FLORIDE CLEMSON was born December 29, 1842, at "Fort Hill," the home of her grandfather, John C. Calhoun, near Pendleton, South Carolina. Floride's father, Thomas G. Clemson, a transplanted Pennsylvania scientist, farmer, and sometime diplomat, had married Anna Maria Calhoun, the favorite daughter of the distinguished South Carolina senator. Clemson's business affairs and governmental work carried him to Europe, New York and Washington; hence, Floride grew up in a cosmopolitan atmosphere and mingled with the best of society. She visited in the White House and formed a lasting friendship with Harriet Lane, President Buchanan's niece and White House hostess.

When the Civil War began, the Clemsons lived at "The Home," a modest dwelling on the outskirts of Bladensburg, Maryland. Thomas G. Clemson and his son, John Calhoun Clemson, returned South to aid the Confederate cause. The elder Clemson served in a civilian capacity in the Nitre and Mining Bureau. The son received a commission as a lieutenant but saw little action before his capture in Mississippi in September 1863. He spent the remainder of the war in prison at Johnson's Island, Sandusky, Ohio.

Meanwhile Anna Maria Calhoun Clemson and Floride remained at The Home until June 1864, when they moved to Beltsville, Maryland. During these years many of their local friends were openly sympathetic to the Confederacy and seemingly came and went with little or no government interference. In December 1864, after much difficulty and delay, the mother and daughter secured passes to return South. They reached Pendleton on December 31, in time to witness the death throes of the Confederacy.
From January 1, 1863, to October 1866 Floride kept a diary,¹ which briefly covers her Pennsylvania visit, July-September 1863, but her private correspondence with her mother reveals much more. There are Floride’s descriptions of the countryside, the cities and mountains, her characterizations of her Pennsylvania relatives, and her hidden hopes and anxieties. The letters of both mother and daughter indicate family feuds, and above all, reveal their deep sentimental attachment to the Confederate cause and fear of impending defeat. I have included Floride’s letters in their entirety, with spelling and punctuation unchanged. On the other hand, as Mrs. Clemson’s letters contain much household trivia and local gossip of little relevance to Floride’s narrative, I have quite liberally edited hers.

*   *   *

Altona. July 29th

Wednesday

My Darling Mother,

Every one has gone to take a nap, so I seize this moment of rest, to tell you of my safe arrival here, I was received with great cordiality by cousin Anna, & aunt Hetty,² & am very much pleased with them. Cousin Anna is not handsome, but very lady like, & pleasant, so is auntie. This house is one of the handsomest, & most elegant I ever saw, the position & grounds beautiful. Cousin Sarah, & Luly, are both here. The former is a brisk, smart little homely woman, & the latter, who is about 11 years old, seems a sweet, bright, pretty little thing. I am sure I shall have a splended time. Cousin Sylvester I dont much like, he is quiet, & not more than good looking. I saw Carrie McClelland³ this morning. She is nearly as tall as I am & really beautiful. She was delighted to see me.


² The head of the Baker family was Elias Baker, younger brother of Thomas G. Clemson’s mother, Elizabeth Baker Clemson. Elias Baker’s family included wife Hettie, daughter Anna (Annie), son Sylvester, daughter-in-law Sarah (wife of deceased son Woods), and Sarah’s daughter Luly. Floride usually referred to Uncle Elias and Aunt Hettie as “uncle” and “auntie.” Elias Baker died on December 5, 1864. The Baker residence at Altoona today houses the Blair County Historical Society.

Now I will begin my journal. I felt pretty badly at first, at the idea of leaving you, but soon the excitement of travelling woke me from my dumps, & I began to enjoy myself. At Annapolis Junction, I looked out, & who should I see, but Mrs. Rankin, standing on the platform, looking as much like a nut craker, or the nut cracked, as ever. We had to wait an hour & a half in Balt. & started for Philla. at ten. Uncle [Elias] drew my attention from time to time to the crops, which looked splendid but spent his trip mostly in the arms of Morpheus. It began to rain after we crossed the Susquehanna (which you do in the cars, without getting out, they are run on the boat) but it was not very hot. We were perfectly covered with cinders, & uncle used one corner of my veil, greatly to his satisfaction. By half past three we reach the city, of brotherly — not love, in the rain, & nearly starved. I went right to aunt North’s & found no one but Walter (who has grown to be a tall thin ugly boy of 17 [?]) all the rest being in Atlantic city except Willy & Clem, who had enlisted to drive Lee from the state. They however returned that same evening, after a six weeks experience of a soldier's life. They are both very handsome. Clem has whiskers, & is exceedingly good looking. They were very kind, & made me most welcome. After eating something I got Walter to go down street with me, & bought nearly everything I wanted. I enclose a list, which is pretty exact, I believe, & only left off shopping when the stores closed. The next morning I finished my list, but had no time to get shoes, the night before my feet were too swollen to try them on. I went into almost every millenary store in the city but found only one bonnet that would do for 7$ as the season is so bad for such things, & that is a white crape, with red moss roses, which though pretty of the kind, is neither becoming or suitable they tell me here. The dress is grey alpaca 50 cts. a yard, & very pretty. Everything is much cheaper than with us. I went to the depot then, put my things in the trunk, found uncle, & started at 11½ o'clock.

The cars ran very fast, we soon passed by Kate Barton's station, then through the beautiful Chester valley, which looks like a garden spot, it is so luxuriant, & rich, — neat to excess. Uncle pointed out the crops, (which were very heavy) furnaces, & places, and when we came to the mountains, said "yes very pretty," & nodded! Oh mother I never dreampt of such scenery! From Harrisburg, on the beautiful

4 Catharine Clemson, sister of Thomas G. Clemson, married George W. North. Walter, Willy, and Clem were their sons.

5 Kate Barton, daughter of Elizabeth Clemson Barton, sister of Thomas G. Clemson. Elizabeth Clemson married George W. Barton (1807-1851).
Susquehanna, we wound around through, & by mountains, & followed
the banks of the Juniata from its mouth to this place. Oh I nearly
went wild, it was so beautiful. Not the lofty, cloud peircing, barren
peaks, I thought of, but bold, rocky, & wooded ridges, some wonder-
fully regular, some tossing wildly like a stormy sea. The woods, and
feilds so fresh, and the little green islands in the lovely Juniata spotted
with Orrange love weed. It was a splended day to travel, little sun,
little rain, few cinders, no dust, & just cool enough. I looked till my
eyes were blinded by smoke, then rubbed them, & regretted the time
it took to do so. I would not have missed it for the world, and uncle
nodded! Harrisburg is beautifully situated among the mountains, & by
the river, but is in itself indefferent. I love the magnificent mountains,
uncle admires the fine barns, & was very kind. We reached Altona
which is quite a nice place before nine, & found auntie waiting for us.
This appears to be a large neighborhood, & quite gay. Annie was at
a party last night, so I did not see her till this morning. I think I shall
like her very much. Indeed I have taken a great fancy to all. I have
not heard politics broached, & I think they do not bother their heads
about such matters. They all think my trunk preposterous, as I thought
they would. Tell Mr. Onderdonk\(^6\) if he never was along this road, it is
more than worth his while to do so, & get a seat on the right hand side.
Tell Mr. Lee\(^7\) uncle says the Hudson is too far out of the way, oh dear!
& is not an inspiring companion; \textit{though kind}, he is lame [?]\

I hope you all miss me. If not I wont have anything to do with you
when I get home. If you were here, I should be perfectly content,
but I feel very badly at leaving you alone. Be sure to write twice a week,
& tell me how you are & everything. I am quite well. All our relations
are well. Uncle William\(^8\) and aunt Sue are at Claymont [Del.]. Mattie\(^9\)
they say still has plenty of beaux. There seems to be a great deal of
wealth here. This place, & house are really superb. I am tired now, &
will go rest for a little while. — I heard a young lady sing with
splended voice to day. Cousin Anna plays. Uncle is very affectionate.
Now do take care of yourself, & do not show my letters, I write in

\(^6\) Henry Onderdonk, president of Maryland Agricultural College. He was
ousted in 1864 because of his Confederate sympathies. Letter from Mrs.

\(^7\) D. Williamson Lee, son of Gideon Lee, onetime mayor of New York City and
U. S. Congressman. Letter from Horace E. Hillary, Paterson, N. Y.,
Dec. 22, 1959. Thomas G. Clemson had business dealings with the Lees,
and in 1869 Floride married D. W. Lee's brother, Gideon. In 1863 she
obviously had a "crush" on D. W. Lee.

\(^8\) William Clemson, brother of Thomas G. Clemson.

\(^9\) Mattie Clemson, daughter of Episcopal minister John Baker Clemson, brother
of Thomas G. Clemson.
such a hurry so that I may rest. They keep very early hours here, in the morning & for meals.

Love to Mrs. D. F, Mrs. Calvert & all.

Your devoted daughter
Floride Clemson

This is frightfully scratched, but I am tired & can not stop to think.

* * *

Before receiving Floride's first letter from Altoona, Anna Maria Calhoun Clemson on July 30 wrote her daughter a lengthy and rambling letter telling her the news of the neighborhood and The Home. Henry McCeney was working all day and "sitting up all night to guard their garden &c, which are nightly pillaged in spite of all their efforts." Henry had said that his cousin Eliza's family had lost nearly all their servants. Mrs. Calvert had a letter from Ella & talked of visiting her [in Pendleton, S. C.] "& the means of accomplishing it." Mr. Lee "still continues charming, & evinces no intention of returning to his duties, in W." Mrs. Clemson reported that the body of a Negro man, dead of foul play about two weeks earlier, had washed down on their back property. Mr. Onderdonk was to leave the next day with his sister for New York. "I have not heard from your grandmother [Mrs. John C. Calhoun] since you left, & am getting anxious." She advised her daughter that "I shall expect quite a journal of all your doings," and added: "enjoy yourself & be quiet."

* * *

Altona. Aug. 2nd 1863

I have not heard from you yet dearest mother, but I suppose I must wait a little longer in patience, as the mails do not do as they should, & bring the letter in one day. I wrote you a hurried, scratchy letter the day after I got here, and told you in an unsatisfactory, &


12 Ella Calvert (1840-1902), daughter of the Charles B. Calverts, was married to Duncan G. Campbell. Nicklin, "The Calvert Family," Maryland Historical Magazine, XVI (Sept. 1921), 316.
hasty manner, pretty much all that had happened till then. Now, though I have little of interest to write, I know you want to hear from me, so I will give you the journal of my last four days.

There has been a great deal of visiting to this house, indeed coming nearly all the time, which is pleasant and very filling up, to one's time. There seems to be a great superabundance of young ladies, & very few gentlemen in this country. I have scarcely laid my eyes on one of the other sex, under forty years old. Carrie McClelland lives but a short distance from the enclosure, & comes up every day. Another of my school mates is staying with her now; Lizzie McIlvain. She is a sweet pleasant girl, but not striking.

I have taken the greatest possible fancy to all this family. They are very lovely among themselves. Cousin Annie would please you wonderfully, she is most lady like, and quiet, and seems very affectionate, and simple. Every one loves her. She is twenty seven, but seems, & looks much younger. I should take her to be twenty two. She is not pretty. Aunt Hetty is very sweet. Although she is sixty she would never be guessed over forty five & is very good looking, & not at all fat. I think my dresses might fit her in size. She is also very refined. Lulu is the smartest, & sweetest child I ever saw. She is a little wonder. She sends her love to you; "as she knows me," she says. Her mother is quite intelligent, and very tender hearted, & pure. She is very brisk, and has occasionally a little something Yankee about her, but not much. Dear mother, do you believe it, they have never mentioned politics, & are much more considerate than I ever dreampt of. After all I rather like cousin Sylvester. He is a little cranky but I think he is very honorable, & kind hearted. He seems highly thought of, and is exceedingly quiet.

Uncle has gone East again, & after his return, means to visit Kentucky, where he has invited cousin Anna, & me, to accompany him; of course I do not think of that, or wish to go. I fear much lest our Niagara scheme may fall through, somehow. Oh mother was it not dreadful about Morgan! I felt so badly. I could not bear to read the particulars. I have not seen a paper since I came, so dont forget the summaries, or I shall be as badly off as Rip Van Winckle, & ask where the country is, on my return home. They keep but two servants here, although they live in such nice style, & are very industrious. I have sent for my shoes to Phila. by the shoemaker here who took my measure. I had to bye a hat (see the above diagram) for $E. It is

13 General John Hunt Morgan, ill-fated Confederate raider, most of whose force had been recently killed or captured in Ohio.
black, trimmed with velvet, & becomeing. I had nothing to walk in. I went to the Presbyterian church to day, and heard a very dull sermon.

Cousin Sylvester took me up to the ore bank in his buggy yesterday. It is about five miles off & one of the very largest holes I ever saw. The scenery about here is magnificent, & though this house is not more elevated than Mrs. Calvert’s, in proportion to the surrounding country, they have a beautiful view of the mountains, & some intervening rolling ground. There are trees at the back of the house, a lovely garden at one side, nice grounds on the other, & terraces & the view in front. The house is one of the finest I ever saw, & very refined. Our furniture looks beautiful in their parlor, & they only want pictures to complete it. The family is badly off for horses just now, & there is little chance for rides until the deficiency is supplied. There is talk of several excursions, to the mountains &c. next week I will try to get my new dress done.

They have put out my wash, but will not hear of my paying for it. I received a letter from Kate yesterday. She heard I had passed, & was hurt at my not telling her. I wrote to day, & explained. She is very affectionate. Remember me to Mr. Lee & ask if he misses me — or — — —!!! To Mr. O. also. I hope to see them both. Love to Henry. Take good care of yourself, & write often to your devoted daughter

Floride Clemson.

Have you heard from father? I am pretty well. It was too cool at first, but is very warm today. All join in love to you. Cousin Sarah hopes to meet you, some day, she says. She is very kind to me. I enclose a likeness of cousin Anna taken some time ago, & is not very good. She has an immense head of hair. Love to Lizzie R: Mrs. Daub &c. Mrs. Calvert & all.

* * *

Upon receiving Floride’s first letter August 1, Mrs. Clemson answered the next day, giving her daughter the local news, noting the comings and goings of Messrs. Lee and Onderdonk, and expressing delight in Floride’s pleasant visit. She happily informed her daughter

14 The Clemsons had sold some of their furniture to the Elias Bakers.
15 Elizabeth Robinson (age 21), daughter of Conway and Mary S. Robinson, was one of Floride’s best friends. Conway Robinson was a Virginia-born lawyer and Confederate sympathizer. The two oldest Robinson sons, Cary and William, were killed in action in Confederate service. MS. Census 1860, Washington, D. C. For the Robinson deaths see McGee and Lander, A Rebel Came Home, pp. 44, 66.
that she had earlier sent news "summaries" and a letter from Ella Calvert Campbell giving news of Mr. Clemson and John Calhoun Clemson. "It is quite a relief to find they are both well, after so long a silence, but I am anxious to hear of your grandmother as Mrs. C[alvert]. has had two letters from Ella, since she enclosed one from her [Mrs. Calhoun]. I do hope she is not sick."

Mrs. Clemson also reprimanded Floride about the newly-purchased bonnet: "I charged you, if you did not find one to suit, to have one made, & not to pick up anything." She strongly urged her to write Mrs. Calvert, and lectured her about her conduct: "Dont get excited. This is all the caution I have to give you. If you can only remain calm, I have perfect confidence in your behaving just as I would have you, & making a favorable impression. Do keep hold on yourself."

On August 6 Mrs. Clemson again wrote Floride and complained of having received only one letter from the daughter. Word from Mr. Onderdonk in Baltimore was that news by way of steamer from Charleston was suppressed. The heat and stench in Washington was unbearable. Two days earlier, the mother reported, a trip into the city had made her so ill that she had had to go to bed upon returning home. And the evening before, the foul odor from burning animal carcasses had forced them to retreat indoors and close all windows.

Mrs. Clemson had little news "except the excitement of the draft," and some neighboring visitors. As for Mr. Lee, she wrote that "the gallant defender, tho possessed with a silent devil, is still quite pleasant, & makes himself generally useful, & manages me as usual." She reminded Floride that August 21 had been appointed in the South as "a day of fasting & prayer."

* * *

(Sunday)
Altoona. Aug. 9th. 1863

My Darling Mother,

I received your letter written on Thursday, yesterday, & was delighted that you were getting on so well. I wrote to Mrs. Calvert in the middle of the week, & I must own here little, or nothing of importance to record since, but you must have your letter, whether it merely consists of a few words. You complain of heat; well I must do the same. Although the day only is hot, still I feel it very much, & often wonder if in our own cool home, I could not find a breath of air. This morning I nearly roasted in church & wished myself in some com-
fortable, free & easy chair, where I should not have to play lady, until I got so fidgetty, & stiff.

I am glad you send me the "Summaries." I can not resist the temptation of reading the papers here sometimes, & they make me feel very gloomy. I have had a fit of the dumps all day, on account of one of these indulgeances this morning. I still have the same forbearance, & kindness to record, for which I am really grateful. My watch is being mended, & I have ordered some shoes from Hipman, through the shoemaker in Altoona. Cousin S. got me a beautiful pair of riding gantlets in Phila., where he spent a day last week.

I wrote to aunt North, Mary C. and Kate Barton. I forgot to tell you that the latter said aunt B. "would be delighted, & would love to see me, with her love!" Strange! Tell Mr. Lee I take regular exercise, & I thank him for taking care of you. I am much obliged for the fencing of my flower beds also. Remember me &c. Govvy seems a fixture. Is he cleaner? I am so glad of such recent, & good news from abroad [South Carolina], but hope grandma is well. It seems strange she does not write, does it not? Again I must tell you how kind every one is. They think me wonderfully straight, & say I carry my hight well. They can not understand my weight, (166 lbs.) My face is a little broken out, but I eat, & sleep a merveil. The hours are dreadful, breakfast at seven or a little after, (I am always one of the first down!) dinner at one, or before; a nap soon after, then dress for the evening, supper at six, & to bed after ten. Auntie is an active, neat, clean housekeeper, but the eating is not Mrs. Daub's. I can not get used to so much sweet. Even salad is made sickening with sugar, & ham comes very often. Everything is good of its kind however.

I recorded in the letter to Mrs. C. my two evenings of dissipation. I had to drive the girls in a one horse carriage, & the man had to ride on my old pony. We got along quite nicely, for I trusted to the horse's instinct, & the good road, as I found my eyes useless. The road that passes by here, from Hollidaysburg to Altoona, is made of cinder, & plank, & is excellant, but I find that can be said of no other in this country. It ill behoves me to complain, & I doubt whether they are worse than ours, but of a different style, — very stony, & precipitous, & exceedingly ill made, but not as washed, & boggy as ours. They are so beautiful, & pass over such a romantic country however, that in climbing a bad hill, you only think of the view which will entrance you

16 Mary Clemson, daughter of John Baker Clemson.
17 "Govvy" Morris, a frequent visitor at The Home and apparently a friend of D. W. Lee.
at the top, & the delight lasts until you reach the bottom. Cousin Sylvester, who I like better every day for his kindness, took me a buggy ride of some fifteen miles, which I enjoyed exceedingly. We just missed a shower which we saw near us, though so very partial, as to look like a grey veil, & so did not feel troubled by the sun. He also took me another, & shorter ride, which was perhaps more beautiful, as he did not confine himself to road, but took me to the top of some mountain-like hills, where the views, were most fine. I am quite prepared to answer questions on ore digging, washing, & burning.

There is a derth of horses, which will not be filled until uncle returns from Kentucky, & which keeps us a good deal at home, but the weather has been so warm that I think buggy riding is perhaps as well. I find it quite pleasant, & a novelty. Pet, as cousin Anna calls the pony, has grown quite round, & fat, — too much so for its slight frame, & is still the tricky little imp, it always was. I have tried riding but once since I came & unless I can get a better horse, & a saddle of more respectable dimensions, & shape, I am quite resigned to staying at home. There are still some trips to the most calibrated spots, in contemplation, which may come off any day. However, my imagination can picture nothing more beautiful than I have already seen. Anna’s cousin Sadie Sterrit, a tall, thin girl of twenty two, is staying here now. I am happy to say she only intends remaining a week or so, for I have taken a dislike to her. She is just a little too sweet, & cat like, & too fond of kissing, &c. Very polite to me however.

You need not think I am not taken care of. I have coughed a little since I came, for you know I had a cold when I left (which soon got well however), & the sound thereof, being not even as hard as usual, did not meet with the approbation of my kind relatives. So here I am, with enough care taken of me, to keep a gross of tender hot-house-plants, through an Arctic winter. In vain I plead that it does not amount to any thing (& it really does not,) the minute I give a hack, there is a general closing of windows, & getting of sugar & water, shawls &c. It is really amusing. Uncle set them on, retailing yours, & Mr. Lee’s accounts of my delicacy. Joking apart, they make more fuss than you; & almost roast me with care.

Poor Carrie McClelland, whose mother died of consumption you know, is quite delicate. She spit (or spat) some blood last week, but does not cough. Lizzie McIlvain is still with her, & as interesting as ever.

Uncle got back the day before yesterday. He got the papers he says from you. He will go to Kentucky next week, but we have no
intention of accompanying him. His movements are too uncertain. He & cousin S. do not sit horses at all. They have not quarell, to my knowledge; but do not get along. Anna is lovely, & quiet, but not very interesting, auntie ditto. Cousin Sarah is by far the most intelligent, & is the only one of the whole set, who has any enthusiasm. I really love her. She seems to have taken a fancy to me, & is very kind. She is very religious, & pure, really one of the best women I ever saw. She is an Episcopalian.

The Clemson’s are expected, indeffinately any time. I shall be glad to see Sallie & Mary, who I think are the two that are coming. The sentiments of the family with regard to “Mrs. Marton,” & others suits me exactly. I really pitty you for that miserable smell, but hope it will soon pass away. Now I have written you a long letter about nothing, & expect a speedy & punctual answer. My love to Leo, & the rest of the family, with oceans to yourself from

Your devoted daughter,

Floride Clemson

Keep well all [and?] tell me everything. The family would send love but are napping & at Sunday school. I shall remember the 21st rest assured. I have been doing no work at all.

*   *   *

On August 9, the same day as Floride’s latest letter, Mrs. Clemson wrote of the usual household items: the doings of Mr. Lee and “Govvy” Morris, the heat, anxiety over absence of news from Mrs. Calhoun, the continuing stench from Washington, and the visits of neighbors. She added a bit of gossip picked up in the city from Mrs. Robert Stone to the effect that Lizzie Giles had jilted Washington Baker, a Clemson cousin, for a General Quarles in Mobile. She wrote: “If it is true, she & her mother have both behaved shamefully, & I think your cousin well rid of her . . . To think of her driving out with him, as his fiancée, while the mother bought her wedding things to marry another man!!!!!!”

Mrs. Clemson expressed joy over Floride’s pleasant visit and the

18 Sallie, a third daughter of John Baker Clemson.
19 Floride’s dog.
absence of political discussions, but she warned her to remember "the interest of Northerners cannot be so vital as ours in this contest, & that family especially, having no near relative engaged in it, & your uncle's iron being enormously increased in value, by it, have no cause for bitterness, indeed the wonder is, that being, as you say, & as I believe, sincere & earnest christians, they or any other good person at the north, could be in favour of a war of invasion, for the avowed purpose of abolition, & subjugation, against their brethren, & can stand calmly by, & see so much innocent blood shed, to put down the very principles our common forefathers fought for."

On August 13 Mrs. Clemson wrote again, still complaining about the heat and the "bad smells" of Washington almost making her ill. Mr. Lee was still at The Home, she reported, and "like[ly] to be. He talks no more of being ordered off [by whom? to where?], & is not so pleasant as he has been. What a queer man he is, to be sure! I gave him your messages, & he expressed himself gratified & sent his respects." She complimented her daughter on her interesting letters and her punctuality at the Bakers. "I hope you make yourself agreeable, & that they like you as much as you do them." After a little lecture to Floride about proper spelling and word usage ("You speak of a 'buggy ride.' You ride on horseback — You drive a carriage of any kind"), she ended with the following note: "The news is not bad & I heard the other day all [Confederates] were in good spirits in spite of the late reverses."

On August 16, Mrs. Clemson, increasingly disappointed at not hearing from Floride, wrote that the weather was still hot; some new neighbors had moved in; she had not been to Washington recently; Mrs. Calvert was quite sick and distressed over no news from Ella; Mrs. Clemson likewise was "anxious at not hearing from your grandmother." She enclosed summaries of the war news and a Carlyle article — "the best satire on the war yet." She added: "Does not Charleston hold out valiantly? God bless the old state."

"There is quite (an almost nightly nuisance,) in the shape of an execrable band from Ft. Lincoln, which comes to make night hideous, for several hours, at Yost's & Barney's.\textsuperscript{21} No two instruments accord, & they neither play in time or tune, nor any tune worth hearing, so the only effect they produce is setting one's teeth on edge."

Concerning "Govvy," she wrote: "Mr. L. tells me he persuaded 'Govvy' to join his regiment, & as he has not come out today, I sup-

\textsuperscript{21} Two nearby places of entertainment.
pose he took the advice. I am not sorry, for tho personally I rather liked him & he had become cleaner, I don't wish that kind of cattle too much about the house.” Regarding Mr. Lee, she said: “On the whole he makes himself rather agreeable, but 'too much of a good thing is worse than none at all.' He gets no letters that I see. Mysterious is it not? Gowy told me he [Mr. Lee] wanted to go to Texas, if there was an expedition sent there. I suppose that is what he is waiting for orders.”

She closed the letter with a final but serious warning: “Don't be led into going to make visits to any of the family. Get off civilly. You have been away so long must go straight home &c &c. I prefer things to remain as they are.”

* * *

Altoona. Aug 16th 1863

My dearest Mother,

I have so much to say, that I scarce know where to begin. Last week, we were so constantly on the go; & when at home, so tired, that I had not the time to write to you, but Mr. Onderdonk said he would see you tomorrow, tell you all about me, so you will not miss my letter.

First then, Monday was very quiet; Tuesday we had determined to go up to Cresson, a place about fifteen miles from here, up the Aleghany range, but could not, as the rest of the party were not prepared. So cousin Sylvester took me up to Hollidaysburg, in the buggy, & we had a very pleasant drive. It is not so large a place as Altoona, nor so nice a one, but seems to be thriving. Wednesday, we all, with several other persons from the neighborhood, made an early start for Cresson. Cousin S. & one or two other gentlemen, constituted the masculine element; the feminine amounting to some sixteen, or more. Cousin S. with his usual kindness to me, determined to get me a stand on the back platform, so that I might enjoy the view to the greatest extent. We had a couple of engines, & a short train, still the grade was so heavy, that we went slowly. I think I never saw anything grander, or more wild, than the scenery was. We mounted in a most circuitous manner skirting ravines, & making the sharpest possible turns. The idea of being nearly on the top of a high mountain on a railway train! It seemed wonderful. I did enjoy it so. Just before we reached our destination we passed through a tunnel, 200 ft. under ground & well on to a mile long. I did not like that.
Cresson is a summer resort, with no natural attraction, except the mountain air, that I could see. Though so elevated, there is no view, & no fine scenery in the immediate neighborhood, but it is surrounded by deep massive hemlock woods, which are not only magnificent looking, but exceedingly productive of ferns & musketoes. There are some strong unmedicinal springs, a fine large hotel, some nice cottages, & a promiscuous set of people, besides a ten pin alley, two billiard tables, & a bar room. Also many plank walks. Well after waiting till we were tired for a room to lay off our things in, we were shown one very small one which we sixteen ladies, besides some children, occupied in common with a gentleman & baby, besides other congruous elements I suppose. The gentleman (who was probably tall, as his pants were very long) kept us out of the room while he dressed for dinner, but was not otherwise inconvenient.

We spent the morning most pleasantly rolling ten pins, & walking; besides wondering at the different kinds of people it takes to make a world. At the first amusement, I came out third, after two long games with eight others, most of whom had rolled before. Cousin Sylvester gained the first, & Lizzie McIlvain the last game. I liked it exceedingly at the time, but found my muscles did not, next day. We had right good eating, & a pleasant day. About eight we expect[ed] to start home, but the train was half an hour late. When it came, it was so crowded, that we could not all get seats. I managed to get squeezed next to a woman, whose child occupied the whole of the opposite seat, as a bed. I tried to induce her to pick it up, but she said she was too tired to hold it any longer, so after inquiring if it had no infectious disease, & seeing that it was clean, I picked it up, & provided two more of the party with seats. The child was very heavy! I left two of my hoops at the plank walk, for incredible as it may seem, my new set [?] is too long. That night we slept without rocking. Next day we rested.

Mr. Onderdonk arrived in the morning, & stayed all day, & evening. We invited him to join a party which had arranged for the next day (Friday) to visit the Wopsenonock mountain, one of the highest about here, & the finest view. Six of us went on horseback, & six in a springless wagon. I was one of the three ladies who rode, Carry, & Anna the others. On account of the scarcity of horses, cousin S. most kindly gave up his (which was lame, & worthless) to Mr. O., & did penance in the conveyance, which cousin Henry McClelland drove. I was on the latter's horse, a huge white beast, which showed much docility of temper in not paying the slightest attention to my whip, &
other attempts at urging out of a very hard, & slow walk. My saddle would probably have fitted me at the age of say eight — but I have grown since.

We started about ten o'clock in the hot sun, & thick dust, & I must say I suspected little pleasure from the ride, however after over three hours we reached the crown of the mountain, & as the weather had become a little hazy, & less hot, the road being beautiful, & the company pleasant, I managed to get along passably pleasantly. We had to wait sometime for the waggon, as the roads were well calculated to retard anything like progress, being nothing more nor less than frightful, & nothing but rocks, & holes. After unpacking the lunch, & feeling to see whether there were any bones broken, we seated ourselves in a shady grove right by the Wopsenonock house, a neat tavern, & had a merry, & most refreshing meal. About two o'clock we saddled up, & rode half a mile to the brink of the mountain. The brow has been denuded of trees, & you look down near a thousand feet of so abrupt a decent, that a stone can be thrown to the bottom, & a man could roll down, were it not for the bushes. What could be finer than that I can not imagine. It was just dumbfoundering. Though the day was somewhat smoky, we could see over three ranges of mountains, & I believe some 80 miles in one direction. The country looked like a beautiful map. What I had thought mountains before, looked like mole hills from there, & Altoona, which was scarce six or seven miles off, seemed just a little place. I do wish you had seen it. It did me good. Most reluctantly, & with many a “longing, lingering look behind,” we left it, & after rather a brisker jog back, by an other road, reached home more battered than tired, & with fine food for thought before dark. My horse, who added stumbling, & shying to his phlegmatic temperament, fell with me twice, though he exhibited no symtoms of enough life for the first agrément. However owing to his inertia & my sticking qualities, he recovered without throwing me. Cousin Anna had a sick headache unfortunately, & had to take Lizzie McIlvain's place in the wagon coming home. Mr. O. will probably tell you all about this trip himself.

Yesterday Cousin S. took me all over the machine shops in Altoona, which I enjoyed excessively, as he, & Mr. Brasto (?) (the superintendent) explained everything to me. The works are very extensive, & are for the manufacture of the engines, & other rolling-stock of the road. I saw all possible kinds of working in iron, especially. It was a great treat; & very dirty, & noisy. I would like to go again. I saw them casting in the evening, at uncle's furnace, the liquid iron
in [is] beautiful; but rather warm. Uncle started for Kentucky Wednesday, & will probably be back in a week or so, when he will take us to Niagara he says. Cousin S. has to go tomorrow to the East as far as Bauting [?] to sell iron, & will probably be gone a week. I shall miss him much, he has been so good, & kind to me, taking me about, & showing me sights. I really like him now. The Clemson's, uncle, Mary, & Mattie, are coming early this week. I am so disappointed Sallie is not to be one of them. I send you aunt B's letter without comment, what must I say? I know what to do. "This world & 'tother country" deciets & starange things! She tells uncle he must "call by for Kate."

The furniture has arrived, & is splended, especially the looking glass, & etagere. I took my dress body & sack to be made yesterday. I have made the skirt myself. I find I will have to send for more. I got my watch fixed for $1.50. Carrie McC. is very delicate, she spit blood last week. — Mr. Latrobe & Mary22 wrote me nice letters from Bethlehem inviting me to join them, which I would do were it not for the Clemson's. I don't know when I shall get home. I want to see you much, very much. I received yours, & Mrs. Calvert's letters last week. Glad you are getting on so well. Remember me to Mr. Lee, & tell him to be in readiness to go with us to Niagara if he can. I cant help getting excited I fear, & being noisy, but they seem to like me, & are certainly very kind, & considerate, & affectionate to me. Remember me to Mr. O., Mrs. Calvert, Lizzie, Mrs. D., & F. & all, all, all.

I am your devoted daughter

Floride Clemson

[To be continued]

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