

Arlington 12 July 1853

My dear Mrs. Elliott

I have more than once commenced a letter to you, but the sadness of my feelings has always taken from me the power of expressing aught but grief at your overwhelming affliction. I heard of your being in New York & could not go to you. I know how you suffered & felt I could afford no relief. I had then had no hope of doing more than intruding in your Sorrow. But God knows how I have sympathized in your distress & mourned over the desolation of your feelings. May he give you strength to bear what he has imposed, & change your grief to joy at the prospect of an everlasting union in happiness & Heaven!

Surrounded as I am by the effects of a like calamity, I can truly realize the full weight & influence of yours. My thoughts have therefore more frequently reverted to you & your household, & I have felt anew the anguish of each – I rejoice you have near you all in this world that can afford you consolation. Your dear Mother, precious children, brothers & sisters – may you all be spared to each other many years & meet at last in a better & purer world.

I have come to give such effort as I can to those requiring my care. Mr. Custis has promised to return with us to West Point – I am expecting Mary & Fitzhugh the last of the week who desire to visit the grave of their Gd Mother – The two little children I brought with me. Unless summoned to the Point sooner, I shall not return before Aug, when I expect to carry with me the whole household – Arlington will not then be more desolate, than it now is to our feelings –

Please present me kindly to your Mother & all your family – Your sister E is again called to mourn over the affliction of a dear friend. The intelligence of the death of Judge Glenn will have reached you before this – Mrs. Lee joins me in kindest regards to yourself and children & in sincere sympathy for your great loss – I remain truly & as ever yours

R. E. Lee

Mrs. Margaret Elliott