

I have no time to read
this over before it goes.
Make you our corrections
Oh! Kiss those dear child-
ren of mine, &
give love to
friends

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Fort Pickens, Jan. 2. '62.

Dear Elizabeth:

In the midst of
great confusion I must write you just a
little to send by a mail which rumor says
will close to-night. - Long before this can
reach you, you will have learned from leak-
age thro' southern papers, of a second bomb-
bardment here. I have no time nor disposition
just now to work up any poetical descrip-
tions, but will limit myself to few & faithful
facts. It commenced after this wise. About
2 o'clock yesterday afternoon a rebel steamer
which had been watched on its downward way
from Pensacola came right along on its reckless
way to the Navy Yard - a thing which has not
been done before since the former bombardment. By
looking at the map I have before sent you, you will
see just how it was. We were all out at the
time watching her, & just as she had got fairly
fastened to the dock, 1 1/2 miles distant, away

flew one of Col. Brown's shells after her. This fire on fell a little short, but she thought it prudent to make tracks while she did in a hurry. Just as she got started, our second shell whined after her & exploded right over her. By the time our third gun was fired, she had got turned & was steaming straight away as fast as possible, & our shot struck just ahead of her. ~~At~~ once the rebels' maddened batteries replied, & they began lively work on both sides. Our camps were greatly exposed without our being able to participate, & we were ordered to march at once by companies further up the island. Before we could get together & move it became quite exciting & not a little dangerous. Some of their murderous shells burst close to us. One struck right behind the tents opposite mine so as to throw the sand all over the tents. One of the men was knocked down just west of us, not by being hit, but by a piece passing so close to him. Within the ten minutes while it took our companies to get equipped & started, probably, 8 or 10 shot & shell struck in & around

our encampment. Our whole regiment went up the island a mile or so, out of range of the rebel batteries, where we remained watching the engagement till after dark. Then we were marched further on, & finally encamped about four miles up the island from the Fort, at a spot where the island is quite narrow, & near where the rebels landed at their former attack here. We were stationed there to meet them in case they should attempt again to take Pickens in the rear. Without any supper, the men were compelled to sleep on their loaded arms, & sentinels were posted in all directions to make all secure against surprise. The left wing rested on the Bay shore, & from that point we had a full view of the whole engagement. It was a splendid but an awful sight to see those frightful shells mount up to the very stars, making such a grand circuit & then descend & burst right over the very spot designed. Quite a number of our mortars here throw shells which are 13 inches diameter, & weigh 200 pounds! We take two good men, with clasping tongs for the purpose, to lift one to the muzzle. And then think of the awful power that will send that great weight

up so high & away so far on its wicked work,
for one, two, three miles. What surprised me most was
that they make so high a circuit. A burning fuse that
burns ^{a given number of} ~~(so many)~~ seconds before it causes the shell to burst,
marks its mighty way. These skillful artillerymen, after a few
shots, will cause ^{almost} every one to explode just at the right
time & in the right spot. Then one of those big mortar fire,
it came to shake the very island. - About 11 o'clock
our gunners succeeding in setting on fire some very large
buildings in the Navy Yard, & the conflagration was awful
& splendid. We were in full view of it across Pueloela
Bay, & altho' at least four miles distant & no moon, the light
was so great that we could distinctly see the time on our watches.
In the form of fire I never saw anything so fine. The cannoning
almost ceased on both sides by ~~midnight~~. We then sent down
to our camp the cooks from each company, to have breakfast
all ready at 5 o'clock, & about 4, when we were satisfied the enemy
would not land, the regiment began its winding way towards
home. Just at day-break, we were all eating just as if
we were hungry, & felt all the more refreshed by it for having
had so weary a night. I forgot to say that we left two
men behind to dig a hole in the sand & bury our
trunks & bedding &c., to save them from the shell, or from
fire in case our tents were burned. All the companies did
not do so, but did it the first thing after breakfast thinking the
firing might be renewed at any minute. It has not been yet,
& it is now 3 P.M., so that the probability is that there will
be no more this time. Evidently this was unprovoked on both
sides, & was occasioned by the saucy coming of that steamer.
It taught them that Col. Brown would not allow such a thing without
punishment, & it taught us that they are all ready to accept
a challenge. The casualties on our side so far as we know yet
are 2 or 3 men injured, one I believe with a broken leg. Aside from the
conflagration, we don't know what damage is done the enemy.
Too much on hand to write now this time. Yours affectionately, Lansing -



Mrs. Lansing Porter,
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