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## MIDDLETON CORRESPONDENCE, 1861-1865

Edited by ISABELLA MIDDLETON LELAND

(Continued from October)

*Harriott to Susan, Columbia*

Flat Rock Jan. 8th [1864]

. . . I was told the other day such a Yankee trick of Mr. Craig's. He assisted Mr. Blake to bury his fine old wine. Mr. Blake then came up here, and Mr. Craig dug up the wine and drank it! Some one asked Mr. Rutledge what kind of a person Mr. Craig was to which he answered "You know Helen? Well he is just like Helen, with her toes turned in." . . . Have you heard of the tableaux at Greenville. The principal actors (there were charades) were Julia McCord, who looked and acted beautifully, young Sass, and a Capt. Fielden an Englishman on Beauregard's staff. He is described as being "up to snuff, and brass enough for anything." In an inn scene, where an apron was necessary he coolly pulled out his shirt in front and buttoned his pantaloons under it and went through the scene with great eclat! I suppose you have heard of Mrs. Mitchell's wedding cake. The pieces distributed were wrapped up in what was at first supposed to be newspaper, but proved on inspection to be the pedigree of her family. She being descended from Washington through the Custises! The Miss Wigfall to whom Hood is said to be engaged is not at all pretty Mr. Haskell told us. Isabella asked if the father was still devoted to toast water, explaining that when he lived in Charleston he was always in the neighborhood of a decanter which his mother-in-law assured every body was toast water! Mr. Haskell said it had now got to be a demi-john, which generally accompanied him, but that in spite of his failings, he is a man of talents and of strong common sense and that the President has more reliance on his suggestions than those of any other Senator. Mr. Lowndes saw Morgan, and describes him as very fine looking, with the true gambler's way of wearing his hat, so as to hide the expression of his eyes. It seems he was a great gambler. . . .

*Susan to Harriott, Flat Rock*

Columbia Jan. 13th

. . . Did you hear that Edward Wells had joined the Dragoons? He was arrested by Jordan as a spy as soon as he got to Charleston—but released

upon Mr. Cleland Huger's interposition, and forthwith enlisted in that "refuge for gentlemen who can't get commissions."

Columbia—Jan. 20th

. . . Every one . . . is wild about the "Bee sale"—as far as I can hear, for I have made no attempt to get in—one is sure to be knocked down, or squeezed half to death in the crowd—the greater number don't get in, but those who do come out disgusted and indignant—the goods being inferior, and the prices enormous. One lady informed me, without a notion of what she was saying, that it was "a real *sell*"—and they say three were stretched fainting upon the counters yesterday. I daresay as much from vexation as exhaustion. . . .

. . . The "fast" ladies in Charleston give what they call "Consolation parties." On Sunday evening they meet together as usual with this difference, they sing psalms until the clock strikes twelve, when the band begins to play and the company dances till daylight. . . .

. . . I have heard nothing of the Dragoons being sent to Va., and do not believe it. Mr. Rutledge says there was a report that Morgan had applied for the Regiment—the President consented, on condition that Beauregard would let them go, but Beauregard declared he would be d—d first! (Very likely—and *very* like Gen. Beauregard.) Officers and men were wild with delight at the idea—but they are *not* to go, and I confess I rest content in that decision. It is bad enough to think of So. Ca. gentlemen on picket every other twenty-four hours—in cold and wet—without proper clothing, and with nothing to eat but cold potatoes—it would be still worse to have them tramping thro' the enemy's country on picking and stealing excursions, with a Yankee penitentiary in near perspective. Of course I delight in Morgan, and think him a very fine fellow, but all that suits Kentucky better than Carolina—don't you agree with me? Lise says Morgan was never a gambler—only "a little fond of horse-racing," like all the fine gentlemen of his section. I have had a long letter from John, at Russelville. He says East Tennessee is a beautiful country, but the men all smoke, and the women chew! Nevertheless he had made the acquaintance of six charming young ladies, who lived in a brick house, and were named Guthrie, and who assured him that, altho' *we* considered them Unionists, "all the influential people" were warm Southerners. He thinks he may get a furlough in March. . . .

Columbia—Wednesday

[Jan. 27]

. . . I never hear a word of "war-news" nowadays, not a whisper even of the torpedo-boats, of which you ask. There is one dominant idea in

all minds—the Bee Sale! It is amazing to see how every one's interest is absorbed by it, and I doubt if even a great victory would excite much attention just now in Columbia. If you would like any purchases made, I shall be very glad to make them for you—the prices are still absurd, but certainly lower than in the shops—most things one fourth lower—some one half—the paper I am writing on \$20 the half-ream, about \$2 a quire, and every where else it is \$4—calicos \$5.50 instead of \$7.50—good quality and yard wide. Spool-cotton \$15 instead of \$25. Next week they are to have sugar at \$2, and plenty of long-cloth and muslins. I hear that the Agency is to be kept open two or three months, as they have ten cargos to dispose of. At first there were frightful stories of ladies fainting and being crushed and trampled by the crowd, but now there is no difficulty in getting in and being served, and the two days I have been, to get things for Mama, I found it quite amusing, so don't hesitate to send to me, if any of you want anything. . . .

*Harriott to Susan, Columbia*

Flat Rock 28th

. . . We have had another visit from Mr. Haskell on his return to Longstreet. He came in Saturday morning and staid until the next day. He mentioned what he did not before, that it was want of powder which prevented our taking Knoxville. The soldiers drawn up in line of battle before it were not allowed to fire—to their excessive disgust. The Artillery caissons were nearly empty. He says that the hard life has driven most of the chaplains from the army, and therefore Sunday is little observed. Longstreet who (I think he said) is a member of the Church and very particular, went out to shoot on Sunday. Meeting a friend on his return, he complained of his ill-luck. "Serves you right" said he "for shooting on Sunday." Longstreet's gun fell from his hands, and he looked horror-stricken. He gave us an amusing account of Stuart's fondness for kissing which he seemed to look upon as very criminal! He said that six young ladies were staying with friends at his headquarters and "would you believe it he kissed them all when he went out in the morning and when he returned at night, and whatever Stuart did his staff did also." We could not help laughing at the earnest indignation which his face shewed, and asked how he knew. He said, because he staid on a hill just opposite Stuarts headquarters and the kissing went on in the portico! Isabella suggested that the young ladies might be a little to blame, but that did not seem to strike him. He told us of three attempts having been made to bury him after Gettysburg. Exhausted he threw himself down among the dead and dying and looking ghastly in the moonlight,

was supposed to be dead. One party had actually wrapped him in a blanket and were carrying him off, when he vigorously kicked out. Another was pulling off his boots. . . .

(*Susan to Harriott, Flat Rock*)

Columbia—Monday  
[Feb. 1]

. . . I did not think I should have written so far without telling you of Gen. Morgan! Not long ago, an evening visitor (we *do* have evening visitors *sometimes*) told us Morgan was soon to be here again. And sure enough, Hal told me after church in the morning that he had arrived the day before, had been serenaded, and had made a speech. In the afternoon, just after the service had begun, there was a little buzz and stir, and the door of the pew next us was thrown open to two rather showy women, and a tall, dashing-looking man. Hal and I looked at each other and said "Morgan," at the same moment. Yet he is not at all like the photograph we have seen of him, which they say was taken ten years ago. He looks thirty-five at least, and can scarcely be called handsome—it is not a clever face either—but the expression is certainly pleasant, without anything as low as cunning—it is rather a mixture of mischief and good nature. He told a gentleman here he never meant to take a Yankee prisoner again—but I am sure he will not find it easy to act up to his good intentions. Mrs. Morgan sat almost touching me in the corner of the pew—a real Western-looking woman—rather handsome and very finely dressed in silk and velvet and black and white lace and brilliant red and white roses. I confess I was a little disenchanted by the behavior of both the General and his wife—it was not what *we* consider decent, altho' perhaps it might pass muster very well in their native Kentucky and Tennessee. First he presented her with a bunch of violets, which they played with, laughing and whispering together—then they sang out of the same hymn-book—and the hymn being Montgomery's on prayer, when they came to the 2nd verse, "Prayer is the burden of a sigh," he underlined the word "sigh" deeply with his thumb-nail! and again they tittered and whispered together. When the sermon "set in," he put his arm affectionately round her, and took her hand in his. In this touching attitude they dozed thro' one of Dr. Palmer's "happiest efforts," altho' he did occasionally rouse them a little from their repose. When they waked up finally at the doxology, I should not have been at all surprised if they had kissed each other!—it would have been a very fit conclusion to the whole performance. I will only add that Morgan's hands were *not* such hands as either you or I would be persuaded to put *our's* into! A great

many people have been to see them—one lady reports that he calls his wife “my darling”—Did you know that he had been married before, and has several children.

You see how they are pounding away again both at Sumter and the City—they say not a pane of glass is to be found in Broad St. Shells have burst lately in Mr. Charles Lowndes’s and the Daniel Heyward’s houses—and in front of the Alstons’ also. They have fallen, too, as high as Aiken’s row, we hear. The houses in the lower part of the town are constantly broken open and plundered. A lady told me yesterday her piano and various pieces of heavy furniture had been stolen out of her’s—altho’ she had a servant living in it. But even all this is not so hard to bear as what we hear of our house at Edisto. By the last report of the scouts on the island a regiment of contrabands are quartered in and around it! A pleasant abode it will be to return to—but it is folly to think of the future. Frederic writes a piteous account of the condition in which they found “Brandon”—a fine old place on James River belonging to the Harrison family. I daresay you read the report of its having been visited and ransacked by a party of yankee marauders. Clingman’s Brigade was sent after them, but arrived after they had left—they had burned and destroyed nearly everything, and carried off all the negroes—it was a terrible scene of desolation—all the farm-horses and cattle had been either butchered, or had perished in the flaming buildings. . . .

Columbia—Wednesday  
[Feb. 4]

. . . I got your letter yesterday morning just before Lizzie and I started for the “Bee Sale”. . . . The shoes are very poor, and dear, I am told. I saw slippers yesterday—but not such as you want—at \$20—they looked very rusty. We bought calf-skins, and are having them made up—but I don’t think there is any saving in it—for they still cost \$55 and \$60 a pair, and are but coarse clumsy things.

Columbia—Friday  
[Feb. 12]

. . . You will wonder at seeing my handwriting again so soon. Don’t be shocked—but your bills are counterfeit ones—and Papa says, if you got them direct from a Bank, and will send them back, you may get good ones in their place. So I thought I had better enclose them to you at once. The way in which I found it out was this. I had gone to the Sale yesterday to look again for calicoes—no new ones had been opened, but as I stood waiting while Mama was buying something, I heard one of the

clerks say to a man: "No, Sir, we can't take those twenties—so many of them are bad." I looked at the bill, and on getting out, and examining your money, I found your twenties were like it—so I turned into a druggist's, and buying something, offered him one in payment—but he said at once he did not think it good—and, bringing out a real one, he showed me the difference by which the counterfeits are distinguished. The bees on the good bills are much smaller and less distinct than on the false—and are flying all to the right of the hive, on a level with it, and not some over the top of it as if they were going towards the left. Besides this, "that object," (as the druggist said) which the boy holds in his hand, in the good bills points not to the *E*, in the word "Confederate," but to the *D* before it. By these signs you will readily know the good from the counterfeit, if you happen to have any more of the same sort. The Ten is all right. On Monday we all mean to make another effort at the Sale—and I hope I shall get your dress then—the clerks said they would have a great variety of calicos by that time. . . .

*Harriott to Susan, Columbia*

Flat Rock Feb. 15

. . . I got your letter today and am much obliged for your trouble about the Confederate notes. We looked over our remaining ones and found we only had four bad ones. Of course we have no idea how we got them. Shopping up here is an unusual thing, so they could not have come in change, but the person who transmits them from Greenville is not honest and it is very possible that he may have put them in. On one occasion the sum he sent was minus \$100, but as he had given it to a gentleman to bring we said nothing—as he might have felt uncomfortable. On another occasion also a pair of shoes disappeared—only valuable at this time. . . .

*Susan to Harriott, Flat Rock*

Columbia Wednesday  
[Feb. 17]

. . . the Bee Sale is really amusing. . . . Milnor, who conducts this big swindle, before the war was almost a pauper—now he has—for one item of the enormous fortune he has amassed—70 shares of the Bee Stock, worth each from 25 to 30 thousand dollars—he is consequently a little beside himself, and above his place. The other day a lady who had bought largely at the Sale, found on reaching home that she had considerably underpaid the clerk—the next morning she honestly—(I say



*honestly* because what used to be considered common honesty is getting to be a most uncommon virtue—) elbowed her way through the crowd, and squeezing up to Milnor's desk began, pocket book in hand: "I have come to get you to rectify a mistake which"—He cut her short with: "We never rectify mistakes here, Madam." "Indeed, do you mean that you never rectify *any* mistakes whatsoever?"—"None whatever." "Ah—then I need not pay you the \$200 which by your clerk's miscalculation yesterday, I still owe you—Good morning." And away she went—I should think with a delightful sensation—it is so pleasant to make a shopman pay for impertinence. We hear the "Agency" is to be open here permanently—so you can send for your calicoes at your leisure. . . .

Columbia—Thursday  
[Feb. 25/26]

. . . when I told Milnor I wanted 20 lbs. of sugar—10 for myself and 10 for my sister—what do you think he asked? If I lived in the same house with her! and if we eat at the same table! because, if we *did*, he really could not think of letting us *each* have 10 lbs! I was very much tempted to tell him we could not drink out of the same cup of tea because we quarreled like cat and dog, and took our meals in opposite corners of the room—but, thinking that might not be ladylike, I accepted the 10 lbs. and walked meekly away. I live, however, in hope of revenge! Ella, who is perhaps more sensitive to impertinence than I, vows she will perish outside before she will go into the place again—but I mean to go persistently until I get everything I want. The other day there was a woman in the crowd with a child in her arms—we all said: "What possessed the creature to bring a child to such a place?" and set her down for a fool—but, as soon as the door opened, one of the Agents bawled out: "Serve that lady with the baby first!" instantly there was a scramble for "the baby"—And the unhappy little thing was dragged about from one to another until it was nearly torn limb from limb. The difficulty of shopping is greatly increased by the prevailing excitement about counterfeit notes—people talk much more about the currency than the War—and it seems we are to be very much worried for months to come between the old and new "issues"—everyone is for holding on to their "Fives"—and getting rid of their "Hundreds"—at the Bee they give *no change*—if you require it, you must take Windsor soap, or Soda—or—Salts—Epsom! Truly we live in droll days! . . . I hear the liberal people of Boston have made up the splendid sum of \$12,000 (in greenbacks!)—the interest to be applied to Mrs. Carson's support during her life—the principal to be

expanded on a monument to her father's \* memory at her death—inasmuch as he died a staunch Union man—among the faithless faithful only he. I hope he will *rise* against it—for his friends say his sentiments toward the so-called "Unionists" were precisely the reverse of his love for the Union. . . .

*Harriott to Susan, Columbia*

Flat Rock March 4th

. . . We have had quite an exciting day. A division of cavalry passed by—4 or 5000 strong. Part of the morning we spent at the gate gazing at them, and the rest of the time entertained six who at various times straggled in. They were all Georgians and Alabamians. A motley looking crew. I did not wonder that the Yankees who habitually judge by the eye, despised their fighting power before they tried them. The higher officers rode first. They uncovered as they passed Isabella and Alice, and one of them . . . presented "the respects of Gen. Morgan" (I think tho' not the hero) or "Martin," on the part of his brigade. All that came in were very pleasant—they say that Longstreet did retreat to the neighbourhood of Greenville, afraid of his communications being interrupted by the Yankees, who had been reinforced. They believe that they are going to join Johnston. They had six cannon and quite an artillery train. Certainly Southern men are born with the instinct of gentlemen. These looked very common, yet their voices were so gentle and their manners so courteous, and they talked with quick intelligence. One of them said "Oh! how I should like to stay here a day or two and rest" in such a wistful manner. Mrs. Baring had 20! over there. Her meat was exhausted, and she had some quite amusing scenes with the men. We are at present in a state of disagreeable corn uncertainty. Mr. Farmer sends us word he cannot send us another ear! And what are we to do! As I tell Mama I have never heard of genteel people starving, so I suppose something will turn up, and we have sent to ask Mr. Farmer's advice on the subject. I heard that Dr. Hanckel will probably have to go down next week on this account. So many soldiers passing through have cleared the country of provisions. As we were looking at the soldiers an old man passed us on his way from the mill and said "I suppose you have come to see the *calvary* ma'am" and added, "Its a sad sight for us. They will leave us nothing to eat." We have just had such a kind note from Mr. Farmer, promising to do his best, and at any rate to divide his corn with us. . . . Friday—Today the soldiers are busy impressing horses. Our coachman

\* James L. Petigru.

being warned, discreetly hurried home, instead of going to bring Harry back. Mr. Trenholm also rushed home on hearing it. Only think of their having carried off his corn, which he has been refusing to sell to the neighbourhood at any price. All kinds of soldier anecdotes are going the rounds. Only think of Mr. Lowndes locking up his gate and putting all his corn in his daughter Caroline's room, at the risk of breaking through the ceiling, whilst every one else was entertaining all who claimed their hospitality. One of the soldiers seeing him exclaimed "Huddy daddy. Why are you not in the wars." And another addressed him as "Gills," (referring to his upright collar). It is said that 4,000 more will pass by tomorrow. . . .

*Susan to Harriott, Flat Rock*

Columbia—Thursday  
[Mar. 10/12]

. . . We are told that nothing has ever been known before like the conduct of the young ladies on Cooper River—the Whaleys, Moultries, Miss Ferguson and Helen Alston—They meet at each other's houses almost every night to dance (partners from town) and the older inhabitants of the neighbourhood are greatly scandalized at their proceedings. Papa declares he will order Emma to confine herself to the "slow side of the river". . . .

*Harriott to Susan, Columbia*

Flat Rock March 10

. . . Isabella says that I must give you the receipt for a very economical and favourite dish—potato soup—but let me warn you—on its demoralizing effects. It is but disguised hot water, but like vice, though first abhorred on that account, its victims finally end by preferring it to any thing else. Alice dined out the other day and had all kinds of delicious things to eat, but she confessed to having given a sigh to potato soup, and declared she had been so long debarred from luxuries she found she could not enjoy them! but to the receipt—a small piece of beef or a little piece of bacon two inches square—hot water—potatoes peeled, and boiled in it, and then taken out and passed through the colander, and re-added—seasoned with herbs, pepper and salt, any scraps of vegetables I should think an improvement. Isabella says the bacon is boiled in the water for a long time the potatoes only put in an hour before dinner. Think of Louisa King's having entertained the other day fifty officers and men. Every thing she had she gave them—their own dinner, all her salt

fish, salt beef, etc. and dozens of eggs. Our corn difficulty is solved for the present for fifty gold dollars we are to have fifty bushels of corn. We hope to make it last two months and after that—well something will turn up, that unfailing source of consolation. . . .

. . . What is the true story of the Little Davids. Who invented them. Cousin Lizzie gave us a romantic account of Dr. Ravenel thinking of a barrel, and immediately inventing a torpedo boat—he then unfolded his plans to Beauregard who expressed himself highly delighted ending with “Go ahead—I give you *carte blanche* as to expense.” Speaking of it to some gentleman as Dr. Ravenel’s boat, he laughed and said “Not Dr. Ravenel’s.” He then said that Mr. Stoney and two others had designed and I think he said begun the boat and only applied to Dr. Ravenel for some scientific facts—as the exact resistance of water to a given surface, etc. They applied for the steam machine for heating shot belonging to Fort Sumter. . . .

*Susan to Harriott, Flat Rock*

Columbia—Thursday  
[Mar. 19]

. . . As to “the true story about the little David”—both Hal and Dr. Ravenel told me all about it at the time of the attempt against the “Iron-sides”—as well as I remember, it was that Theodore Stoney, Dr. Ravenel, and some others, about a year ago, happened one evening to be talking of torpedoes. Dr. R. said it had often occurred to him that a boat built on the pattern of the Winans Steamer in Baltimore would be peculiarly well-adapted for the purpose of attacking the fleet with torpedoes, and went on to mention all the advantages such a boat would unite. He was thinking it over after he went to bed, and recalling the descriptions of the Winans boat which he had read, I believe, in the “Scientific American.” The next day Mr. Stoney called, and told him he too had been thinking over what had been said, and wished Dr. Ravenel would undertake to build such a boat as he had described. Dr. R. said “certainly, if you will undertake to get me a month’s furlough from the Hospital in Columbia.” Soon after he left town, he heard from Mr. Stoney that the furlough was secured, and during the month of May he was at Stoney Landing, his plantation on Cooper River, where he superintended the building of the “Little David.” I think, by his own negro carpenters. He was recalled here, however, before it was quite finished, and turned it over to Mr. Stoney, who promised to procure the engine and have all completed. Hal said they had heard nothing of it for months, and had

nearly forgotten its existence, when Alfred Ravenel in a letter mentioned that the Segar-boat was ready for service and would go out the first favourable night to attack the fleet—a few days afterwards came the news of poor Glassell's attempt. I did not know that Gen. Beauregard had had ought to do in the matter, and it is certain that people constantly call it "Ravenel's boat." Hal's great fear was that her husband would go out in it, which he told me he was anxious to do. He said, too, that if they had followed his directions the attempt, he believed, would have been perfectly successful—he had urged them to depress the torpedo, so as to have as great a weight of water as possible above it, and also to pin down every piece of old iron used as ballast, that it might not be displaced when the shock of the explosion came—it was neglecting this, you remember, which made the boat become unmanageable—a piece of iron which was loose having got into the machinery. She went out again not long ago—but the torpedo failed. . . .

. . . Thank you for the potato dough receipt—but recommending us to eat potatoes now instead of something else reminds me of the French princess who wondered why the peasantry did not eat white bread when they could not get brown! We have not had potatoes for months, and regard them as a first class luxury, entirely beyond our reach.

*Harriott to Susan, Columbia*

Flat Rock March 27  
Easter Sunday Evening

. . . After Johnny went today we had the honour of entertaining 19 of the Hampton Legion. Certainly Carolinians are a peculiar people. Instead of straggling and going to the different houses, these men marched quietly along and those who came in, only did so because the children gave them most pressing invitations, and they stipulated that they were not to be asked into the house because really they were not fit to be seen! They were so gentle courteous and intelligent that the children were delighted with them. How like boys they are. The poor fellows had been marching steadily for five days, through snow, rain and wind, ice everywhere. Numbers of them had their feet so frost bitten that they could not wear their shoes, but marched bare foot through the snow—they looked worn and exhausted as if they could hardly get along. Cousin Izard said it was such a painful sight he would not look at them and yet there was not a word of complaint. They joked and laughed and "chaffed" one another as they wearily walked along. One of them told the children that no matter how tired he was he would walk 20 miles

just to set his feet on the soil of So. Carolina that they were frantic to get back to the dear old State! Langdon says that they are a very superior set of men to all we have seen before. I should like so much to have seen them pass by particularly the W. L. Infantry in which there are only 25 men now they told Langdon, and I daresay those are not the original members. Langdon saw the flag but it was furled.

*Susan to Harriott, Flat Rock*

Columbia Monday

[March 28]

. . . The gay people in Charleston are having a very gay time, it seems. We hear of a French play at the Rhett's—acted by amateurs—Miss Elise performing the part of a fairy! Also, that the officers from New Orleans, being strongly urged by “a party of young ladies” to dance the “Cancan” for their amusement, consented to do so on condition that the “ladies” would assemble at their (the Officers’) house to witness the performance. This was agreed to, and the entertainment came off accordingly at the Bachelor establishment in very *high* style. Perhaps you saw the Cancan at the Gardens in Paris. I saw it on the Stage there once, and have been trying ever since to forget that I ever did see anything so purely disgusting. Lise told me yesterday she had just had a letter from Dolly, who said they were going on a party to Fort Sumter—in row-boats, in the evening. But the nights have been so stormy lately, I doubt if they have been able to do so. . . .

*(To be continued)*