Dayton, O., Dec. 1863

Dear Luther,

My expectations have been disappointed; I could not bear thoughts of hungry, cold and desolate families. I counted up the days that should pass before another letter could come. Last night was to bring one certainly, but there was none for me.

Christmas is nearly here, and we begin to wonder whether you will be here with it. We told me today that you wanted me to bring the children out—Christmas Eve, and remain all night. I am afraid it will make too much trouble for you but have promised to go unless you drop down upon us; which is most too good to think of.

Howard will come home Christmas Eve.
and spend Christmas Day with us, on that account I wish you could come then. I have anticipated a little with Hall’s present which was a muff, and I thought she needed it already; she will have some other smaller things now. For the boys, I have got knapsacks which I think will be very great things in their estimation, for they hunt up all the old clothes and hang them on their shoulders for knapsacks, carrying all things, but a favorite play-thing. We have agreed among ourselves that the grown people are not to make going to Washington; for I find that each one presents, but some one finds for the Beson. Mother’s Birthday was for us, and I might have sent two days after Christmas, and in such a way as to give her something, I know our Christmas presents that I sent, and that the War Department can give me by writing up a list of them. You would think I am settling my heart upon this; I don’t think I am, yet, I shall be disappointed unless, indeed, you can come over after, when I shall have holidays free. Molly came to me a few minutes ago, and told me a long string of ugly words that a boy had said to him, and I thought they were very clever, and he was off, cursing me, that “I am going to try to forget that; right now;” which is my frequent advice to him; but enough of funny enough from his petulant lips, I am rather puzzled at what for not letting me know sooner that he was that the grown people are not to make going to Washington, for I find that Mrs. Beson had turned to perform a box for the Beson. Mother’s Birthday was for us, and I might have sent two days after Christmas, and in such a way as to give her something, I know our Christmas presents that I sent, and that the War Department can give me by writing up a list of them. You would think I am settling my heart upon this; I don’t.
a week before Christmas.

I'm writing by twilight—which is about as bad as "camp fire." I think, as we sit till after tea to finish

Evening—went over to Uncle John's, where I found Fielding and Lizzie, the former was unusually talkative, and I found all so pleasant that I stayed to tea. I found out a piece of news too, which is that two months after landing in California Miss Emily Pain was married! A calamity which I had predicted for her. I could not learn who by was, but it was said to be a suitable match as to ages, so I suppose she has not been guilty of much foolishness.

Lizzie became acquainted with Captain and Mrs. Gilman (you met them at Atlan
town) at Washington. She said the Captain had been (I think) of staff for Gen. Buell. They had been at Frankfort, Nashville, etc., and after being at Washington about two weeks
were ordered to remain; then she declared she meant to stay, no matter when the Captain went; the want of fit to travel at the time.

Fiddling asked whether you ever said anything about the face down there, and laughed heartily about the "hard task" saying "why haven't they got rid of that lot yet?" He would n't like to be back there, she says.

Howard's appointment has been confirmed at the War Department and he hopes he will remain in Columbus some time.

May come home last evening; she carried up four targets and two small pots of Williams and Sprig Benajes.

The mixed Potockich's Concert is going; but it was nothing to sneeze. Never having heard him, I was quite anxious to go, but was surprised and
old greatest, it was certainly the greatest concert I ever attended. Puccini himself didn't seem to care that he did; the female singer was bad and Brignoli didn't sing well. He said it in Russian, but remained suddenly for Cincinnati. The whole audience was angry and it would not be best for any of that sort to come this way again.

Now, tomorrow I think that letter must come! Mary and I have been up to the office quite frequently; the Eastern Mail opens at 6 o'clock in the evening, which is rather an inconvenient hour, but we don't take it out till morning. Bella is just off for bed; she has been working with my hair, a luxury that you would enjoy, and I doubt she will be glad to give you; somebody else will at any rate. Goodnight. That one, for I have something else to do before my bedtime.