

October 19, 1863 - The chaplain's tale of "a peculiar hardship and ill usage." The kidnapping and beating of two former slaves



Nashville, Oct 19th/63

To his Excellency Gov Andrew Johnson

Governor. The bearer Maria Colored woman recently belonging to Wm Cartright residing about eight miles on the Murfreesboro Pike has represented her case to me as one a peculiar hardship and ill usage.



According to her statement her husband is a colored soldier in the regular service of the government, that while living with in the lines of this post her owner came and managed to steal her child away and convey it to his residence, being desirous of obtaining her clothes, and her other children who trusted the word of a "Tennessee soldier who offered for five dollars to convey her safely to the residence of her master, obtain her children and clothing and insure her safe return within the lines, but this was a trap, as she alleges by which for the sum of thirty dollars the soldier or individual so presenting himself had agreed to deliver he up to her master, who no sooner had her in his power than he locked her up for four days and inflicted upon her a most cruel beating, the marks of which she now carries on her person. A cruel beating was also inflicted on one of the children whose marks and scars was seen by one of the soldiers of the 129 Ill. Reg[iment]. She now hopes to obtain from your excellency the necessary authority and help to obtain her clothing and two children. I have no doubt of the entire truthfulness of her statement, and I feel sure Governor that your well known regard for righteousness and you sympathy for the weak and oppressed will prompt you to do what may be within your power to redress the wrongs from the suppliant who will present you with this humble document.



I am Governor with much esteem yours most respectful

Thos. Cotton

Chaplain 129th Reg[iment] Illinois Vols

Papers of Andrew Johnson, Vol. 6, pp. 426-427.