Con. May August 20th 1846.

My dear brother & sister

I promised yesterday to write a long letter, and to redeem my promise begin one this morning, to which I shall perhaps add a little daily until an opportunity occurs of sending it down to Concord. This is that indeed, the only way of writing in this hot climate where one feels no disposition to sit up longer than half an hour at a time.

The encroaching effect of the constant dry con-tinued heat in these parts upon the natives than foreigners, for they are really incapable of any powerful exertion, and except an hour or two of morning work, appear to spend their time in lounging & smoking. The people of Maine, both men & women, are remarkably good looking. Yesterday I saw coming from Church one of the most beautiful faces to be seen anywhere, and to match it a figure walk perfectly graceful. No where in our Country could you find a village of 200 inhabitants containing so much beauty, male or female. Nor is it for their habit of lying, or their total disregard of modesty. I should like the Mexicans exceedingly as an example of the latter defect, as well as to account in some degree for the beauty, grace of their persons. I may mention also, the children to the age of 10 yrs, their discipline entirely without clothing, so that their movements are peculiar.
are perfectly uninhabited. This is situated on a hill of moderate height above the level of which runs a creek which at the distance of two miles empties into the Rio Grande. Its several directions from one point to the others are higher hills of limestone, from whose summits the views are extensive and beautiful, which we enjoy the more as most of the country that we have hitherto been in is a dead, uninteresting level. The hill on the other side of the creek completely commands the town, i.e. at cannon shot, for Spaniards, but with their exception it is the finest place I have ever seen. The hills of the houses, found of stones on mountains, are very thick, and are either flat, and also found of stones mortared laid in heavy joints. The town is laid out on the usual plan, with a large Plaza of about acres, in the centre, and streets running at right angles to each other. We arrived here about 10 a.m. in the morning after a very hot march, and found our way to the Plaza formed in line opposite the Governor's Court-room, and went in to inform him that we came as friends, and would be obliged to him to find the necessary quarters for our troops. An excellent building has been chosen as the Plaza, which he now occupy. It is a heavy stone structure forming two sides of a square, one of which faces the Plaza. The other runs back on a street leading to from the other part of the town.
The first idea is for our Third floor and staircase. The stairs are high, the rooms are long. The guard chases this horn and goes up a stone stair case through the building to the roof of the one story part on which the door of our room opens. From this other stone steps lead to the top of our room, the most commanding position but one in the plaza, and from which the view is beautiful. Next to us is the Church built about 60 yrs ago by the Spaniards. Opposite the Court House, a one storey stone building with a big arched portico in front; the three sides of the square is filled up by private dwellings. Since ejected the ice of the Padre, somewhat, in this way, coming from our interpreter that his house would perhaps answer for a Hospital, I went to look at it. The owner of the house is the brother of the priest refused to open the doors, so to make the best of it, I jumped in at the windows, and found inside a bacy of girls who fled in all directions not understanding my good looks a bright buttons. I thought as absurd badly for their good taste to act in that way. Being looking into the room to which most of them had fled, I made them a low bow, at which the poor frightened creatures casted peacefully, and by "Becos, Senorita" I jumped out as quick as I came in and headed to meet them further but the padre caught my interpreter and so abused him that he had to complain to the Alcalde. At the Catholic school in Philadelphia the priests are so suspicious
Altar not seen a female clerk in chambermaid is allowed within the walls, but here public prayer and mass require such a sacrifice of comfort—mercy for the sake of appearances, and it should be remembered that public opinion on such subjects when Rome's influence predominates might consistently rule their princes to require of them more stringency than anywhere else. — The Church here is a remarkable building, both externally and within. In its piers are three large bells which accord admirably but ring at so many different hours of the day that the music becomes sometimes quite a nuisance. If its altar, if its walls and ceiling are much richer, though nearly as tasteful as those of any church at Como. It was, which surprised me much, a very sweet-toned organ, the wood of which sounding through the lofty and dimly lighted aisles are calculated to produce a thing surpassing upon the ancient imaginations of such a primitive people: people who are more children in knowledge, expectations in feeling, and from the violence of their passions, are naturally disposed to accept a religion which puts almost no restraint upon their inclinations, and accepts true outward penance as abundant satisfaction for the commission of any crime. — Happening to pass The Church during the grave if not so much as holy hour, to see if, and when the ceremonies, infinity more showing if any that you have been here one, I entered the church as the congregation moved out. A few belugas or choristers remain kneeling along the floor before different images, and their appearance, aide by
the graceful Mantilla was very striking. Each a long drapery was fastened to encumber the eyes of the Northern Barbarians; we were some requested to kneel the church as ordinary but the Padre & the ladies were allowed to remain, though from some they glanced we did flatter the fancy that the fact that the priest and at least two or three were to have been to hear the confession... The Calaboose or Prison is just back of the Court House; it's been gated a heavy manacle I managed to unlock once but do not do it until you hear the whispering. As I call the Padre Tuesday it was that. The officers although much fatigued by their watch were a portion of them about to be ordered to carry our Commissary items into the structure. I stepped up to Capt. Benton recommended that as the soldiers were tired he should call out the prisoners to do our work for us. He approved the plan, and it was carried out, one of our sentinels standing by to shoot any who should attempt to escape. Unfortunately for us there were but few prisoners, but we kept them at work till they finished our task for us. The very small tree ulipus as I come to see the utmost precautions for our safety. We were told that nothing is accompanied by a mounted guard, but you are not to infer from this that the disposition of
The inhabitants appear unfavourable in the contrary to our appearances—so, we may infer that to our presence. They are nearly indifferent, on the most external only a slight feeling of distrust—which we hope soon to overcome. I went this morning to visit the town school, an institution which we did not expect to find in this part of the world. The scholars number 150, are all taught to read and write Hebrew. This is an advanced state of education which is perfectly unaccountable, for as the country is destitute of newspapers, and has few books, their accomplishment can seem but little purpose. In a Protestant community similarly situated as regards books, a steady instruction would be found in the necessity of reading the Bible; but that is a book probably unknown here by anyone in this place.

August 4th. This afternoon a trader, contrabandist, expects to start for Company, and I take the opportunity to send this letter to home, that it may reach you in safety. Seriously, hope, as you must feel some anxiety to learn the particulars of my situation. Tell Mother that we are now living very well, and that my health is better vigorous than in the last few weeks than it has been for years. Bernard asks...
Pt. Peabull 11 th inst.  

Mr. Charles M. Fleet  
Son of Andrew M. Fleet  
Philadelphia Pa.  

MIGHT BE COVER  
70 AUG 3 - LETTER