Head Quarters 20 Maine Vol.
In the field, July 21, 1863

To His Excellency Abner Coburn
Governor of Maine

Dear Governor,

I embrace a rare opportunity, namely, a day's halt within a few miles of our baggage to write you in reference to the affairs of our Regiment which I am well aware you feel the deepest interest.

In the first place, allow me to thank you for the honor you have done me in entrusting to my care this noble Regiment. I trust I shall be always worthy of the confidence you have thus placed in me. I consider it an officer's first duty to look after the welfare of his men. To this he is bound no less by the responsibility which the arbitrary nature of his power imposes than by the regard he should have to the interests of the service in which he is engaged. My experience in severe trying campaigns has taught me that the way to ensure the efficiency of the army is to keep the men in
Within a month this Regiment has been engaged in the most active and honorable service, taking a conspicuous part in three fights in as many different states, within that time, and in all of them going as well as the best. At the great battle of Gettysburg, however, the Regiment won distinguished honor. We were assigned to the extreme left of our line of battle, where the fiercest assault was made. A whole Rebel Brigade was opposed to this Regiment, charging on us with desperate fury, in column of regiments, so that we had to contend with a front of fresh troops after each struggle. After two hours fighting on the defensive our loss had been so great, and the remaining men so much exhausted, having fired all our "six rounds" and all the cartridges we could gather from the scattered boxes of the fallen around us, friend and foe, I saw no way left but to take the offensive. Accordingly, we charged on the enemy, trying "cold steel" on their. The result was we drove them entirely out of the field, killing and wounding one hundred and fifty of them and taking three hundred and eight prisoners, two hundred and seventy-five
Stand of arms. The prisoners taken were from five different Regiments from Alabama & Texas. Twelve of the number were officers some of the staff of the General commanding their Brigade. They admitted that they had charged on us with a Brigade & said that they had fought a dozen battles, & never had been stopped before.

We were afterward ordered or asked to carry a height which afforded the Rebels a very advantageous position & was considered by our Generals a strong point to camp. & exhausted as we were. the one hundred & ninety-eight bayonets I had left after that day fighting, charged up that hill & carried every thing before them - taking many our prisoners & arms, but what is better, taking the heights holding them - the darkness which had now come on deceiving the enemy as to our numbers.

Our services have been officially acknowledged, though no partial friends has published our praises in the state whose name we are proud to bear, & which we believe, we have not dishonored. I protected my men in every possible way, but I grieve over the loss of thirty-two gallant fellows who fell on that field which
their courage helped to make a field of honor.
1st I regret to lose the services of 102 who were
wounded there. Besides this, in our other fights, we
had a loss of three killed & sixteen wounded &
missing. I fear I have written too freely last
this is not an "official" letter, & I know you
desire to be informed reliably of the service render-
as by your regiments.

I am sorry to say that Genl. Col.
Wilcox was obliged to leave us on our march
through Maryland, & is now in Baltimore not yet
fit for duty. He all suffers for want of medical
attendance. Our toilsome & wearied marchers
broke down a great many, & I had to be sur-
geon & hearts as well as colonel, to such an
extent that I fell sick myself & came near
dying, but was providentially able to lead my
gallant fellows into the fight. The surgeons recent-
ly appointed have reported, & we are highly gratified
with their appearance.

I should be glad to have you

Mr. Brown whom you recommended fit for the
Perry letters, clerk of a hospital. Stewart & ordered to
report at once. I very much need a piece of paper
I had to go through the fight alone. Is there any
objection to following the suggestions of Col. Axten in
the appointment of a major? I shewed hearty endorse that

very respectfully yours &c.,
J. L. Chamberlain, Col. 28th