcely made out to get food enough to sustain life. Now I don't know who the gumbler is, but I do know that we have been compelled to take half rations from the commissary, and have for a day or two had but one cracker a day, but we never were out of meat, and have almost always had Corn Meal and good bake Kettles to cook it in. One night when we had no bread to issue, I went and bartered a box of hard bread of the 99th Indiana. We have tonight more meat than we know what to do with. I know I have found as hard for provisions as any man in the Battery, and have never seen cause to complain, although we have not had all that heart could wish. You can give the lie to any such stories, and if I have a man who complains after knowing (as they all do) the circumstances, all I have to say is, he is unworthy of a place in the Battery; and I sincerely hope

he may never fare worse. One thing is certain, while there is corn in Egypt, or food in the Southern Confederacy no man in Cheney's Battery shall go hungry. orders or no orders, and it touches my pride a little to have it said that we have scarcely enough to sustain life, when it is known that there is plenty in the country to eat. We draw 1^{lb} of meat per day for each man, and have never drawn less of meat, and in addition to that, day before yesterday we fraged one Beef and two Hogs, today we have dressed one Beef and one Hog, understood this is against orders, and in addition to our 1^{lb} per day, think you we have scarcely enough to sustain life? It is true we have not been able at all times to get Coffee, but we have been furnished with Rice, and I have drunk that at home, and expect to again. We have always had Sugar. There occasionally gets into the Army a Gingerbread man who expects to sail pleasantly through a Civil War, and never want for anything that his appetite craves, without getting it. there is another class who make the best of everything, are not heard to complain, came with the expectation of privations and hardships. Of the latter class are the men of my Battery generally, and the sick child who writes that he has scarcely enough to sustain life is fooling away his time in writing. I hope it is not true that such a letter has been written, and am inclined to believe that some one has written that we were on half rations, (which is true) and some one has drawn the inference that we were starving, and thus the report. We are not starving nor do we intend to. My health is good, and I expect to hear from you often as we have 1¹/₂ Royal communication with Memphis. I wrote you last evening, and sent the

letter together with a Diary of our march since we
left Memphis. I rode to Lagrange and mailed it
to you. I will continue to keep a Diary and if my
letters are short, you will get a full account of
our doings about once in 15 days. I will continue
to write you often. Seth Thomas and Jacob Neffman
went to Memphis last night as I suppose, for I could
not find them in Lagrange. I sent a good man
with them and instructed him to go to Memphis
if possible to get through. Give my love to all
the friends. "Dixon Boys" all well. Charlie Kennedy
well, and has written today. Give it well. Good
night May and be assured that your "prayers and
desires" are all right, and so am I. Grace must
be a little "cluck of a girl", oh how I wish I could
hear her say "ai" and "Papa" but I'll not whine
while I can hear from home once in 45 days, and
get enough to "sustain life". I expect you will
be highly entertained by reading my Diary, but you
will recollect it is unlike sitting down in the
Parlor at home to write. Sisters Newton and Whaley
have gone to bed, and Levit Smyth is reading from a
"New Church" Paper, a Theological discussion is going on
and I will once more bid you good night, and
God bless you, and add to your present small stocks
of money. No Payneaster. Still have \$1.50 a piece of
Tobacco about the size of a piece of chalk, or less enough
to sustain life.

Mrs Mary B. Cheney
Dixon Ill

Affectionately, Your Husband
John P. Cheney