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[Please note: This is a literal translation; Jacob Miller spelled many words phonetically. Double s's are spelled "fs"]

Sharpsburg February 17th 1862

Dear Christian and Amelia

I acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th January which came to hand sometime since and gave me pleasure to hear how you are getting along with your domestic affairs and also how you are getting along among your neighbors or [hole in page] union party. They call us the disunion party but they put the saddle on the wrong horse we are for peace, and union of all the States if we can get it if not divide the States and live in peace hereafter war of itself is disunion that party has caused disunion and destruction of lives and property and if they continue another year and get the States all united again it will hardly be worth calling a united States because the debt will be so enormous that it will take all our surplus funds to pay the interest. Besides the great debt, they are committing great depredations in this state as well as in others there is a regiment encamped near town in the woods belonging to the heirs of Samuel Grove near the road leading to Shepherdstown you know that timber was not too thick but they are thinning it out most retchidly cutting all the hickrey. A portion of them are encamped on my land in the woods between the house where Frances lives and the river there they cut down timber to build cabins for their winter quarters cut down large shingle trees to make clapboards to cover them beside that they cut a great deal hickrey and ash for fuel also burnt over two hundred pannels of fence of mine. They also burned a considerable number

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rails for [from?] W.M. Blackford and cut a large amount of his timber and those depredations are still going on – in Montgomery county where General Banks is encamped they have burnt all the rails and cut down all the timber off some of the farms besides many other depredations such as robbing hen roosts stealing turkies, geese, ducks or anything else which may come in their way not long since John Smith went to the country gathering up a load of butter eggs and fowls to take to market on the way home several Soldiers came up behind his wagon and opened the hine

end gate and let out some ten or dozen chickens then staid back and shot them. Smith would have been none the wiser of the trick but that several hens ran forward when he stoped his wagons and caught some five or six the balance the soldiers got they are up to all kinds of tricks what one does not know another does. You speak of the blockade of the river trade which is no doubt a great drawback on the west. I see where Sam [some?] fellow has been making calculations of the lofs to the northeren states of many millions of dollars all occasioned by this nefarious war and that is not all now when the people are called on to pay the war tax and no way of raising the money I see where some one has made a calculation and sets down six millions for Maryland shaer pr anum that is only to pay the interest on the public debt we used to think it a heavy tax when we paed one million State and County together and this will be in addition...

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...the potomack has rifsen over the banks of the Canal four times since last spring and has obstructed the navigation of the Canal verry much the governmen has undertaken it this time the have been working on it off and on for the three weaks and no one hear knows their object whether it is to bring provender from Cumberland or to get a parcle of boats together in the river to form a bridge to crofs trops into virgenea or perhaps both they ordered the Canal to be repaired in a hurry so as to get three feet water to float an emty boat and leave it at that a few days. Then take it out again and finish it and if the weather continues as it has been it will be verry difficult to do it....

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...we are quite well supplied hear with musick there is a lot of Soldiers twenty four in number occupy the corner house where Sally Con yoused to live in they form a band and play every day more or less -this Regement is from Indianna they have inviled [enlisted?] for twelve months their time will be up by April and many of them say when their time is up they are going home and stay there but there are many of them who are offscowerings of the earth and fit for that - Nothing more but that we are all well and doing the best we can, and I hope you may continue to prosper in this world and be prepared for the next.

Affectionally yours

Jacob Miller