

Fort Pickens, Fla.,

Dear Elizabeth:

July 4. 1862

Surprise of this anniversary day finds me away "down south" in this strong Fort with my military "toggery" on, superintending the firing of the national salute of thirteen guns. Well, we enjoy it. It is something new for us to be actual participants in such deeds, & I quite like the smoke & thunder - when I know that blank cartridges are used & that no body is hurt. The guns were fired just 20 seconds apart by the watch, consuming just 4 minutes for the thirteen. At 11 1/2 o'clock we are to have a Dress Parade, & at noon precisely we are to fire the usual salute of 34 guns. This will be a noisy time, for Fort Barrancas, & the Batteries at Pensacola & the Gun Boats in the Bay will join in it. By special order it is made a complete holiday for the soldiers; they are relieved from fatigue work & every thing else except necessary guard duty. I think they will enjoy it.

And how are you spending the day at home? Have you reason at the north to be thankful & jubilant to day? Or are you sad & despondent? What of Richmond? Surely by this time there must have been some decisive action there, & you at the north must know what it is. But away down here

we are entirely ignorant of what has been done for the last twenty days. Our latest papers are dated the 13th Jan. The next day after the "Cahawba" left for Key West, the "Rhode Island" came in bringing later letters but not later papers. I received by her mail your letter of June 4th & 9th - the first inclosing Cornie's & the second being the one you finished in church at the S. S. Concert. Thank you for that. It gave me quite a picture, & I could see that you were all living on as usual & doing the same good deeds at home, while the rest of us are in this wicked wrangle & worry of war.

You will be surprised & vexed that the vessel containing our packages has not got here yet. The delay is unaccountable, but we hope she has not gone to the bottom.

You have not given me very full accounts of your farming operations in any letter I have received. Very likely some of your items on that subject will be found in the packages when they get here. You have made one mistake, sure! The old Peach Orchard should have been all plowed up thoroughly, raspberries & all, & sowed ^{with} ~~&~~ wheat & sowed down. It must have been very poorly plowed with so many scattering bushes in the way, & they will be very much in the way too in cultivating the Potatoes; & besides, the ground was so foul that the weeds will overrun the Potatoes & bushes, unless you hire more hoeing & weeding on them than they will

all be worth; & lastly, if you don't have this hoeing & weeding
thoroughly done, ^{if you} allow weeds to get the start & go to seed
the lot will be thereby damaged for years & years!! There, is
not that an encouraging representation of the case. It is my
judgment in the case, nevertheless, & I should feel relieved if
I knew that you had already hired fifty dollars worth
of hoeing & weeding done on that single lot. From your
unwillingness to hire extra work, I fear that chick-weed
& May-weed & all sorts of wicked weeds will cover
the ground & go to seed. You may get a few raspberries,
but it will be expensive fruit if obtained at the expense
of seeding the ground with all kinds of foul stuff. You
know how I hate to have weeds go to seed, & that is
the reason I write so in regard to that lot. I know
how difficult & expensive it will be to keep it under.

You speak of Pony jumping the fence even with
her strap on. To keep her in the stable all the time then
& not run any risk. She will teach & tempt the others, &
lead them into mischief. While speaking of this lot let me say
that I am afraid of the fence west of the pasture,
the one between the pasture & where we had corn last year.
If it is not already down, let me suggest that the corner of
the fence that side & also the south side be mowed at once
even at the sacrifice of a little hay, so that the colts will

not be tempted to reach over after the tall grass. It is in that way that they crowd the fence over & push off the rails, & in the end make a breach without meaning to. But the grass in the crooks of the fence so that they can't reach it, & so they won't be tempted to try.

If it is a good season for grass you ought to have a good deal of hay to sell. Let me remind you that it is policy to sell all you can during haying time & draw it to market right from the field. Of course father will have to help you in all that, not only in effecting sales, but perhaps also in drawing some. Hire Charlie & his team to do it. - But I am writing at random. What nonsense for me to be giving counsel! How can I farm it fifteen hundred miles away from "the scene of the conflict!" I'm sorry I have said so much; & now let me qualify or nullify it all by begging you to let John have all the care, & do as well as he can. ~~I~~ I will be satisfied. Pray don't you worry. No matter if the Mower does break down (by the way, would it not be well for him to hire Charley or somebody to cut his grass by the acre, while he cares & draws to market), no matter if the hay does get wet (by the way that is what you want to sell, you know - the wet & bad hay!) no matter if the market is dull & prices low (by the way Mr. Turner may take some of you to redeem his account) no matter if - well, I haven't room to finish this sentence, & I don't exactly see how to finish it if I had room! So I leave it just as it is. - Before this gets to you, Annie will be with you. Give her a brother's love & have her sit down & write me if she has not already done it. Remember me to all the friends, & kiss those dear children for Father.



Mrs. Lansing Porter,
Auburn,
Cayuga Co. N. Y.