

Ms. # 2000, Cont. 1, Folder 8

1862
Mar 9

Reply
Brig. Genl. Pillow

to
Maj. Blain's letter
of the 9th March
1862

Mar 9, 1863

Inculation to vituperative
language of Maj. General ^{W. C. G.} ~~W. C. G.~~
Toward General ~~W. C. G.~~ and
the confederacy,

Humboldt New March 9, 1863

My Claim

Your letter of the 8th inst requesting me to recuse to writing the substance of vituperative language used in my presence by Maj Genl. McComb at Shelbyville is recd.

About the 21st January past, I visited Shelbyville in the discharge of the duties devolving upon me in organizing this volunteer unit composed of recruits for the Camp of Tennessee. I could procure no quarters in the town and pitched my tents in the cedars in the north edge of the new town. On the second day after I reached the place, Maj Genl. McComb visited my Headquarters. After the exchange of the usual salutations I gave him a claim and asked him to be seated. I was sitting in the open air by the side of a large fire. He sat down on the opposite side from me. He very soon introduced the subject of the late Battle of "Union Springs" the retreat of the army and Genl. Bragg and himself.

I undertook him to say that Genl. Bragg had placed artillery behind his commands - "intending to disgrace it" - but which "by God" it did the only good fighting that was done in the field. He passed on in the converse - time to what I understood to be a recent order of Genl. Bragg's making some changes in his divisions. He said he had taken from his two regiments and best regiments and placed two small ones in their place, and that it was a blow aimed at him, and was intended to break him down. I asked him what regiments were taken from him, and what ones were given him? He said one of them was a ^{each} Regiment which he ordered to be re-mounted and placed under Genl. Wharton, and the other was, I think, at Winchester Regiment that had been given to "C. Reathum" and the in their place he had given him a small Regiment from Florida, and

one from North Carolina. I then asked these if the
2nd Regt. had not been Cavalry originally? No.
said it had, and if all the other Tennessee troops were
not in Cleburne's Division, I am not positive as to
his reply, but my impression is, that he, as given
in the affirmative. I then asked him if these were
not given reward for the transfer ordered, without
imputing to Genl. Bragg, improper motives for his
official's conduct, - that Genl. Bragg had the
strongest possible motives for giving efficiency
to the army, and that I thought it right, improper
to ascribe the official actions of the Commanding
General to personal and unworthy motives.
He then said to him that of the contents to include
in such remarks about Genl. Bragg that he would
have to quit the army. His reply was "by God
he will 'not care' that he had 4 acres of land
in East Tennessee - that he could go there and
make Potatoes".

He was severe in his censure of Genl.
Whelan for a cause he had published in Mobile
papers in defence of Genl. Bragg, and on Genl.
Cleburne who he said "said are thing among the
officers behind Genl. Bragg's back and wrote him a
totally defornt thing".

I was anxious to conciliate his feelings
and said to him, General you have no right to com-
-plain. In the Mexican war I was a Major Genl.
and you were a Lieutenant. - In the beginning of
this war, I was a Lt. of Genl. Commanding the whole
Army of Tennessee, and I assisted to have you ap-
-pointed a Lt. Col. of Artillery. - Now I am a
Brigadier General without any Command at all, and
you a Lt. of Genl. with a fine Division, and
I have recently participated in a conflict, in which
your Division performed a brilliant part. Yet
you have not heard me complain, although I am
now put on a most disagreeable service - totally
independent to my feelings. If you are as good as
I which as now, you will cease abusing the Commanding
Commanding.

He swore he would not submit to it, and shortly afterwards left my House. Excited and I have not seen him since. He can speak to the effect only without any form or shape or manner whatsoever. It was not anticipated, my recollection is that my chief Adm. Genl was in the tent writing some 20. steps from the fire. Capt. Chalmers - chief of my staff was sometimes present but was passing about without his attention being specially called to it; He was not to have been a participant of the conversation particularly the latter part. There was nothing in the conversation that partook of a private or confidential character.

At Columbus Ky. he said, the Confederacy was a damned stinking cotton oligarchy - that it "stank" in his nostrils - that it was getting up for the benefit of - John & G. Harris and Jeff Davis and their damned corrupt clique.

Col Russell and Col Bell were present and I was told by Genl Chalmers that he had heard see the same ^{above} conversation. The conversation was between my superior Mr. Cant and was somewhat excited on this part. I was defending the Government and for Harris' action, it occurred on Sunday while Mr. Cant, Col Russell, Col Bell and myself were riding out and around our defensive lines. I afterwards reported the conversation to Maj. Genl Polk. The language was so remarkable that it made a lasting impression on my mind.