

Camp Falmouth
[Jan.28, 1863]¹

Dear Father

Enclosed you will find \$400.00 which I send by Quartermaster Harris. Am well and shall write soon. The balance of the money (after taking out my late debt to you) please put in the bank or invest as you please as I think what I have will last me. Am going over to see the 140th tomorrow and will then write at length

Your affect son

Saml Porter

When I wrote the preceding I intended to take the letter down to Harris² immediately but as I was folding it a large mail was brought in which I concluded I could better acknowledge at the present than at any other time. I received besides a letter from Mother, six papers which were very acceptable. Mothers letter I read immediately and was much interested. The papers I have laid aside but as it rains and snows quite hard with every prospect of a continued storm it is safe to say that nothing short of advertisements will be overlooked. Until within two weeks we have had splendid weather and it was difficult for me to believe that Virginia's winters were rainy and muddy seasons which last winters soldiers declared them. Now however we are beginning to get a little taste of it, and I am afraid that the last half of the winter will be as unpleasant as the first has been pleasant. Burnsidess movement have of late all been unfortunate, and though I for one place as much confidence in him as ever I feel that that the dissatisfaction of the men has been fomented by officers who care or at least seem to care more for party success than for the overthrow of Rebeldom made his resignation necessary.³ Not that I believe in the "Vox populi etc" doctrines but in war it is absolutely necessary that the common men should have confidence in their General. Nothing but that will insure success, and though our army may be composed of better material than is often found in still there are thousands who are mere worshippers of a man and can feel safe in his hands & his alone.⁴

You will of course understand that our Paymaster has been paying us a visit. He came yesterday and threw the camp into quite a state of excitement. It was a rich sight to see the piles of greenbacks and to see men that had never had ten dollars at any one time in their life going off with their hands full. I received a goodly sum rather more than I expected 480 odd dollars, but I owed Brigade Commissary some and Sutler quite a bill so that four hundred is as much as I thought best to send you.

The doctors bill during my illness, you have never mentioned. That I shall expect to pay of course. My health is perfect and I think that my weight is more than it ever was before.

Your affect son, Sam

Transcribed by Terry Crooks.
The original letter is in the *Porter Family Papers*, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections,
University of Rochester Libraries.

Notes:

¹ In his previous letter he says the Paymaster arrived on Jan 26 so the opening part of this letter would be the 27th and the second part would be the 28th.

² Joseph S. Harris, 1st Lt and Quartermaster 108th NY.

³ Burnside's movement was the disastrous Mud March. There was indeed a plot to get rid of Burnside, spearheaded by Joseph (Fightin' Joe) Hooker, plus other general officers.

⁴*Vox Populi* – popular opinion.

Sam refers to the constant whining from people like Pierce for the return of McClellan who did not impress Porter very much.

The sutlers were privately licensed merchants who could sell non-regulation supplies directly to the troops and often at incredibly inflated prices.

Porter's constant comments about his continued health etc. provide a thin screen to reassure his parents. He was not a physically strong or robust individual.