

In camp April 21st 1864

Dear Et,

Your letter of the 18th & 19th by the hands of Dr. Gamble was received last night. Also the money.

I am sorry to hear that you are all still on the sick list. I have lectured you so often of late about taking care of yourself, that I refrain for once, saying anything about it.

I think you might ask Aunt about the forks, explaining to her what you want with them. I will also write to her. The gloves fit very well, but as she wishes to be exact, I can only give the following directions, etc. The pair just sent are a little too large around the hand just behind the thumb, and the little finger is about $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch too long. Otherwise they fit first rate.

I am proud that the boys are learning so well. You wrote me that Pat says he can spell among other words "Yancey" but you don't spell it properly. You have it as "Yantsy!" By the way I think you are becoming a little careless about spelling: I suppose it is because you are always hurried & tired when you write. But I won't "lecture" you on that just now.

As to the establishment of the hospital at Monticello, I know nothing about it, and have nothing in the world to do with it. It is a matter purely belonging to the Medical Department over which I have not control except those in the field. Those connected with Hospitals are entirely independent of me, and are not only jealous of their rights, but sometimes become very defiant. I have as little to do with the surgeons as possible.

I hear that Mr. Tucker has not moved to Casa Bianca. I wonder if I couldn't rent it from him. I would like very much to do so, and would write to him on the subject but do not know where to address him. Please ask Dr. Scott to write to him, or find out in some way whether I could not occupy it. The house will fall down if someone is not in it. Or it may be if it is left vacant that the Doctors will make hospital of it! I am rejoiced on Mother's account that Caro has returned. But I confess I have very little hope that Mother will soon find some new trouble for it seems to be the study of Caro's life to keep Mother constantly under some high state of mental anxiety or trouble. A new sensation will very soon appear, in all probability.

I took up the notion that Dr. Scott thought I was "interfering too much" with his management of the place from what you wrote me. You said that Lewis had several times of late received orders which the Dr. knew nothing about, among them he had been hauling back to somebody in town & then you went on to say that I ought not to allow it etc. I merely wrote to you explaining how I came to order him to take the buggy to Station 17 and denied any knowledge of the bark hauling business, etc. By the way I have never had that matter explained yet. You have written to me that you didn't believe that he had hauled any bark but you had written so positively before that he had hauled it & that too without authority that I am puzzled to understand. Certainly Lewis can tell whether he hauled it or not & settle the question. If he were to deny it, and there would be no proof that he did, I would believe him.

I see that you don't take to the "Suwannee Springs" project very readily. Well, if you can get the Casa House I would prefer the latter, but I do think you ought to quit Dr. Scott's little crowded establishment. I can readily see why you should wish to be with

Mollie, but I don't think you ought to wish to do so at the sacrifice of your health & that of all your children. Do you remember you used to abuse the Monticello people about always wanting to live with their kin? Particularly the Scotts who insisted on Mollie living in the house with old Mrs. Scott. I fear you have imbibed the same spirit. You ought to reflect about this. I know when you do you will come to a correct conclusion, and whatever you may determine on, I will abide by it. You have my ideas about it. I wish I could see you & talk to you about our affairs. If we go on in the way we are doing, next year will be a sad one, I fear. We will have nothing to live on & nothing to buy it with!! But above all, I think we should look to the health of ourselves & children. I want to see you worse than ever. Here's a bushel of kisses for yourself and a peck a piece for Willie, The, Pat, and "Crom." Love to Mollie & kisses for her girls.

Your
Patton

Transcribed by Christopher A. Baker, University of Florida, 2008.