The Front, Georgia, June 14, 1864.

My dear Father:

Vicksburg over again! Here we are in position, our guns looking through their embrasures at the enemy, the rifle-pits full of infantry on our right and left, "crack, crack, crack" going on from the line of skirmishers and pickets, the balls from the enemy whistling over our heads. In this part of the line the rebels are in the edge of an irregular-shaped plateau covered with timber. Our zig-zag line of works runs through the middle of a somewhat hilly but open field. You see the Johnny's have the better position. Our Battery is in a fort in an apple orchard, the horses and limbers in the rear, ready to move on the instant. These are screened by a little shrubbery from the view, but not from the bullets of the enemy. Here is this difference as com-
pared with Vicksburg. We are kept in readiness to move at any time; the horses stand day and night hitched up to the limbers, the drivers lying by them. The cannoneers wear their equipment at all times, and remain within easy call.

Last evening we did some firing merely to test our new guns; the test was satisfactory; the infantry said they never saw better practice. As soon as the weather permits we must either flank the rebels out, or charge them in front. It is necessary to press them before they receive reinforcements, for which they seem to be waiting. They do everything possible to avoid a general engagement.

For a week the weather has been very bad. We are drenched with rain by day and by night. You can fancy the condition of the red-clay fields! On Saturday night we were busy till dawn, making gables...
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in the dark, and lining the embrasures with them; it was tedious work, for we had nothing to split the oak saplings with but our sabres and jackknives. Today has been cloudy, no rain; a few cannon-shots have been fired by us, but none by the enemy. Their sharpshooters, however, are pretty active; most of their bullets fly rather close to us. The blankets hung up to dry have many a hole in them. One fellow paid his compliments to my breeches and boots this forenoon, in a way not the most agreeable in these days. When both tailors and shoemakers are hard to find, I was cleaning my revolver; the Captain was near me doing the same for his sabre; quite a crowd of men were standing around two rifles cracked in the edge of the wood, about 300 yards away. One heavy ball went close over my shoulder. The other stopped right
Through the Gunner's haversack, riddling his tin cup and pepper-box; next, it took me close to the ankle with tremendous force, making me spin round like a top. Luckily, it did me no harm beyond making two holes in my pantaloons 2 inches apart, and one in my boot-leg where the crinkle is at the ankle. If it had gone an inch to the left, it would have ended my soldiering; for I never yet saw a broken ankle that did not cause an amputation of the foot. It is a bad place for a wound. However, a miss is as good as a mile, and I am thankful. I remember that the limb of a tree fell just in front of me once, when I was about twelve years old. You saw my narrow escape, and said you felt sure I was spared for a purpose. Now that I have had so many "close calls" in battle, and am still unshorn, I begin to think the same—that God is keeping
me for some future work. Somehow, there is within me all the time a feeling of perfect security and confidence. Even when the danger is greatest, when men are struck down all around me, when no one knows whose turn it will be next— I have the assurance within me that I shall come out all right. On Saturday we came up into position a little to the right of where we are now. We unlumbered in an open space without the slightest shelter, within 400 yards of the rifle-pits, fairly swarming with Rebels. They were in plain view, looking earnestly at us while we shoved our guns forward and got ready to open fire. It is a marvel to me yet that they did not annihilate us with their rifles. Many of our men were almost beside themselves with fear or excitement— lying down or crouching about in the sunniest
attitudes. I hope you will think me not boasting when I tell you the plain truth, I was as cost as a cucumber all through the affair. Of course we very soon threw up a defence of earth and fever rails. I tell you all this to induce you also to share this confidence that I feel. The balls are "zipping" by me as I write; there goes one now through a tarpaulin near by! The leaves and small branches of the apple trees are constantly falling. But I feel absolutely no fear. It is strange; but it is true. — What you write of S. is remarkable — his being able to tell you always where to expect a letter from us.

I never have any premonitions of that kind. The mail is about to go to Big Shanty; I must close. Your two letters have done me more good than an interruption. We are as near to starving as we can be and live. Nothing but hard tack, and very little of that. But nobody complains. Your penfellow and hungry son, F. J. C.