

Private

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Head Quarters 16th Reg. Me. Vol.
Camp near Belle Plains. Va.
April 1st 1863.

Gov. A. Coburn.

Dear Sir,

An order recently issued suspending for the present the granting of furloughs, entirely deprives me of the privilege, I had promised myself, of visiting my friends in Shrewsbury.

Apart from the simple pleasure of such a visit, I had wished to see you for a free conversation concerning the history of our Regiment, and also the contemplated establishment of a State hospital in Maine or more especially the appointment of a Surgeon to take charge of such an institution.

You already know much of the history of the 16th Maine, but there is a history that is not written and can hardly

be written. Little can be known concerning the inner life and workings of such a body of men. You have had intimations perhaps of a conflict, that has existed among its officers from an early time. This I had supposed to be at an end, till recently and now, so far as the field and staff officers are concerned, the condition of things is harmonious and pleasant. Between the Line officers, particularly the Company Commanders, and more particularly two or three of the original Captains and myself, relations are not so pleasant. I had supposed till within two weeks, that there was a much better feeling here, more real harmony, than at any previous time for six months. The late manifested wrong feeling, I perhaps am not qualified to explain. It is sufficient for me to say that a few weeks ago, I administered a pretty severe rebuke to one of the Captains referred to for plain disloyalty, which he talked in which I knew he was in the habit

of talking. I understand that he is in the line an applicant for the Provost Marshall ship of Maine or a district of Maine, & I have learned that he talks very loyally now. It has been intimated to me that these Captains have acted under the suspicion that I was in some way instrumental in securing the appointment of Major Leavitt. I know nothing of the spring of their actions. So far as I am concerned and my relations to the Reg. I have tried to be a faithful Chaplain to perform with fidelity the duties that devolve upon me, and the other day, having a suitable opportunity, I addressed a note to them, asking wherein I had not been a faithful Chaplain and they declined to make a specification. Probably the difficulty referred to, will pass away & the condition of things be more pleasant again. The Reg. is in better shape than it has been for months. I think the general management better

than at any previous time. But you saw Col. Tilden a few days ago and doubtless he told you all about it.

I was very glad to learn that the establishment of a State Hospital in Maine is under consideration. I believe the life of many a soldier would, by this means, be saved to himself and family and the services of many a soldier saved to the Army by such an institution. Men will die here, who if in Maine would recover and be well make good soldiers. And many die before their discharge can be obtained who would, as I believe, be saved, if they could be treated in their native climate.

In a former letter, I asked as a personal favor, that the choice of a Surgeon to take charge of the hospital, if not decided upon, & if consistent, might remain unfixed till I should see you and present a name.

The name I would suggest is that of the Surgeon of this Regiment. I was quite ignorant of him as a medical man, when we left New England, but seven or eight months association with him here have given me a high opinion of him as such, and I feel no hesitancy in recommending him to your

favorable consideration, for the position of Surgeon ^{to take the} in Charge of the contemplated Hospital. His position here has been a very trying and arduous one, and the number of sick with us has been very large, I think that at any time he might have asked for his management to be examined and the examination had been to his credit. The general conduct of the medical department has been harmonious almost so far among the many men connected with it. We have had many sick from causes beyond his possible control, and many deaths, as compared with many other Regiments, but few, ^{when} the treatment the Regt. has received, ^{is} being considered. I feel fully justified in highly recommending Dr. C. Alexander for the position, whether especial reference be had to the business management of its interests or to the special medical wants of the institution.

No man can claim such a po-

sition in the public service as belonging especially to him. But I may say for the person referred to, that if fidelity to duty in a trying and responsible position, is any recommendation and may furnish ground on which a desirable trust may be asked and granted, he is not wanting. He has had a hard time.

and, tho' my relations to him are intimate, I may say from personal knowledge, that the manner in which he has performed his duties in this Regt are a guaranty that he would do well in the other position.

I presume it is a decided matter that a person will be chosen who has had experience in the Army. Experience here would be very valuable to him there. Knowledge of soldiers in soldier life, the influences they have felt, of climate, of habit, of exposure &c. would be an invaluable qualification to one who would successfully treat soldiers

in Maine. Personally I should be very much gratified, could you deem it well and wise to appoint him to this place. It is such an one as he has desired and I believe he would fill it creditably to himself and satisfactorily to yourself and all others interested in the institution.

My regards to all the family,

As ever,

Sincerely Yrs.

G. B. Bullen.

P. S. For the success of the Theopical Enterprise, I earnestly hope you will take for the man to have charge of it one who has had experience in the field.

G. B.

P. S. Accept acknowledgments for a copy of your excellent Message and of the Land Agents Report.

G. B.