



Transcription of the correspondence of Lucy Chase, January 15, 1863- December 1863 (Box 2, Folder 13).

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January 15, 1863 Lucy Chase to home

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[In pencil] 1st Thos will forward to Eliza Eliza to Charles Carles will lend to our contr[aband] society and then keep Charles please find my rubber sandals and take care of them. I left them in the pass way, ask Ellen & tell me.

Craney Island Jany 15th 65.

To our folks at home Sarah and I are comfortably established at Dr Brown's—in a house somewhat lately occupied as head-quarters by Union officers but built, and occupied, by rebels, while Norfolk was in the hands of the enemy. Like other head-quarters of the enemy, the house puts to shame our army architecture. It is made really picturesque by wooden awnings over the doors and windows. (The awnings and overhanging roofs are designed as protections against the heat.) There are six rooms upon the ground floor and three in the attic. Floors, walls, and ceilings are of Southern pine, giving an air of substantial comfort to the house, which plaster and paper cannot impart. I am writing by the light of a candle held in a candle-stick from Genl Harrison's estate. From the window near me can be seen the estate of one of the Wise family; and a few moments ago I sat writing in the room with (Colored) members of the Washington and Custis families; pretty, and neat girls, and good sewers. I asked them if they could read, they all answered, "No" and very eagerly took their first lesson from me. Waifs of rebel furniture from the region roundabout beautify the parlor, which wears a carpet with becoming pride. A large room and two or three bureau-drawers, have been placed at our disposal, and we have the promise of a stove. We see, as yet, no prospect of starving. Chickens, wild-duck, oysters, and Baltimore mutton have already found their way to our table. Relishes, and other light luxuries, do not abound here. Dr. Brown gave 75 cts. some time ago in Norfolk for half a peck of apples. Mrs. Brown said they tasted too strong of silver. The Dr. heard of two barrels of apples, which had been forwarded to him from the North, but they were lost at Fortress Monroe. The climate here is very mild. Roses blossom out of doors in the neighborhood, through the whole winter. A thin/coat of ice has formed but twice this winter. The Dr. doubts the summer season being unhealthy. Craney island is six miles from Norfolk, with which it twice holds daily communication, at government expense. At one point, the river is fordable to the near shore, which is sparsely peopled. There, the Dr finds his milk, and there—but five miles distant—he found rebel roofs for his negro barracks. Government aids him very grudgingly. He says he has to fight for every stick of wood which he obtains for the poor creatures. He says Genl Dix lends a ready ear to his every request, and aids him in every way within his power; but even his ability is restrained. The island comprises 12 acres. No opportunity is offered for extended agricultural labors, but the Dr designs planting to the very water's edge. He hopes, when we have made the women good sewers, to get an army-contract for their needles, and, then, with the mines of wealth in his oyster-beds he hopes his community will be self-supporting. He says the N.Y. friends have promised to build him a school-house, and a meeting house. He was delighted with the representatives of that body, with Wm Cranwell particularly. He thought him particularly agreeable, and very handsome. The negroes at Newport News, and other districts in this neighborhood, were recently gathered here, by government order, and, many of them coming as

they [in pencil at bottom of page: Give Sarah Pope her note in second day afternoon, unless she calls before] did from their Master's plantations, feel their deprivations, and look upon Craney Island as a slave-pen. The grumblers see no reason why they could not have been left as they were; ask passes to Norfolk, and elsewhere, that they may find work and wages but the masses see the promise of the dawn. Dr. Bn. says it is nonsense to talk of the negroes as being (now) a superior race, and already fitted for freedom. He says they cannot, as yet, compete, by any means, with white laborers; and to talk of them after the manner of ignorant, enthusiastic philanthropists, is giving undue praise to the barbarous teachings of slavery. We are to give them a chance! which they have never had. At one of their prayer-meetings, which we attended, last night, we saw a painful exhibition of their barbarism. Their religious feeling is purely emotional; void of principle, and of no practical utility. The Dr says they will rise from prayer and lie or steal, if the way opens therefor. The brother who knelt in prayer had the friendly sing-song. His sentences were incoherent, and aimless—"ohuh Lorder! this afternoonugh, hear our prayerer! this afternoonugh! And dontuh let usuh take helluh by stormuh! this afternoonugh! in heavenuh! Save usuh our father in thisuh trying worlduh, and let usuh go upuh to theeuh for Jesus Christ's sakuh amen!" They must know what is Right! in order to worship aright the God of right. Robbed of their all, in slavery, they felt, instinctively, a right to what their masters said they had no claim; and, checked in all directions, they let their passions loose in all directions. The Dr has a guard of ten soldiers, to restrain the negroes from trespassing upon the neighboring shores. He says one of the negroes swore, for a quarter of an hour, that he had not stolen a hog while all the time the hog was in a bag upon his back. A boy named Friday gave him his name. "Friday is it," said the Dr. "Yaaz, Zir, Friday," was the reply. "You said your name was Saturday, did you?" said the Dr. "Yaaz Sir." "You are sure its Saturday, are you?" "Yaas, Sir." He says the habit of the Negro is to say whatever he thinks his interrogator wishes him to say. Dr Brown has already won my respect-and faith, he seems to meto be in every way fitted for the difficult task he has undertaken; and I am sure he will inspire as well as direct whatever efforts Sarah and I shall make.

He sees the negro as he is, and knowing his wants can administer to them. I fully believe he possesses the power to touch the secret springs of their consciousness with such skill that success will follow his efforts to direct, control, and educate them. He is intelligent, honest, and kind; and he truly loves his work. His wife also is intelligent and pleasant and heartily sympathizes with her husband in his work, though she is unable to cooperate with him, as three young children claim her care. Dr Brown served in the army for a year or more as a surgeon, but he has no time for practice on the island. A kind-hearted army surgeon, with an assistant, is established here, and one or two other white-men are employed as heads of different departments of labor. At twilight, the heads of families flock to the wharf to obtain their daily allowance of wood, which they carry, either balanced on their heads, or swinging under their arms. In squads of ten, led by a colored man, they go for their wood, and for their rations (of meal, bread, bacon, and coffee.) Each hundred reports through a colored leader to the white head of the body-who, in his turn, reports to Dr Brown. Two women died this morning. Dr B. says the old rate of mortality amongst the negroes was 1/4 of 1 pr cent, but it is reduced here to 1/14th. In the lying-in hospital is an old woman who has a certificate from her master testifying to her superior qualities as a mid-wife. She says she only lacks five of making seven hundred children

she has helped into the world. Slaves from Hampton are expected daily. (Government negroes) Genl Viele unfortunately told the Negroes, before the issuing of the President's Proclamation, that they were free; and he was obliged to take back his gift. Many negroes, in this neighborhood, came to the Dr to ask him if there was no hope for them. He replied, "What should you do if you knew that you could become free by going to yonder point?" They took the hint, and three hundred went to Fortress Monroe. Tonight a negro man lifted his hat to Sarah and said "Missuh, please miss-uh, may I ask a favor of you, Miss-uh?" Sarah expected to be begged for clothing, but when she said Yes, the man said—Will you be so kind, Miss as to make me a copy of a b c?" I just heard one of the women in the kitchen, say "You can make a hundred out of any number under the sun, over and over again. Two and two and two, ever so many twos, or any number you have a mind." Her listeners seemed incredulous and, inquired, "Fives? Sixes?" The women are mostly field-hands, and are entirely ignorant of domestic duties. Mrs Brown took one into her kitchen, as a cook, at Newport News. (by the way, the woman came in through the window) and found, after having ordered her to make a fire, that she had made it in the oven. Dr Brown designs serving uncooked rations in the future. Skill, neatness, economy and self-independence will be developed thereby. Sarah and I shall rule the roost, for awhile. The Dr expects great moral results from the inevitable calling into exercise of dormant in-born faculties, which must result from any, the smallest degree of independence. There are now eighteen hundred negroes here; and they continue to arrive. They come almost wholly destitute of clothing, covered with vermin, and extremely ignorant, and (incompetent for noble, self-originating action of mind or body, uneducated in principle too as they are they ought to enter freedom through the path of moral-restraint. The Dr gives them short practical lessons whenever he drops into one of their prayer meetings. The stir and bustle of a village is about us on this little island. It is but a few weeks since the Dr came here from Newport News, and he has already given giant energies to a giant work. He is now building stables for his mules, adding a wing to his hospital, building more barracks, and looking into the future for his people. Many of the negroes are in tents left here by the soldiers. One brick chimney serves for two tents; the fire-place is in the center of the tent, a mere earth-trench, with an underground flue. We made entrance-calls at several tents, last night. No candles are furnished the negroes, but their soft pine-fires give a cheerful light; and, when any woman wishes to sew, she lights a pitch-pine knot, or burns cloth in heated fat. In some of the barracks we found the men and women playing games; in others singing and dancing; and in the meeting we attended, we heard really good music. "I belong to the band, Hallelujah!" is very musical. When singing that exultant, joyful air, the women swayed back and forth, and their dusky faces, and uncouth figures seemed born of the flaming fire-light. Cloudy, Shorty, and Volunteer are already acquaintances of ours; but we are not as yet like skilled in negro-talk. Mrs. B's little girl she said last night, "They have dun called Father to supper." Private. I must tell you a word about our journey here. The Superintendent of the Contrabands at Alexandria, a hard-faced man whom Sarah fancies to be earning his way to heaven by sufferance—both on his own part, and on the part of all who come in contact with him—found us out, and entertained? us all the way to Baltimore. He was a whirlwind of complaints. He complained of the drunken idle rascals who live on the public treasury; complained of Miss Wilbur, who pays six dollars a week for her board, and does nothing because she's afraid of the smallpox, complained of Friends, saying—"when the N.Y. Committee visited

Alexria he was sick and they could not see things in a favorable light. He said, "You know that Quakers always think if any-thing's the matter of any-body they are certainly going to die." He pumped us very hard, but found our wells dry. Finally, he found that we were friends. "Oh! that's very nice, You are just the ones to go out." But, we remembered the tone in which he had spoken of friends just before. Narrow and sectarian the man seemed to be. At Baltimore we were obliged to get passes of the Provost Marshal-"Guards" were (in them) requested to let us pass "without interruption or molestation." We visited a well-ordered hospital in Baltimore. The soldier who conducted us about it said Union feeling is as strong in Baltimore as abolition feeling is at the North. The two I suppose he thought could not be united. On a dirty boat we went to Fortress Monroe, were snubbed by the black, haughty chambermaid; and were told in the morning by a very polite mail-agent that "He was very sorry we retired so early, as he had some very nice whiskey-punch prepared for us." But two or three other ladies were on board. There were many military and naval officers on board. Fortress Monroe with Bank's outlying fleet, the Rip-raps, the water alive with wild ducks; the air made white as by falling snow flakes. With an English iron-clad entering the port as a prize all speaking of war and the seat of war impressed me as I was never impressed before. At the Fortress we took the beautiful city of Hudson for Norfolk. The officers of the Mass 48th were on board. We wished there had been Nine of the forty instead of eight. At Norfolk we had no time to call on Gen Viele as the Island boat was awaiting us. In fifty minutes we [mutilated] will be sure and tell [Artie?] Gordon that there is no [?] here.

January 19, 1863 to Major General John Dix

Report on number of "contrabands" in the camp and statistics concerning their employment and support.

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Craney Island, Jan. 19th, '63

To Major General John A Dix.

Commanding Department of Virginia

Sir:

I herewith transmit the statistics concerning the contrabands under my care. The greatest care has been taken to insure their accuracy.

Whole No. of Contrabands upon the Island.	1625		Average Length of time Employed	2.16/29
No. of Males over 16, and under 50 yrs.	212		Average Am't of wages recd per month	15 cts.

No. of Females over 16, and under 50 yrs.	380		No. of Women & Minor Children whose husbands and fathers are employed by government	401
No. of Children under 16 years	689		Average length of time those upon the island have been supported by government	4 Months 27 days
No. of Males and Females over 50 years	144		No who can read	47
No. of Males Field Hands	299		No belonging to Churches	355
No. of Males Mechanics	32		No of Blacks	1500
No. of Females Field Hands	478		No of Mulattoes	125
No. of Females who can sew Army Clothing	500			
No. of Males upon the Isd. who have worked for Govt.	200			
Average length of time employed	3.39			
Average amount of wages recd per month	16 1/3 cts.			
No of Women upon the Island who have worked for government	145			
How employed				

From the above statistics, their account with the government, estimating their rations at 14 cents each, would stand as follows--

Deduct from the no. upon the Island (1625) the no. of wives and minors (401) whose husbands and fathers are at work for government, and their remain 1224.

Whole no. rations for 1224 for four months and twenty seven days 179928.

Sot 179928 rations, estimated at 14 cents each \$25189.92.

678 months work performed by male contrabands at \$10 per month. \$6780

370 months work performed by female contrabands in hospitals at \$6 per month 2,220

Value of rations for males and females while thus employed at 14 cts. each	<u>\$4401.60</u>
Deduct am't rec'd by above frm govt	13401.60

Males 675 mon's 16 1/3 cts. per month	\$110.74
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Females 370 " at 6 cts. " "	<u>\$55.50</u>
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\$166.24

13233.36

Balance due govt	11054.56
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It appears, from the above statistics, that one hundred and forty-four are above fifty years of age, and six-hundred and eighty-nine are below sixteen: showing that a large proportion of those upon the

Island are physically disqualified for labor. The disproportion of laborers among them is due to the able bodied single men having gone with the army. Had these remained, in the same proportion s they came within our lines, it is probable the community would be self supporting. The statistics also show that the larger proportion of the population, both male and female, have been accustomed to field-labor.

The able-bodied males upon the Island are employed in catching oysters, in assisting the Carpenters in the construction of barracks, and in chopping wood for the use of the Island. When the weather becomes warmer, probably about the middle of March, they can catch, with a good line, all the fish that can be consumed upon the Island; enabling us to dispense with nearly the entire meat ration.

The females could be employed in agriculture.

On the opposite side of the Creek, and within three and one half miles of the Island, are about five-hundred and seventy-five (575) acres of land suitable for cultivation, owned by notorious Secessionists who have not taken the oath. The Land is divided as follows:

One Farm of one hundred acres, owned by Luther Ballerd. (Owner living upon it.)

One Farm of seventy-five acres owned by John Henry Bedgood (owner upon it.)

One Farm of one hundred and seventy-five acres (owner with the Secessionists.)

One Farm of one hundred and fifty acres, owned by Cornelius Bedgood. (Owner living upon it.)

Besides this land there are other large tracts owned by less active Secessionists, who have not taken the oath.

The above Lands are of about the average quality of the Farms on this side of the Nansemond River. They are low and sandy.

Without manure they will yield, on an average, about twelve and one half bushels of corn per acre.

With manure, they will produce the first year, a "paying crop" of Sweet Potatoes, Irish Potatoes, Melons, Cabbages, Turnips, Tomatoes, &c.

One Female field-hand would cultivate two acres, which would provide enough to support her, after paying for the manure.

The necessary outlay to make this land available for the support of the Contrabands would be: --
One mule, with cart and plough, for every twenty acres. One Hoe for each "hand" employed, and
12 lbs. Guano per acre, for all crops except corn.

Farming operations should be commenced at once.

The women upon the Island are competent sewers and could readily manufacture 500 Army
Shirts or Pants per day.

January 20 1863 Lucy Chase to home

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[in pencil]: 2nd letter

Eliza will send to Charles

Dear home folks: Every-thing about us indicates that we are in the Army.” We realize, too, that we are somewhat exposed to the Dangers incident to “the state of war.” A few days ago Norfolk was excited by the rumor that Corcoran’s legion was cut up, and that the rebels were marching upon Suffolk. Dr. Brown said if the report was true nothing could save us and we must be prepared to leave for the Fortress at a moments notice. The rebels are now within fifteen miles of us in one direction, within twenty in another and within thirty in another. We are under the protection of Heaven alone: neither Fortress Monroe nor Norfolk avail us Except as places of refuge; and if the rebels once reach Suffolk, they can easily march across the country, ford the river, and retain possession of their much coveted fugitives. The Dr doubled the guard the night of the alarm: stationed them on the ramparts that they might keep peace without, instead of within—according its wont—and gave us a long candle! in place of our short one! to take to our room! From the roof of our one-storied house we can see Norfolk, Portsmouth, Newport News, Hampton, and Sewall’s Point. Indeed, we can see them all from the ground. The Merrimac went down near the island, and the Dr kept his large family warm for some days, with its iron-clad-beams. He has promised Sarah and me some work-boxes from its wood. Bits of the Congress and the Cumberland stand in the room-corners in the shape of canes.” The blockade” reaches within three miles of the island and we hear it spoken of almost hourly as a line of demarcation. Craney Island is the only contraband depot in this military department now recognized by government, and it is under absolute military discipline. The clothing-depot is a room adjoining the Drs office, and as it cannot be warmed, it is sometimes necessary for us to arrange sewing for our women within his walls. An hour or two with him sets us whirling with the multifarious machinery of the various departments. His factotum comes bustling in, with his census list of numbers, pages, occupations, and former owners. The sergeant of the guard comes in to report his men, and to receive his orders. The Captain of the two island-steam-boats come and go: the mail comes in and then, as a natural consequence, white-faced-males flock after each with the same inquiry. Men detailed for carpentry-service in the island come to ask for passes to Norfolk or the Fortress or

come in to report their return there from the hospital. Drs kind-hearted-assistant, or mere-boy hurries in with a "requisition" upon his tongue's end from the Lying-in-hospital, stating, to Sarah and me that one woman is just confined, and that another is about to be and asking, with unblushing directness for the various articles needed by mother and child

Ever affcn Lucy 1st month 20th

A wagon passes the window, the guard gather about, lift the cover of a box which it contains and a stranger passes with the wagon to the wharf. The box contains the body of a soldier who was buried upon the island, and it is now reclaimed by a friend. One of the guard comes in with two colored men (still slaves), saying "Dr here are two men who crossed the river without passes." "What do you want" asks the Dr. "Massa told me to come over and ask the Dr ^Dr Huskins, the surgeon^ how much he asked for his visits." "And what do you want." "I want to know if the Dr. can come over and see my wife, she's afflicted—she's got something the matter of her leg." Then comes another slave with the written request from his master to borrow the Dr's horse and carriage. "So you have not left yet" says the Dr "No massa" "Is not your master afraid you will? Say [I?] "Reckon massa is" says the slave. Refugees find no immediate asylum here, as the island is under Gen. Dix's sole jurisdiction. Then comes a slave-holder for asking sugar, molasses, and vinegar, in exchange for which [2?] he gives farm-produce. The somewhat intelligent well-to-do-farmer thinks that "Between the North and the South he and his neighbors are badly off." Confederate money circulates here, of course, and the neighbors consider themselves specially lucky when they can get hold of U.S. currency. Now, and again, and almost perpetually, comes a black-face to the Dr's wooden window-pane. "Massa Dr. I—" "Not Massa, I'm not your master, you're not a slave now." "No, massa, but I'm so used to it"—The requests are of course, very various. "Please Dr can I have a pair of shoes, I've been here (meaning in the army) five months and none of our squad have had any clothes." Please Dr the fly to our tent needs mending." "Go to Mr Coleman," "go to Mr Marcus" or to whatever Mr is at the head of the Department within whose province lies the obligation to answer the demand. Yesterday, in compliance with an order to Gen. Dix, one of our boats went to Norfolk, and brought from there various government employed negroes to visit their families upon the island—a fact which would make sore the callous-hearted Herald—whose opinion that extra courtesy is shown the negro by government is echoed by many. Every one should know, and remember that most of the negro-men are in the employ of government and therefore deserve something more than mere protection from its hands. A son of the Herald was at Newport News at the time of the Negroes leaving there for Craney Island, and was the authority for the statement wh appeared in the Herald that "The negroes have been removed to Craney Island—They were accompanied by a quantity of white trash in the guise of missionaries." Yesterday, when the Negroes were coming from Norfolk the wind was high and the tide was low, and the boat ran aground. The fact was brought to our knowledge by [Shirly?] who came into the office, and said "She's dun blowed saah." One of the island-boats is a rickety tug—when it was bringing us here from Norfolk Sarah expressed some anxiety lest it should tug us into eternity. Our lone-island-living is spiced with many liabilities to mishaps. We were startled to our feet a few evenings ago, by a cry at our door "The house is on fire, the house is on fire." Men, maids, lords and ladies ran to the stairs with pitchers, pails, and tea-kettle. We extinguished the kitchen-fire and found the roof unharmed but we all soberly anticipate a serious conflagration some-day as each-room carries a stove-pipe

through the wood-work to the roof. Why don't Sarah Pope forward the chimney I ordered her? The census taken brought a little kidnapped negro to the office yesterday. Poor lone-fellow-his story made us sad. We were all convinced that he was kidnapped, when a child, in N.Y. and the Dr has written to Benj Tatum, hoping, thro' him, to get knowledge of the child's parents. It is very difficult to get at any truth through the negroes, particularly since their veracity succumbs under cross-questioning. The Dr thought, at first, that the boy might be repeating a lesson he had learned from his master. "You were playing marbles, were you?" "Yaas zuh." (The Dr was supposing a case) at Union Park on the wharf? "Yaaz zuh. (The boy had said he was on the wharf.) Fourteen years ago was it? "Yaaz" And you're seven year old now "Yaaz zuh." But there were some statements to which the boy tenaciously adhered. His father's name was always John,-and not Henry when the Dr Called it so; and he was very sure he was not playing marbles on the ice at the time he was kidnapped. A fact must be a fixed one in the memory; or the negro will almost surely incline to meet your expectations-with his yeas and his nays. First-Day evening. An order has just come to the house, from the office forbidding us to undress tonight. Our gun-boats have been seen pointing towards Norfolk, which has been in a state of more or less excitement for the past week. A steam-boat, which Dr Brown sent to Norfolk to look into the state of things, has returned, with the information that all the steam-boats about Norfolk keep on full head of steam; and that the Galena has opened her batteries towards Portsmouth,-with orders to destroy it if the rebels succeed in taking it. It is rumored that they have destroyed the telegraph-wires and rail-road this side of Suffolk thus cutting off our communication with Corcoran. Our volunteer is ordered to keep up its steam, through the night, and our pickets are to be sent a mile or two out on the main-land. This is war! A few nights ago we saw a large fire in Portsmouth, and from its size and long continuance we fancied that the rebels were destroying the town. The next day brought the news that the secessionists burned seven houses there. Today we saw, distinctly, from the housetop the (permanent) blockading squadron at the mouth of the James River. Second day, morning: the Dr has gone to Norfolk to accompany seventy-five able-bodied negroes ordered by the Quartermaster. The Dr thinks they may be wanted to remove the stores and he says if that is the case, we must move ourselves. Our kind-hearted young Drake, from the hospital, was in the office just now saying, "I shant sir an inch, and leave these poor creatures" "Neither will," the Dr said "I." In case of attack he intends to defend the island, so long as he can, and, when resistance is useless he will surrender. But, he says, if we are forewarned of the approach of an overwhelming force, it will be folly to remain, unable, as we shall be, either to defend ourselves, or the negroes. Drake brings the usual morning report of two or three deaths in the hospital, and one in the barracks. Consumption is sadly prevalent here. The African constitution is certainly very delicate; and the necessary exposure to which our half-clad people are subjected, when going for rations of wood and food, brings coughs and colds into every barrack. I want our good sewing societies to know that we have still nine-hundred unclothed fugitives, and are daily expecting two hundred more. We have great need of broad, coarse, shoes, of stockings, Dresses, coarse and stout, petticoats, and blankets. Our women are ready with their needles. Sarah and I have already employed eighty or ninety of them in the manufacture of beds, and today we shall give dress materials to some of the needy. We consider it feasible to unite study and sewing, so we hang our A.B.C. card upon the walls, and keep heads and fingers busy. For a few days, it has been very cold, and Sarah and I have shivered in the

barracks, which have unglazed windows and wide-open doors. We stand, all day long, having the choice between stretching in a bunk and standing on our feet. The N.Y. friends will soon build a mtg and school-house (in one) and then we shall be able to make ourselves and our women comfortable. The Dr has just returned, and says his men were wanted to unload stores, not to remove them. He says there is to be, today, a general movement along our whole coast. That we shall be safe unless our army should meet with reverses. Mrs Brown has taken out her travelling-dress, and says she shall put it in repair, in order to be ready for journeying. We are subject! to a very curious cook. It is evident that she has always been used to ruling the roost. She orders her fellow-servants, the children and ourselves. She ordered Sally about last night. "Come, I ant used to so much noise. Ise used to drawin a rockin-chair up to the fire, uh evenins, an bein waited on by my chillun." There is a great deal of aristocratic feeling amongst the negroes. Criticism upon manners is their acme of disparagement. "I dont know where Sally could uh bin raised. She hant got manners," said our cook. The secessionists left their sentiments behind them on our walls. Yesterday we found these words! "To the infernal Yankees." "We will never be conquered, as long as there is one man left in the sunny South the only land of the free, and home of the brave." Men and women here are greedy for tobacco. "I'd rather see some tobacco tonight than see my Savior," said one woman the other day. The Negroes have yet to learn to guard in seemly silence sacred things. One of our house-servants, struck with the beauty of a gay dress of Mrs Browns, said to her, "I should be ready to die, if I could get that dress!" Second-day evening. News has come from various sources tonight that the Merrimac, with five other small ironclads is again in the neighborhood of Newport News; that the rebels are this side of Blackwater, and that the "incompetent" Galena alone must meet the foe. All reporters say the excitement at Norfolk is intense. I have been listening for a half hour to a conversation between the Captain of the Volunteer, and various persons from Norfolk. They all think there is cause for alarm. "A new kind of parole they'd give us," said one. "We, the last of all people." The Dr says he shall take us to Baltimore, tomorrow; if things still look dark and if no opening lies that way he will take us to our opposite shore. The Dr thinks there is a feeling of humanity on shore, though there maybe no Union feeling. By the way, he is very much respected in the neighborhood on account of the good discipline he maintains here. The steamer from Norfolk has arrived. There are two or three Monitors there ready for the Merrimac!!!

[at bottom of first page] Ever affcy lucy 1st month 20th

January 23, 1863 Lucy Chase to Benjamin Fatham (no transcription)

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January 29, 1863 Lucy Chase to home

A long and very descriptive letter containing many stories of her own responsibilities and of how housing, work, and the distribution of clothing are organized. She also tells of many first-person encounters with the freedpeople touching on such topics as freedom, education, religion, work, life among the Custis slaves, and what slaves were told by plantation owners about northerners.

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Craney Island Jany29th

Dear home folks;

Having given my word, that our Contraband Society should hear from me, and having very little time at my command, I must ask Charles to lend the Society my last letter, and this also. I find these old fashioned sheets admirable incentives to my pen, which would, except for the inspiration of space, gladly end its labors at the foot of a sheet of [?] paper.

I must tell you at the outset, on the authority of Dr Brown, what Sarah and I are not doing. In reply to Mrs Viele's inquiry if we were sensible, the Dr said, "Oh, yes, I have not caught either of them trying to give a lesson in Music or Drawing yet." A fine commentary that on adorning the mind while the body is yet unclothed. By the way, we hear, from all directions that Gen. Viele and his lady will speedily call upon us. I recd today, a letter from Dr. Russell. He said Genl. Viele wrote to him that he regretted not seeing us when we were in Norfolk. He said he had made arrangements for us to pass a few days at the hotel in Norfolk while he came to Craney Island and [?] arranging pleasant quarters for us. He also wrote that he should come soon to see us. He has made the same statement to Dr. Brown twice, since he heard of our arrival. I felt that it was discourteous in us to come to call upon him. But, as I felt unauthorized to bid the steam-boat Captains await our pleasure, I could not command the necessary time.

You, of course, feel assured of our safety, we also feel assured that we dwell in the midst of alarms while we reign in this horrible place. Again, in the Dr's office, I heard two sea-captains and one pilot report a renewed excitement and anxiety in Norfolk, on account of the Monitor having been tugged into port, and that, too, soon after a supposed conflict reported by the sound of guns. We heard the guns here, and one of the Captains declared he saw the flashes of the guns. But no harm came to us and I believe to no one from that direction. Sarah and I still find work for our hands to do in the clothing room. We feel irresistibly impelled to work early, and late, until every refugee upon the Island has tasted one day of comfort, at least, in the shape of clothes. Hundreds are yet to make their first visit to the clothing-room. We have already distributed the large quantity of valuable material which came from Phila, and it is, even now, warming those it was sent to bless. We have not yet found one woman who cannot sew but fearing ingenuity might not be universal, we have cut the cloth before distributing it. I gave a long strip of gingham to one of Col Lee's slaves (from the whitehouse) the other day, supposing she would make from it an apron with a waist; but she appeared with a short, fancy apron and I asked her what it meant, she replied, "Oh, aprons with waists are out of fashion now." One of Col. Lee's slaves, bemoaning her isolation here, said, "If I stay on Craney Island all my days, I

shan't have a chance to wear out my clothes, and I know I shall keep coming back after I die to see after em!! I can't help being so fond of my clothes, twas born in me." Dresses made from bed-ticking are favorite week-day garments with the women. The Dr says, "Poor things, we can't blame them for cutting up their bed ticks, they are so comfortless." Mrs. Brown says, when the negro-women come here they almost universally wear upon their heads either Tubs or Boilers, whether their bodies are clothed or unclothed. I have just now given Dr. Brown the letter to read, and he continually exclaimed, Excellent! Capital! Pretty-good!" Your brother must know a great deal about these people" He expressed amazement when I said he did not, and said "Well, then he has a great deal of common sense." (I helped him to that conclusion by a remark I made.) The Dr repeated a proffer he made us a few days ago; he will give either of my brothers, who will come to see us, a free pass from Baltimore. He thinks if Tho's would speak two or three times to the negroes "He would do them a great deal of good." He was delighted with the potato-illustration, exclaiming, after reading it, "That's true, that's true!" And, as I also was satisfied with it, Alice is left in a cold minority.

A perfect mania for thread rages among our Islanders. "Please Maam give me some strands of thread," said woman after woman when she handed us her finished bed-tick. A man, too, who went as a messenger to our sewing-women, begged us for thread; saying, "I live all alone, and I have no one to take a stich for me." He pronounced himself a good sewer. Some-day I hope we can have a woman-overseer of the wardrobes of the solitary.

2d day Morning. We are, today, practicing homeopathically in the distribution of needles pins and thread. A quarter of a spool of cotton, one needle; and two pins! to a full grown woman! rolling no one in riches, but enabling the community to be shareholders in our limited stock of necessities for neatness. Such work, may seem to you more insignificant than measuring long lines of tape behind a counter, but based on such a course of action the closest calculation how to best meet the needs of the many, vital needs, too, it is surely, in my eyes, a noble work. A work, too, which would be beyond the ability of all to execute. When the good Dr. & Friends have given us our Meeting-house, School-house and work shop (in one) we can delegate some of the minor menial duties which now fall upon us.

Many long shawls have found their way here, and I have found five backs for each shawl. The colored women call each other "Ladies," but in the mouth of one who inquired our whereabouts, we were "the women who do the sewing." Dr. Brown expresses his anxiety lest we should overwork ourselves. He thinks we stand a "right smart chance" "to suffer, bleed and die" an end ardently desired by a good lady from Bridgeport, who left her husband and her house-keeping, and went as a nurse to Newport News (when the Dr. was in charge of a hospital there.) But, if our expectations are like hers, I trust we may like her be disappointed, though not in the same way:-- sickness sent her home.

The negro marriage-question puzzles the Dr. A negro man here wishes to retain, for his wife, a woman with whom he has lived happily for a year or more; but another woman upon the Island claims him for her husband, and does not give her consent to a separation; while he declares that his first. wife is very ill-tempered and that it is impossible to live with her. The Dr. intends to invite some clergyman to visit the Island to marry all who wish to be married, and to make legal the relation between those who have already married themselves. He wishes to impress the Negroes with the sacredness of the relation. A few nights ago, we had a wedding in our dining-

room; perhaps not a "sure enough" wedding. Indeed, the Dr doubting its legality, pronounced them man and wife "By virtue of the authority assumed by me." And, also sent with them to Norfolk, from whence the groom came, note suggesting the propriety of retying the knot. The bride was a very handsome mulatto, elegant and stately in her bearing. She is a great loss to the Island, having been its most ornamental animated feature. Her dress was always neat and brilliant, and she was always accompanied by a beautiful in child in beautiful colors.

A few nights ago, a negro man and two women stole the grave-diggers boat from the hospital, and then stole them selves away; and a few days ago five or six women stole some sheets from a box in a hall; and I was forced to aid in the examination of the culprits. Upon one I found a very suspicious looking petticoat but I could not identify the sheet. Two witnesses testified to the guilt of the accused, but neither the guard-house nor hunger brought the sheets to light. The women protested their innocence in the strongest terms. "If I was as innocent of my sins, as I am of those sheets, I should be sure I should go right home when I die," said one. The guard with their guns brought the women into the office where the Court-Martial was held. One of the guards said "The poor women have been knocked about so long with the army, their honesty is frequently challenged. Many will steal but there are others who would die from want rather than steal."

We were door-way visitors, not long ago, at a dress-ball where bare necks, and arms shone resplendent with their drapery of jewels and ribbons. There we saw a real Virginia Break-down, on Virginia soil. It made us breathless, to watch the flying movements of the unwearied feet of man and maid. A song, like the sound of buzzing wings, accompanied their feet. "I wish I was a little fly, uh sitting by my sweet-hearts eye. I wish I was uh little bee, uh sittin on my sweethearts knee. I wish I was uh little mouse uh sippin kisses from her mouse" (mouth). As mouse and mouse do not rhyme, I suggested to Sarah the peculiar fitness of the substitution of Louse for Mouse. From the party, we went to a meeting, where we again saw dancing, after the Shaker fashion. At Dr Brown's suggestion Sarah sang "Joyfully, joyfully." She sang the sweetly, exultant air admirably; the negroes caught the air very quickly, and joined in the chorus. The negro who fell in prayer was very fluent and earnest. He prayed for black and white, for rich and poor, for bond and free. He also prayed that his brethren might not "pull down vengeance upon their naked souls."

First day Sarah and I took two oarsmen and a boat and crossed the river to go to church. After landing, we inquired the way at a house near the shore. We were obliged to knock a great many times, before any-one would wait upon us. And then, when a poor unfortunate, for whom Nature had done Oh! so little! came to the door, and with vinegar pouts and vinegar glances, waited our will. I said to myself Lo! a poor white! We were so sweetly oblivious of her evident ill-will that she finally thawed enough to ask us to walk in. But we were church-bound and turned "down our lane," as she directed us to do. We were enraptured with the novelty and beauty before us. Close by home, we were but at home was desert barrenness; here the same June-like sunshine which made us bless the morning when we woke at home, but June with its birds in every bough, with midsummer songs in the air, and a luxuriant vegetation around us as beautiful as it was novel. The "china tree," sunny with its clustering, ?, cream-colored berries; the holly, beautiful = cheerfully gloriously beautiful, whether modestly dwelling with the shrubs, or towering in stately companionship with the Gum tree and the Hickory. Now green with very summer greenness; and again, glowing with yellow-green leavage. The "brambly-brian" tangled its way along, its blue-

berries mocking the luscious little grapes which Cousin Oliver loves to set before us, and gracing every shrub by which it passed with its leaves, rarely beautiful in forms, and rich in "Autumn colors." The beautiful "Jefferson-vine." The laurel in bud. The gold "Salve-berry" (bright fairy-orange!) And the "What is it"--here there and everywhere. We walked, harried by the heat, for a mile and a half, and then, learning that we had yet two and a half miles to walk, and could not reach the church before the close of the services, we turned reluctantly on our steps, meeting now then one or more colored men, each of whom declared himself to be free. We had a good deal of talk with three colored men, who told us that a good many slaves still remained with their masters in the neighborhood. Drake, (the hospital steward,) who was with us, Said, "You tell them they are fools to stay." The men seemed satisfied with their own freedom, and indifferent to the condition of their fellows; but, as to seem and to be are not necessarily one and the same in this latitude it was not safe to judge by appearances. We found one very social and interesting free-negro, living on a small farm, for which he pays \$100 a year rent. As figs grow round about us, I have a desire to get some, and so I asked the man if he could tell me whether any of his neighbors had put them up in sugar. "There you're too hard fer me," he replied.

The roseiest of summer sunsets reflected in the many lakelets left by the tide, with the wooded shores at hand, the James River fleet (The Minnesota, Galena, and two or three other gun-boats) within very near view, and our own beloved little village at our feet, made a picture of surpassing beauty. The shaded trees on shore, with the burning lakes on the flats, and the burning-sky above made me dream of the tropics. The Dr & Mrs Brown went to Norfolk when we were over the river, in the morning, and saw a "butternut" prisoner freshly brought in. The Dr was quite excited when we returned, saying it would have been very unsafe for us to have attempted to enter the church. He said where there was an army hospital upon the Island the wife of the Surgeon had the door of the church locked in her face, and missiles thrown at her. "That, too, when we were much less hated than we are now." The Dr said if he had not found us here on his return from Norfolk, he should have hurried after us. He is willing we should go, after he has opened a safe way for us, by letting some of his well-wishers across the river know that we are going.

Jumping rope and swinging were the favorite amusements last first day, but when we were going the rounds in the evening, the Dr stopped all games, and told the sergeant of the guard to allow no playing on Sunday. All play or no play, even on week days, seems to be the theory African. Our handsome and lady-like Custis house-servants said to me, "We never went to a party in our lives. Mother would not let any of her children go to parties. We were as genteelly brought up as white people. Our mother would not let us go with bad company." And one of our sewing-assistants said the other day, "What a very good man Dr Huckins must be, he almost never says anything; I think he must be praying all the time." The contrabands are very mindful of the courtesies due each other. Good day and good health are their daily wishes; given to those they meet; and they are singularly respectful to white-people. Too respectful to fawn and cringe, but ready and expectant to save the whites from all manual labor. A broom in my hand brings them to their feet, they are amazed if I pick up a spool, and most of them show sadly wills unused to will. Yet, with all their willingness, they are slow indeed! Southern women have often begged Northern abolitionists to sympathize with them, instead of with the slaves and (while the oppressed are still nearer my heart than ever.) I am fast learning to sympathize with the depressed.

To wait and wait, and still to wait, is our lesson of every day. A man has come to the office window for a pass to Norfolk. The Dr is particular in his inquiries when a pass is wanted, fearing a runaway may help himself off with a pass. "What is your name?" "Has that always been your name?" "No, my name used to be, but I married my mistress, and now it is (so & so)." All the officials use many precautions before registering names, as the negroes often give false names. Perhaps, after all, no false motive influences them, as they may bear many names in a life-time. They usually need to be asked, repeatedly, for their surnames. They are Judith or John, and nothing more. North Carolina has been sewing lately for Mrs Brown. A woman has this moment gone from me, who wished me write to her sister that another sister died in her tent yesterday "half an hour of the sun." A letter from the one to whom I wrote addressed to the dead has just arrived. The author offered to furnish her sister with money if she needed it, and also begged her to go to Fort Hamilton to visit her. A letter from a woman to her "Dear husband" (who is not here) has been opened, and the woman is discovered to have told her husband that if he does not come to join her, she shall be obliged to get another "Bough"—Boy, I supposed she meant, but the Dr says "No, Beau."

It has rained gently all day. I see two boys whipping a mud-puddle furiously into their faces. Lizzies Eliva's & Pliny's letters are very welcome. Lizzie can dispense with the useless cypher which she added to my twelve acres, as the extra acres are O, the cypher may as well be not. The Dr thinks there may be fourteen acres ("A neighbor was my authority")

The Monitor has just passed the Island, but Sarah and I were in the clothing-room and knew nothing of its being within sight. We are frequently reminded of Eagleswood here. Very homely and very handsome people, you know often look alike. An old-man and a young maiden, whose marriage we shall witness this evening, have just visited our clothing-rooms, and been clad in bridal array. The maiden alone won our sympathy at the outset, but when we had freshened her, her companion said, "I don't want to be a laughing stock, and I don't look fit to stand up along uh her." We agreed with him in opinion, and made his outside worthy of his brides. Among the slave-holders who, impelled by their needs, often come to the Island is one who says he has not sold one dollars worth of produce since the war began, and that all his negroes have left him.

Another has the pleasure of seeing one of his runaways here. The whites rival the negroes in talking of what happens "Heeugh." One of the neighbors told the Dr that since the state of war women-field-hands can be hired for 20, 25, or 30 dollars a year, and men for 40 or 50. A negro who made a nice basket for the Dr, came with it to the office, and told the Dr there was a very disagreeable woman going about the camp who called herself by his name! "Now Dr," the man said, "I don't want her tangled onto me. But I have a daughter at Newport News, and if you 'U give me a pass to go fer her, I shall be so glad for she's very anxious to get learning." Every day's tidal ebb, and flow sends solemnly into our presence now the negro stranded on our shores by the war, who forces our sympathies to meet his wants; then the slave-owner either in person or estate, now begging at our hands, now uttering a complaint; and now, Woe 's him! houseless and homeless with our faces reflected in his mirrors, our tables heavy with his books, and our wearied heads resting in his easy-chair.

A fine horse and a rockaway just came into our stable from a large farm taken possession of by the Dr a day or two ago. Negroes from here, are already at work preparing our estate! for planting. "It is quite time to put in some seeds," say the farmers about here. As none of the

farmers in Vir can send “Truck” to N.Y. except by government aid, Dr Brown hopes to have control of the boats, that the expenses of forwarding his “truck” may be covered by his receipts from the farmers he will accommodate. We expect to be flooded, in a few days, with the furniture from our new house. And, tomorrow, another large farm, will fall into our hands. This too, is war! Savage, and cruel! The Dr acts of course under orders. He would consent to the inmates of the houses remaining in their homes; but he says it would be impossible for them to do so. They would provoke the negroes, and the negroes would provoke them. Room in their houses must be found for our overseers, and their furniture would be unsafe. So it seems best to remove them from their estates, if we take possession of their soil.

Dr Brown received a letter a few days ago, from a noisy secessionist from whose estate our negroes had taken wood. “Having frequently heard of your gentlemanly deportment—Mr Marcus did not know how to treat a lady—he would not have allowed the negroes to laugh in derision as I walked off. It is indeed hard having no one to cut my wood (Her slaves have all left her.) The driftwood on the shore, I can get myself more conveniently than from the woods, besides, I could have sold it several times, but preferred to keep it for my own use, believing that you will see the injustice of it, I leave it with you to do what is right. Very respectfully J. M. Wise.”

After taking possession of the farm I spoke of the Dr called a few men and women into his office to test their readiness to work in the field. He told them that what they raise shall be sold, and, after their expenses are met the surplus shall be their own. They were all eager to enter the field. One man went out to bring in a woman he said was an excellent field-hand but he returned with the report that “Ever since her husband went to Washington, she has been living with Commodore Perry! and she does not want to leave him.” One man who was anxious to go said, “Dr, there’s no probability of bein interrupted by them [rebels] Sah is there?” A very bright woman came to Sarah yesterday, and asked her if she would “Expound the Bible to her” saying, “I can read myself, but I am mighty desirous to have you read it to me. I am learning in a broken manner, now.” She has, for some-time, been teaching a large class to read. She told us “The white folks didn’t think nothin of her after she left off dancing.” Mrs Brown said to a very dark girl a few days ago, “Is that very light girl your sister? Why she can’t be!” “Yes, she is,” replied the girl, “Mother played naughty then.” A girl who has been a very useful assistant to us, asked me to write a letter to a friend. She was very well, and hoped her friend was also, wanted her to come to see her, had “nothing more to say at this time present,” but, “I have just heard that Henrietta is sold!”!!!

It is very difficult to understand the negroes. South Carolina dialect is unlike that of South Carolina and Virginia claims little acquaintance with either. Our women tell us which “Bakk” they live in. Oh! how the women besiege us with entreaties! I don’t know but I shall fall into Mr. Coleman’s habit and pass about the Island with both hands extended and fluttering while I scream, “Shaw! Shaw! Get away from here.” I whispered to the Dr at the dance, “I cant afford to give out shoes to be kicked out in this way.” Sarah says she expects, the moment, she goes into the yard, tomorrow, to hear our Rockaway exclaim, “I have not had a single thing given me since I came on this Island!” “Move away, white folks are coming.” “Let the white folks in,” is the cry, when we put our faces within the negroes-doors. “Oh, you ‘r Secesh,” is a favorite insult with them. “Do you think I’ll marry any-body as black as you are?” “is a very decided cut.

I was very much interested in hearing the Dr commission the “squad-men” to tell their people of his agricultural plans. He has been lecturing them seriously, lately; insisting upon their compelling their charges to keep their quarters clean, to chop their wood in their back-yards!! to hang their clothes there, and to do other seemly things. One old man, alluding to the life before his men, said, “It makes me feel proud. I think we can talk to them stronger now.” The Dr said to them all, “You ‘r improving, but there’s a great deal that ant as I want it, yet.” “Yaas, suh,” was murmured by many. “But we cant do it all at once,” said one man. One of the women ordered to the field said, “I’m so tired doin nothin, makes me no account. I had worked since I came here.” We have several dogs at our heels who barked through the perils of the seven days fights. And both our steam-boats served in those battles. One was shelled twice. Our German druggist Sarah found kindling his fire with Hawthorne’s “Mosses from an Old Manse.” He says he always kindles his fire with books he brought from Newport News. I have been enlarging our stock of threads by making three skeins from one spool of colored cotton, and four skeins from white cotton. Pliny will send to Thos, Pliny to Charles. Charles will keep.
Ever affectionately LUCY. Craney Island, Jan 29 ‘63

February 7, 1863 Lucy Chase to home

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Feb 7 1863

Dear home folks

I am rejoicing with the happy negro in his greed for letters. One word of instruction from a teacher brightens the face of the learner with shining content. Frock coat or shoes, he takes as his due; but every step of his creeping progress into the mysteries of letters elevates his spirit like faith in a brilliant promise. Scattered about the houses of the whites are pleasing, intelligent women, who serve as cooks. One of them told me that she was very willing to take her share of suffering and all who were in the room with us, said they would suffer still more, rather than again become slaves. The woman said she should the very happy, feeling that her children can spend “The balance of their days in freedom, though she had been in bonds.” Want of house-room makes it impracticable to form classes at present, but we can assist those we employ directly about us, and may be able in that way, to form a corps of A.B.C. teachers. Five thousand or more bags are to be sent here from the Quarter-Master’s Dept for repairs. The carpenters are now preparing a work-room for the needle-women, and, when they gather there I propose reading the Bible to them, and if, practicable, teaching them their letters. “When our ship comes and it will come in the form of a meeting-and-school-house in one, and, until that auspicious day, we can be helpful to but few.

I laid aside my pen a moment ago to write the following, in the form of a letter. “My dear Dick: I hope you will not forget me, and I will not forget you. I am a lady of my word, and I hope you

will prove to me that you are a gentleman of yours. I am doing very well on Craney Island. Don't think that I don't think as well of you as you do of me. So I write to you, hoping that you will keep the same word you told me in Hampton, that you would not forget me, and that you would come and see me wherever I might be. I shall be a lady of my word, if you are not a gentleman of yours." "Is it to your husband," I said? before commencing. "No," she replied, "To my beau." When she ceased dictating she said, "That's all, you put something there pretty for me, now." So I added "Something pretty," about loving each other while separated; trusting in living together sometime, and loving and caring for each other 'till their dying days. The maiden was pretty, coy, and loving. I was really fascinated by her charming bashfulness. We have, in daily attendance upon us, three girls; young to all appearance but one of them has been the mother of one or more children, and another has lost six "since she entered the Army." She "sent first to Hampton, then came here, then has sent to Newport News, and then came here again. The mortality among the children since they were brought "into the Army" has been immense. I have already told you that it has been greatly reduced here. Our cook says she has had "a right smart chance of children," but that she has lost them all. One of the girls said, today, that Mrs. Brown's [?] her children behind her with her master, when she ran away. She said one morning her master ordered all the house-servants to the field, a not uncommon custom in busy times, but, when he ordered them into a wagon, she hid away, and saw all the others driven Southward. She said she was perfectly contented with her mistress, was satisfied with her lot, and had, formerly, been willing to live with her mistress all her days; "But, when the Union came along, then, peared-like they would like to kill us. They told us the Yankees was going to send us to Cuba, and goin to eat us up." She said her mistress never sent her to the whipping post because she had such a very bad temper. "But, when she was angry herself and I had not dun nothin she'd lash me and then she'd read the Bible to me till I got qualified ." This same woman told Sarah one night that she wanted very much to go to church. Sarah said, "Well, ask Mrs Brown She'll let you." "Ask Mrs. Brown!" said Nancy, "No, indeed I won't ask Mrs Brown. What do you think God would think if I should ask Mrs Brown if I might go to meeting ! What ud he think to see me go and ask any man if I might go to church!" I told her today, to get an early supper and hurry off to church. But she went only to return. "What's the matter Nancy?" "Oh, they don't sing to suit me. They didn't rise and fall alike, and they did not put in such words as become the music. Taint Scripture. Then I could not stand outside long and I want going to crowd in. I won't breathe such air. I want to be outside where it can blow all round me. I should go frantic to get squeezed into their dirty rags, and the very sight of them would get something into my hair."

Lizzie asks if Dr Brown is a New Englander. He is from Connecticut. He is acquainted with Dr Sargent, and he speaks highly of Dr S's professional skill. Of course you all want to know all I can tell you about him. We supposed he was a D.D. having been told before coming here that he was a minister; and so, at our first dinner, we waited for "grace." We told him that we expected to see him with a white choker on, he replied, "You may yet see me with a choker on, if the rebels get me." The Dr is over six feet; large, and handsome, not elegant in manner, but truly graceful in his awkwardness. Very warmhearted and affectionate, though showing in all his relations that he was born to rule. He sways most becomingly the arbitrary law of military discipline. He has a John Donnes like love for nature, throws himself on the sofa and talks finished pictures of country sights and sounds. We seem to feel the breezes, to hear the leaves

rustle overhead, to listen to the babbling brook, and to see the kine come home. I should like to send you a sheet of his country talk. You would have laughed with us to hear him one-day "Tell us our history." "Oh, you've attended two or three courses of Dr Cutler's lectures, you sleep with your windows open, you take the water cure journal, you've had Fowler examine your heads, you've got hair-mittens, and hair-towels, any no of flesh-brushes in your room at home." The Dr shows great capacity for organization. His community was planted here but yesterday; but, directed by his brain, it has already made for itself a picturesque village. It meets daily many of its daily wants and hopes to meet your want, for early spring vegetables.

Fifty or sixty white people, are, at present, subject to the Dr's oversight; and what they have done today, and what they shall do tomorrow are studies for the Dr's brain. Twenty of the whites constitute the guard. One is head-oyster-man (He superintends the planting of oysters) another is a blacksmith, and several form a squad of carpenters (soldiers detailed for work on the Island.) All the whites are connected with the army. Even our house-walls tell us that we are in the army. Black target-circles adorn our bed-room walls, and parlor and dining-room vie with the homes of the dead—great in wall names. Everybody is glaringly invited not to spit upon my chamber-floor. And there is no lack of written indications that the 10th N.Y. Regt was determined to "furnish ample information" to all who came after that it was "The first Regiment that landed on this island." " Whence shall our wood come," is the Dr's cry just now. Men from Isd. daily waw and bring by water fuel for the daily fires, and when the available heavy tinder is exhausted on one rebel-estate other timber-land must be plundered. Gen Banks follows in Gen. Butler's footsteps, and taxes the rebels of of N.O. to support the city-poor and high-way robbers though we are we are still law-abiding citizens.

We drove our confiscated horse, a day or two ago, upon the woodlands of a so-so Unionist-- (A man who brings us eggs and chickens and buys of us sugar and molasses) for the purpose of looking into the merits of his timber, but, to my relief of mind, we found it too small. However, as a pretended Unionist, Dr. Brown's certificate of receipt would insure him government-pay. Or, I should say, it might insure payment. I suppose if his loyalty was questioned, it would be necessary for him to prove it. That short drive was my second essay upon the mainland. We crossed the ford at low-tide, and rode a few miles upon the beach, in preference to driving in the country. We went to Pigs-point, memorable in the early days of the present war, passed rebel rifle-pits and abatti, and drove over a large camping-ground of a Georgia Regiment. The large, substantial barracks, still standing, are of mud-cemented logs; and, if their excellent roofs had not found their way to our "Quarters," the village would seem to invite emigrants. The barracks enclose a square ; they are near each-other ; and it is supposed they were designed to serve as barricades against infantry. The universal custom in this country of building outside chimneys was not lost sight of by the builders of those barracks. Of mud and sticks the chimneys were built, and they still stand, pointing a moral and telling a tale. Opposite Pigs-point is Newport News, near whose shore we saw the Minnesota and Galena at anchor. We saw the yucca not in pots and housed, but thriving on the sandy wayside banks. On the evening of the same day I went sailing with the Dr and his wife, in one of our steam-boats. We cruised about, in search of a large lighter, which was tide-stayed a day or two before and which we helped to tow home. But we were hailed in the darkness with the artificially-melancholy cry--"We can't get out"--and so we

turned homeward, leaving the woodmen to pass their second-night with the worthless stumps which they had despoiled of their glory.

We drove over to visit the distressed woodment the same day in the day-time, and found the poor fellows hovering over a smoke-belching fire, walled about with evergreens, their camp of the night before. They had been impudent enough to leave their rations behind them, and had been thirty or more hours without food, though their hunger had been staid before our arrival through the Drs thoughtful prevision.

A few hours dependence upon out-door resources makes one a scheming settler. The 3 men looked as if they had begun a life-time there, and I almost fancied I could see an incipient Craney in the frontier-settlement.

One day the woodsmen found half their wood stolen. The Dr. hearing that some of them saw the guilty man rifling the pile sent for the squad, and asked one man if he was sure Mr. ____ was the thief. "Well, I can't say responsible; 'twas him" said the man.

A woman said complaining the other day, "Dr. I wish you'd keep that man from interesting (interrupting) me so much. He keeps interesting me all the time."

At low tide women and boys wade into the water to dig for clams. They reap a very scanty harvest, and they are forced to reap it with sticks. A spade! is a sure clam-send! and lucky is the chap who can hold one for an hour. I am afraid a little boy we caught in the act, a few days ago, hardly counted sixty minutes for his hour. "Hullo, my lad," said the Dr, "what's your name?"

"America, Sir." "Well, take that spade right back to Mr Miller" (Chief of Police, who superintends the daily sweeping of the Island, and who, for some special purpose, had put the spade in the boys hand). "Take it right back, America, or I'll give you United States," said the Dr playfully. "Pocahontas" came to me yesterday for shoes ; but poor "Queen Victoria" is yet unclothed. Hannibal had a new coat this morning, and Abe Lincoln cried, in honor of his new birth, and, if not, because "He had not had a rag of clothing since he came into the army."

Certainly before he had a rag of clothing after he came into the army. A tattered maiden modestly asked the Dr today for a pair of pantaloons. "Why, Uncle, have not you a better pair," "Yaas suh, Ise got one better pair." "Well, Uncle, what do you want another pair for?" "Well suh they've got a hole in each of the knees, and some holes behind." Appearances seemed to indicate that those he had on had holes behind, though I could not so affirm, as he spread his hands upon the affected part when he turned his face from us to pass through the door. Two very old men bent with age, were made both comfortable and grateful this morning. Freedom came too late to them to teach them their right to gratify their wants; and every look and movement was servile. But, as happy as children with new toys, they smiled and bowed, and declared to the four walls, "These are gentlemen and ladies waiting on us."

There is such a great lack of women's clothing that we substitute vests and pants for petticoats and sacks. One woman lingered today, after I had made her comfortable and I said, Do you want any-thing more? "There is so many gentleman here I can't ask you for what I want." Her want was a chemise. I suggested to her that she should have blushed when I handed her the pantaloons.

Fourth-day the 4th. Yesterday, we had our first snow-fall. It was light, but it was accompanied with a furious wind, and it brought misery to our community. The wood-choppers with difficulty stemmed the tide, and found to their dismay, and to the dismay of the almost perishing islanders,

that some one had stolen the wood. The suspected man is the husband of a woman who may have thought her prayers answered yesterday when the snow fell on Craney Isd. She expressed a wish, sometime ago, that "snow might come upon the Isd, and send the niggers flying home to heaven."

It did fall. And the Dr rose and hurried every white man to his feet, and to their rescue. The boats could not run to Norfolk, and to the Fortress, and the Dr impressed the captains into the special service of the day! Soldiers and civilians breast the story, and every one showed zeal in seeking, and meeting the wants of the hour. Every barrack and tent was visited. fuel was sent to the freed? and men were deputed to provide for the threatening night. The building timber! was cut, and distributed; but at noon, the sun broke out, the wood-choppers came home with wood, the Dr's agents came into the office with reports of good-works well-done. And we felt that she would all weather the storm.

The frowning Providence sent a frowning multitude to our doors all day yesterday, and we were forced to break our good rule of distributing clothing by districts. All through the morning our entry was filled with the shivering, driven early from their wet beds, and coming from their empty fire-places to seek cold comfort in our cheerless hall. The most destitute could not, of course, come out, and, most unwillingly, we gave shoes to those who manifested their toes to us, feeling that there were, shivering by empty fire-places feet manifested in their entirety. The stock of women's shoes was soon exhausted, and we were forced to distribute to the women men's shoes. It seemed as cruel to rob the men, but it was cruel to deny the women; and from one dose of cruelty my conscience sought refuge in performing another, and I was forced to send sick and shivering women home with their worthless shoes. Many are entirely destitute of bed-clothing, and we were unable to meet half the need by sending out our entire stock of clean, white, hospital-blankets. Even today we learn of many new cases of extreme need. One young, motherless girl, who has been here several weeks, has been without sufficient clothing to keep her warm by day, and has had neither bed nor coverlet by nights and has set up through the long watches of every night ! Cases of long continued suffering which has escaped observation are not rare here. Women are taken sick and die without entering the hospital or letting their wants be known. It is the duty of the Squad-Master to report the sick, but many lie in silent suffering cared for by their companions and shrinking from calling on the Dr. Death must surprise them as much as it does us when it takes them off so suddenly. "Taken sick on Sunday, and died this morning," says the squad-master when he comes to me for a shroud. Several families are still destitute of beds. Sick women and children are lying upon boards which are made no softer by our sympathy. Craney Island planks have no soft side. The North must feather them.

Whether needy or not, our people are given to greediness and complaining, and we are forced often to pass them unheeded as one does besieging coachmen. I sometimes fancy myself fast growing hard-hearted, but my heart as often leaps warm denial to m my fancy, and I laugh when I realize that I incrust myself in a coarse-grained habit after the fashion of all men who brush daily against the idiosyncrasies of the crowd.

It may interest you to know that we occupy a decidedly "airy situation." Tell Arthur that "the wind whistles after us." I am afraid it would be necessary for Dr Collins, if he should visit us here, to "Hold his hat on" even when our windows are closed. The winds, when they are abroad, have free sweep across our island, and they howled like ravenous wolves, all day yesterday. It is

only necessary, at all times, to draw a chair near the wall, if we wish to gauge the amount of air stirring abroad. When the balmy South is true to her traditions, gentle breezes fan our brows, but, when Northern fury [?] her, the sharp teeth of fiery dragons pierce us, and threaten to carry us off. Last night, cross-winds swept over our bed, and wove a network of frost about us, and I know of two more than Tom who were cold.

I have not told you of half the expedients to which the Dr resorted to defy the storm. When we were coming from the office to our dinners men were hacking the cannon-carriages in pieces. "That looks like the coming of peace," I said, "as well as like coming to pieces." An armed guard was stationed all day at the redout, to guard the wood as it was brought in across the ford. The Dr was filled with anxiety, all day, lest the ford should become impassable. Poets say that standing forests "groan" but that day timber, mules, and wagons groaned in sharpest unison as they ploughed through miles of Virginia mud. In the afternoon, when the waves were stilled the Dr sent his steam-boats to Norfolk for wood, and they have gone again, today, on the same errand. Sarah declares she used a "warped shingle, white-washed" this morning, in lieu of her towel for which the frost-spirit had substituted the shingle. Today comes rain--a deluge without and within. "Hot and cold water all over the house!" A desideratum in dry weather, but too much of a good thing in foul.

Turned, by the incoming shower, from our room into the dining room, we thanked Nancy, Mrs. Brown, the rebel architects and our good fortune for the promise of the night. Sarah, sick, went early to bed. Her head was hardly on her pillow when she sent for me to place an open umbrella at her head-board. Nancy encircled the stove with tin-wash basins and, to the music of resounding water[-drops Sarah was lulled to sleep. The basins speedily filled and ?, the night long, showering the ground with "earth-rejoicing drops," but neither my vigilance nor the capacity of the basins availed much and waters covered the floor. In the mid-watches of the night, I rose and set sail in my bed-room. Sarah suggested that I must not perambulate barefooted, and urged me to put on slippers. So I put my feet into a pair that were new at the moment. I put them on, but turned old in less time than a single night, and chillingly suggested rubber boots. I lifted all our heavy trunks alone and put them high that they might remain dry; took our books, photographs, and other water-soaking valuables from the shelves, our dresses from the nails, and made desolation general throughout our borders.

Nancy, fondly hoping to make the dining-room seem home-like and never doubting that the rain would spare us there, carried a little table and other unnecessary pieces of furniture into our new bed-room. Mrs. Brown said "Oh Nancy, you need carry any-thing but the bed into the room." "Why, you see," said Nancy, "I did not know but Miss Chase might want to write and so I thought to carry in her table and portfolio." A few days ago I sent Shorty from the office to the house for my portfolio, and left the children, saying to Mrs. Brown, I'll go and get it. I reckon none of the others'll know what a portfolio is. Nancy is very kind and devoted. The finest specimen of a slave-nurse. She made a roasting fire under Sarah's very nose. Sarah said, "Oh what a rousing fire you've made, Nancy." "Yes, Miss Sarah. I reckoned you'd wouldn't want to get up and make it and then you see I felt as if I wanted to do my duty." A little remissness in the fire-making line of duty would be a matter for rejoicing with Sarah and me. If we live through the fiery ordeal of this winter we may be able to travel about the country to test the heat of brick-ovens by crawling into them after the coals have been removed. The Dr catechized Nancy last

evening, and found she needed no religious teacher. "Nancy do you believe in so much excitement as your people work themselves into when in meetings?" "No, sir, I dont." "What do you think of, Nancy?" "Oh its self, they can deceive man, but they can't deceive God. They sees each other doing so; and so they does it." "Where is heaven, Nancy." "Heaven can be here below sir, as well as above." "What sort of a place is it, Nancy?" "I cant tell temporarily, that is discerned spiritually." "Do you think hair will be straight there, Nancy?" "Oh, yes sir, hair will be straight there." "Do you think the slave-holders will go to heaven?" "If Massa's good he'll go to heaven with all the rest of the just." "What is your idea of God, Nancy?" "He's all in a smile," said Nancy, adding, after a pause, "he smiles on the just, and he frowns on the unjust." "What is your idea of the Devil?" "He's meesable, he's meesable." "Well, what does he look like?" "Well, the Devil has got such a disagree-able look that it's out of my power to tell how he do look. He drags his tail, too, oh, its so disagreeable. He looks naturally; sometimes like a man, sometimes like a beast." "Well Nancy what do you think about baptism?" "Its one of Gods commandments. He say if we neglect one commandment, we neglect all." "Do you think no one will be saved who is not baptized?" "It is the pure in heart what see God," said Nancy. Oh how charming Nancy is! I really love to be ruled by her. She is motherly, kind, fond as one's aunt, and indulgent as a grandma.

Sarah and I are very happy here, happy enough to say many times that we are very happy. Sarah wrote a little letter full of enthusiasm two weeks or more ago but it did not get into an envelope. To be in at the birth! is it not something to rejoice in? Great plans that are not yet afoot but are creeping into strength and promise spring daily, from the Dr's brain, shining with the prestige of success of their antecedents. It is certainly very good for us to be here. Men selected for farming came into the office today, all eager to work, and all expressing strongly their desire to have their families accompany them. "Well, Squire Nixon (the name the man gave as his own) do you wish to go upon a farm, to have for yourself half that you raise, and perhaps more?" said the Dr. "Yes suh, no more required suh than that suh." "Well Champion what do you say?" "I suppose when we get there, you'll let us have our families, like you said suh?" "Well Knowledge are you going?" "Yes, suh, that's my intention, exactly what I cum fir."

Some of the men, having recently arrived here from Norfolk, the Dr took their names ; their condition, before entering the army, occupation since, and amount of wages they have received from government. Two or three said they were free. "Well," said the Dr to one self-styled free-man "Why did you leave?" "Oh, I cum to look fer you all suh, when the others did suh." Cross-questioning showed that all were slaves. "I dont care about the work," said one man, "but I'm might afraid when you aint round they'll interfere with us and kill us." One or two of the carpenter's squad were sent for, but "I'd rather use tools, suh, if its left for me to decide, suh," promptly said the foreman, when the Dr put the chance in his way, at which all the others leaped. I have not told you that Uncle Sam slipped Craney Island into his pocket when he ran away from his mother, so you see we are really in the Old Dominion and not on rebel soil, after all. We are obliged, on Craney, to take a public journey every time we visit our private house—to put fairly out to sea. But, at such times, and at all times, I find myself ignoring the crowd. I am too busy, and every-body I pass is too busy to heed the concerns of others. We are as independent of our fellow-islanders as Broadway denizens are of each-other. But, when I go into the village ! I am abashed like a country-girl who thinks all Broadway staring at her. Pont think the village outlies

our twelve acres. It lies in the rear of the house and the office. "Sounds from home" come to us at night in the tattoo at our gate (the head-quarters) and, in the morning, the reveille is sweeter than the storied lark when it bids us to rise. The oratorio of the creation cannot vie with the sunsets here ! Night after night, they glow like our warmest and most golden summer skies ! and a step gives us the whole horizon-circle ! Water too, all about us, and always about us! Water and sky—and around us work, work too which we love to do.

You all seem anxious about our health. I think we shall be well and strong here. Sarah, is, just now suffering somewhat from a cold, and I was hardly my best self for a few days, but we both believe that the climate will agree with us. Lo, on my first page rain-drops, from the roof when I sat writing at the parlor-table !

Ever lovingly, Lucy

February 11, 1863 Lucy Chase to Fatham (no transcription)

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March 3, 1863 Lucy Chase to Dr. Russell (no transcription)

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March 4, 1863 Lucy Chase to home

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[Inserted at top and side of page] 5th Letter Eliza will forward to Wor Father will please to tell E. Gordon Sarah Wall and others that there are lovely farms where they are wanted now [illegible words] two of our farms. Lowell, Worcester is in our [cuts off?]

Craneys Is. forwarded 3d mo. 4th Dear folks at home.

You are doubtless aware that the whole Army of the Potomac is ordered into our near neighborhood. If a moment of leisure comes, we talk of making it a visit. Last seventh and first

days we were in a state of some anxiety, arising from a report brought here by a trembling negro from the main-land—that five butternuts had been seen across the river. Five too many of the seen; and who can number the unseen! thought the Dr. who grasped his pistol, summoned the Sergeant of the guard and sent off an armed force, hoping to make captive the intruders, but though many confirmed the negroes story, the guard returned without even the shell of a cracked butternut. On First-day, Dr Brown sent Dr Huckins and his assistant to gather information about the mysterious five. They learned that the intruders came down the Nansemond river passing our picket-boat in a fog—and were seen by two of our pickets on the land, but as they were five against two our pickets did not molest them!! They visited the old Georgia Camp, where we mine chimneys and pluck roofs; and, as they were dressed in Georgia uniform they may have come to look after roof-trees. But our prize escaped us, no doubt prizing its escape. Dr Huckins came home with a wheel from the Pig-point battery, so he considered his journey far from fruitless. Dr Brown is now the proprietor of five or six confiscated farms so the local prejudice against him is of a decided butternut hue, and we think there is some danger of his being attacked when taking his lonely rides from farm to farm. 2d mo 27th. I wrote the above, after two or three days illness. I thought myself well, wrote seven or eight letters (many of them on business) went into my work, was torn into shreds by an army of colored besiegers, and sent to bed with a fever and now, on the ninth day am calling my feebleness strength and trying to write to you. Sarah is in the field again. Her three drops of verat verid three times a day, and my calomel-pill, (the first that ever dared intrude within the prejudiced precincts of my mouth) did not kill us, and may have cured us. At any rate, we believe fully in Dr Brown's medical skill left Dr Brown the proprietor of five or six farms, behold him now the proprietor of twelve or fourteen! Of the fourteen, or to be added to it, is Gov Wise's farm, seven miles from Norfolk. We shall probably hail from Norfolk, when you hear from us again. Dr Brown has been ordered to make the city his headquarters. His doing so, will save the Gov an annual expense of seventeen thousand dollars in the daily sending of two steam-boats to and fro in the Dr's business. Norfolk becoming his headquarters the commissary stores will be removed there, and boats will be sent here two or three times a week. Although Norfolk will be our special field of labor, we shall come here semi-weekly and continue our interest in our first charge. I cannot tell you what a trial it is to us to leave this Isd this Gaza—this wilderness has become very dear to us. This sandy bleak Isd cut off from the world is the whole world, and enough of the world for us-Dirty, dilapidated, south-side, city of Norfolk intruding its white faces and civilized habits upon us!! Out upon it! Dr Brown has been privately informed that govt may ere long, take possession of the Isd for a hospital station. If it should, the women and children would join us in Norfolk. All our squad-men except the wood-choppers, (even the grave-diggers) have gone upon our farms. Their good, as well as the relief of government, being considered in the arrangement. The Dr gave them their choice between working jointly, or on separate patches. Each man his own row—was the in variably, promptly expressed choice. “That I should like.” “Id rather have my own zah, if it makes no difference to you zah.” Men who have been working for three or four weeks reported at the office a short time ago. In order to test Gov. Andrew's chance of success in his rumored soldier-hunting tour to the Isd the Dr said, “Well, my men how would you like to be soldiers?” “To go into the Army?” A low murmuring grunt of distaste accompanied by a slight restless shuffle was the response. “I think I'm making the best soldier now, sir or shall be when I get my axe,” said

one man, his heading rising with every word, and his face kindling with pride in manly labor which not only earns its reward but hopes to get it too. [Two lines of text erased] Each man takes his family, and, in so doing, assumes the responsibility of its support. Many of the women have been unable from want of shoes, to join their husbands in the field. The wail for shoes has reached so high a pitch that the Dr pacifies the whiners by telling them he shall plant shoes, at one, and he hopes for a harvest so abundant that every-body can have one pair, at least. I long ago required the feet I blessed to leave with me their apologies for shoes, in return for the genuine article—Into them the really naked feet gladly crawl. I really feel happier when I put a rejected shoe into service than when I hand out a new one. The new one promises to perform to the fullest all the capabilities of show-nature-but, when the discarded shoe is brought to toe the mark again to not only do both ends seem to meet-but they meet and fairly lap over! Think of the seven-league boots in which Dr Brown compasses his acres! To Fortress Monroe, Norfolk, Suffolk, Portsmouth, and the round of his farms he sometimes goes in one day. Every-day adds to his care. Lighters are to be bought, manure is to be found, tools must be at hand, and men with hands to use them. Quarters for the men and their families must be provided, the one amount of rations sent to every farm-house and carts must be found to operate with the men, the machinery of the Isd must also have its daily share of oil, and Dr Brown must count the drops for every hub. From the stables of Norfolk, and the Army stables of Suffolk, the Dr gets his manure. One day a lighter of manure sinks at Norfolk, sinking with it eight hundred dollars in value. Another day, an express car from Suffolk comes to Portsmouth for the Dr, finds him not, and returns. Its fruitless trip costing the govt seventy dollars. The Dr's breakfast, that morning, costing the govt seventy dollars. Breakfast coming upon the table in a few moments later than it was ordered gave tide and sand-bar opportunity to combine against his purposes, by lifting his tug out of water. Would that tide and sand-bar were his smallest obstacles! Genl Viele (would there more beaf about the man) tries him beyond endurance with his caution and vascillation. Mrs Brown says of him, what Whipple said of Abbots Napoleon. Must have mistaken his vocation! A good Sunday school teacher he would have made! The officers in Norfolk are generally disaffected toward Viele-Gen V. tells the Dr that he does not dare to open schools for the contrabands in Norfolk! (So we should remain here and keep house by ourselves) Think of Butlers schools in New Orleans! I am as near boiling with indignation as it is possible for a cool-blooded member of the Society of friends to be. Beyond the luke-warm point I surely am. Because the refuges in Norfolk are arbitrarily kept unlettered, I agonize to give them what they so much crave. Craney Islanders may and will hold books in their hands. (All thanks where thanks are due!) It is those who cannot who cry loudest to us. Major Beauvais, Provost-Marshal, of Norfolk, aids the Dr to the extent of his power. He seems to be an honest man of the right stamp. "xxx" That is what you black republicans have done"-said Genl V. to the Dr one day." I am a black Repub" said Beauvais, "and I am proud to own it." Our impetuous Dr stirs the blood in everybody's veins. "I never saw any-body like you said Beauvais said to him, yesterday you come in coolly and say, "I want a ware-house," and you must have it before the shower is over." "I expect you'll ask for a city next." "Well, the city is yours with one scratch of our pen," said the Dr." "I know it, said Beauvais, and I expect my own to come tumbling about my ears." A lady secessionist went into Beauvais office yesterday. While Mr Young of the Boston Herald (who has been a guest here for the last week) was there, and handed the major playfully, what she called a southern badge. That

badge is now on our parlor-table. It is a cluster of hyacinth and arbor-vitae, tied with red white and red. Major Beauvais refused to accept it and Mr Young asked for it. [One line inserted] The lady forged a pass, got one of the clerks to sign it, was hunted for three days, found & brought back to the city she is a Drs wife. A woman was brought in yesterday who attempted to smuggle millinery-goods. "Genl Viele gave me leave to take necessaries she urged." "Millinery-goods are not necessaries," said Major Beauvais. The office is daily thronged with secessionists: seeking passes, and exemptions from confiscation, making complaints, and begging for indulgences. One of Mrs. Brown's girls thinks, "Perhaps if I go to Norfolk I can get a husband." But you have one" says Mrs. B. "Oh, yes, but I have not seen him since last August, and I have not got any-one to take care of me. How'd you like that?" The cook lays down her fork, and says, "I think if I fall in love, I must marry again. I dont know whether my husband is living or not, he left me in Hampton." Nancy, my Nancy, poor Nancy, says, "I've only got one man, and he's away; left me here like a rotten stick to drop down and die, and my children, I always look out when the boat comes, thinking its my children. I could rule my grown-up children better than I see other people rule little children." "Why dont you get Miss Lucy well?" says the Dr. "I'd uh got her well in one day, if't had been left to me," said Nancy, but she's in the Lord's hands. Its as he says He'll do it at his leisure, He's slow and sure." The Dr having spoken to me of the increasing diminution of sickness on the Isd turned to Nancy, and said "if the people were cleaner, they wouldn't die, would they Nancy?" "No, said Nancy, its nastiness that ails them." "You think Nancy-ness would help them, don't you?" said the Dr. In one of the twenty or more invaluable boxes sent here by the N.Y. friends, within the last month, I found, to my exceeding joy, a coarse-typed testament, and read from it to Nancy, the sermon on the Mount at each clause, Nancy have an exultant cry." I want to learn to read the Bible, that'll make me more composed—I'm so alone, I'm always sad, there's no joy for me. Oh, if I can only learn to read the Bible, I wont never go out of the house—Not Sundays, nor work-a-days. When I said, " Blessed are the pure in heart," she cried, "That's so." That's what I want to learn, to read the Bible for that I can say all them words and be made perfect." Now comes Nancy's turn to be sick: Sarah was taken sick-I kept her company. Sally took to her bed, then Milly was sick, and, one day, while we were all sick, Nancy came stumbling into our room, saying, "Oh, how tired I am." "Why, whats the matter Nancy, what have you been doing?" "Its what I haven't done, that tires me." "You see nothin goes on, nowhere, without me overseein it. You see Mrs Brown, she can study whats right before her; but she cant sit down in one spot, and study all round. As Nancy would be helpful, I asked her to hand me my watch. "Ise used to hangin up watches, and takin on em down. Missis, she used to have me sleep on the floor by her bed, and hand her watch every hour of the night." Each day Nancy grew weaker, and we tried to keep her in bed; but she would steal into our room. Sarah said to her, one day "Why, Nancy, you ought to be in bed. What are you here for?" "I cant lie in bed, fer I think every-thing goes wrong, if Nancy an't about. I laid there, and I thought, now there ant any-body doing any-thing fer Miss Lucy. Im sure she's sufferin fer attention. So I looked in a few minutes ago, and she did not say any-thing, but she looked distressed, and I knew she was sufferin fer all sorts of things, and wouldn't say a word, because Nancy want round, and there want nobody to do any-thing." Nancy told us she laid awake one night, adding, "I heern my teeth knock together, plain as I dunno how, and the chills searchin me." "I aint got strength enough to draw up my entrails." On the very rare mornings when the Dr is not out of

bed at four o'clock Nancy is apt to rouse him with "Dr Brown get up. Its high time you were up." 5th letter 2d sheet. Our young Ary, one of our clothing-room assistants, pines for a young child she was forced to leave behind her when she ran away and which died, soon after she left it. She looked long, and fondly, one day, at a child's skirt, saying, "Once that belonged to some dear little baby." She told us her story, one day. "Young Master was the father of my baby, and he was very fond of it. He made me dress it clean, three times a day, and he was never tired of playing with it and calling it pet names. One day the nurse put it in a tub of water and got a grit in its eye, and I thought he'd go mad about it. We always played together from the time we were little children. Old Master was the richest man in Virginia. He's all out doors secesh! His sons were Union, and Anti-Slavery. Oh, how he would quarrel with them, and swear to them! He'd make his daughters kiss the bible, every morning, and say they would not give any-one a rasher of meat. Ive seen ten cargoes of negroes sold on his plantation, at once. They came and tied young Masters hands and feet together, and took him off to the war. He used to write to me, and a young lady who was in love with his brother used to read me his letters. Did your Master's sisters know how intimate you were with him, I asked. "Oh, yes, indeed," she said, and they were all as fond of me as he was, and of the baby too. The baby was very white, and looked just like him. When the cavalry came and took off young-Master's brother, I had gone to the point, four miles, and got a woman to mind my baby while I was gone. Master's brother rode up to me and said, "Don't go back Ary I'll take charge of the child. It shall go to my house, hurry to the Union-Army"-and the next thing I knew, in four weeks, the babys father wrote me that baby had died. He said I must not grieve, that it was a great deal better off now than it would be with me. That he should try very hard to get to the Union, but he was afraid he could not. That if I found any-body I loved, I must marry him, and try to be happy. He used to say he should go mad if I left him. He always stood up for the North, and found fault with the South. His mother came from the North-Oh, baby could walk, and could say almost any-thing. He would not let me have any-thing to do with colored men, he said they weren't good enough for me. He was my cousin, and he named the baby for his uncle.": "How old are you?" said Mrs Brown to a woman one day. "Oh, I ant but thirty-five. I ant done breedin yet. I reckon breedin ages a woman." "I ant done breedin yet" is a frequent statement here. "We are in Virginia! Anne Devor, another of our clothing-women, says she was always hired out to her husband, at first for ten dollars a month, then for five, and then for nothing, because she was breeding. (She has lost her six children.) Both Ary and Anne are now sitting with my writing-class, both greedy learners. Ary says her young Master constantly begged her to learn to read and write, but she says she was so happy with him she did not care about his teaching her, and now she wishes she had not lost her opportunity. "I can stumble along right smart," said an old-man, when asked by Miss Smith if he could read. A woman stands by me, while I wrote, who buried a young child this afternoon. She came to us this morning in Dr Brown's parlor, and asked for medicine, saying the child was taken sick this morning. We sent her to Dr. Huckins. She says now Dr H. went with her immediately, and told her her child was dying as fast as it could have. "It had some kind of consumption-chill." She says, -as I am not yet well enough to go into an airy barrack I called the first-class of scholars to my room today . Mrs Brown has constantly said to me, since I came here, "Do take your mornings. Dont rush right into your work." She says now, I am reaping the penalty of using "my morning"-But I think my sickness has been one long gasp for fresh air. My

temporary school-room was in a barrack whose space was monopolized by bunks, and as no admittance was not on our sign-board, the eager children crowded pestilentially around us. Until our schools can be organized, we are forced to give divided attention to good readers, indifferent readers, and A. B. C. Darians; but we find no difficulty in keeping the fixed attention of all, and in making the lessons equally profitable to all. By enlivening easy-reading with oral instruction each mind is kept interested, the beginner dwelling on the little word and the little thought, and the more mature grasping what we put within his reach. I wrote to Sarah Folger that Sarah was the victim of hard-work, stoves that spit fire one minute and [blackly?] say they did not the next a wind-ridden, north-sided bed-room, and the fickliest of climates, summer is coming now, and moreover, we have learned the ways of the wind and really believe we shall fraternize amicably with the climate in time to come. Sandy and his wife have just been called behind my chair by the Dr. "Well Sandy, will your wife be comfortable at Fort Norfolk if I let her join you there?" xx "Well, Lucy, where's your other husband?" "They sent him off Christmas before last sir." "I don't know about these things. In the North we should not allow such things. You don't love this husband, so well as you did your other, do you Lucy?" "Yes, sir, better." Well, if he should go off, and some fine-looking man should come along, what should you do?" "I'll never have another husband sir, if I ever get destituted of this one." But, supposing your other husband should come and claim you?" Well I think I'd not leave Mr [Johnson?] That's it Dr. says Sandy, looking up very soberly. "I'd leave it to her preference." "Well, where's your other wife Sandy?" "She's the only one I ever contained Sir." Well, supposing you take a notion to take some other wife, some day?" The way I've felt Dr, ever since I was a boy, was if ever I saw a woman I loved well enough to marry, to stick to her as long as I could. Then you think you'll never leave her Sandy? "I put myself with her suh to do as well with her, Suh, as long as I can stay with her, suh." "Did you ever want to go into the army Sandy?" "Yes, Sir, I did, indeed, sir. That seven days battle at Gaines' Hill, I wanted to go into, dreadful bad, but they would not let me, Suh." Do you think many of your people would be willing to fight?" Oh yes suh from now to Saturday night you'd have all you wanted Suh!" Would you be willing to fight, rather than go back into slavery?" "Yes, suh. I wouldn't ha come away Suh, if I hadn't felt willin to fight suh." "I have been in some scrimmages. I drove an army-wagon in Hooker's division three months and two days." "Well, Sandy you've got a nice wife and Lucy you've got a nice husband. When you get to Fort Norfolk have the chaplain of some regiment marry you." Sandy literally pulled his wool when he bade us goodnight. I note all conversations on the spot so the language is sure. One man, who stood before me a few nights ago, wore in his fore-lock a wooden comb, of the fashion of those Thomas distributed largely among the lousy beggars of Italy. Have I told you the favorite gracious courtesy mutually exchanged by fond lovers? A real dolce-far-niente, sunny Sunday luxury?— Hunting for hair-walkers. No mothers caress is fonder, no lovers embrace more welcome-if appearances are not deceitful-a smile of satisfaction and sweet peace lights the face that nestles in a lap-and the joy of well-doing kindles the face of the seeker. Nought abashed, the work goes on, pass by who may. Did I tell you of the Dr's checking our inward progress on our first-attempt to enter an evening meeting? "Be careful." "Keep back." "Dont get too near." Charmingly respectful and considerate of the solemnity of the occasion thought I, is the Dr. But poor Sarah, blushing at her hoops, felt mortified by the Dr's seeming allusion to her intrusive

fence, whose bars poked impudent infringement into the very faces of the worshipping crowd. We no sooner entered our house, than Sarah discussed with Mrs B. the feasibility of laying aside her hoops permanently. Mrs B. wondering at the strange suggestion, said 'twould never do to deprive our colored sisters of the delight they find in our expanded borders. It was only after another, and clearer warning that we found the Dr's consideration was for us, alone. He did not want us to take more life away from the meeting than we carried into it! At the last m'tg we attended, the Dr preached a sermon on practical religion. He loses no opportunity to impress upon the noisy worshippers that boisterous Amens, wild, dancing-dervish flourishes—"Oh thats the Devil," exclamations, Yu-ooo's, raw-aw-aw's, Ru-u-u-uh's and pandemoniamics generally, do not constitute religion. If the Dr had studied to be simple and direct in his thought and language, he could not have been happier than he was when he tried to tell them how to live and how to worship. His talking always tends to cultivate intelligent thought, and every listener kindles with appreciation; while "That's so, Dr." "Thank you, suh." "Thats the way." "We know it." is heard on all sides. Into the rubbing-of-eyes stage of wakefulness, only has the negro emerged from the darkness of slavery. This "in-the-army life of transition bewilders even the stupidest. Out of the shadow of the past: more effectually dead, and buried, and disconnected from their future than the past if the free-born can be: they sprang at a bound into the mysterious twilight if the present. Bewildered by the breaking of the shackles, and blinded by their life long imaginations of freedom, they work from their dazzled dreams with the consciousness of having put off the old without putting on the new. The dawn of freedom they believe will come with the end of the war. Still, they are alive! and hope and faith live in them! and a hoe makes a man of them! I can truly say, white-man though I am, that I have, with the Negro, "a feeling sense" of this state of transition. Lo! an episode! Every hour of my life here is strange it is not the past; it is not the future, and, with all the chances and changes of war it does not seem to be the present either. Carlyle is right. Quashee does love to lie in the sun. No matter how bright the coals are within doors, no matter how sharp the winds are without, the men pilaster, or (men though these are) [?] the outer walls of their barracks, and the women sit in now, elbowing the walls, and busy with their needles. Sit and sew when they don't stand and wash. Clothes washing is mania with the women, and the barracks always look winged for flight. Another mania with the women and children, and a much more offensive one is an almost universal [erased] There are no out-at accomodations on the front of the Isd and though tubs, daily emptied at low-tide, serve as substitutes, "the flag of truce," as the Dr calls it, "is always hung out." He thinks the flag would serve to deter any designing rebels from invading the Isd. [Inserted: Look twelve lines below*
*The friends of Phila have sent us a dozen earthen vessels for the sick and storm-staid.] Quashee shuffles and foddles and walks about with folded hands: rides horse-back when he goes a rod or two to call Miss Smith to dinner; calls the wheel-barrow into requisition when its sure to increase his load and totes[?] himself, as well as every-thing else through life. A word well chosen is tote. Tote he does and tote is the word for him. Inglorious too is Quashee. The bed by night and chest of drawers by day would be made to serve more than two ends with him. His favorite way of carrying fire-coals is between two tongs-wise sticks, but coals come to my fire-place(?) on tin-plates, in wash-basins; on stove-covers and, when the circuit of non-combustible kitchen utensils is exhausted, the coals go to the rounds again. Mrs. Brown thinks we're by the sea you know:- Venus, God-like in stature but of fallen angel hue stole up to me, a few days ago, with a

whispered request for “Little things,” but, her own need of raiment being nearly as glaring as that of the marble and canvas Venuses of my acquaintance I gladly embraced my rarest of opportunities—to give unasked! I have never told you of my ridiculous fondness for Army-bread. Potomac-river bread, I call it since the Dr tried to sweeten it for my palate by telling me that it was made with the dirty water about Norfolk. Not losing my relish for it, he threatened to tell me something worse about it, but it is still sweet and good. The Quartermaster in Norfolk deserves great praise. More delicious beek and mutton than we have had here uniformly I never ate. Today we are house-keepers, living alone. Come and see us, one and all, sure of a welcome. Mr Newbold-Reporter of the N.Y. Times has made several visits here lately. He invited me to join an army party to Crummond Lake and the Dismal Swamp. Mt Young of the Boston Herald, gave Sarah a similar invitation: I was sick when Sarah was invited, and Sarah was sick when I was invited. Mr Brainard (?), and enthusiastic and interesting minister, made a little visit here, a few weeks ago. He is well known as a Cherokee missionary. The man who first made the Cherokee a written language. He entertained us with a story of his lonely voyage on the Miss. in a canoe by night and under one by day. We had a bona-fide wedding, while he was here. Yesterday the Dr sent one of his lieutenants to serve a writ on one of his farms seven miles from Norfolk and the officer fell in with rebel cavalry-pickets. Pryor is in this neighborhood and it is supposed he has given up Suffolk, and has designs upon Norfolk. The N.Y. 99th Regt,8 has pocketed thousands from the sale of colored men. Mr. Young saw their last victim, and his reclaimed money and watch at the slave money and watch at the Provost Marshal’s in Norfolk. Ever lovingly Lucy

April 1, 1863 Lucy Chase to home

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[April 1, 1863

6th Dear Ones at home: “I doe want to go on ery farm.” “I doe want to leave Crane Island” is now the cry of the women unused to field-labor, and of some of the timid men, who, made aware by painful experience, that, in these war-times, one knows not what a day will bring forth, prefer the comparative security of the Island, to the uncertainties of the distant main-land. Heart-broken too, so many of them are! Husbands are with the army, they know not where. They are alone, with no one to comfort them. “All my children have died, since I came into the army,” I hear lonely mothers say, Every day a good old motherly-soul came out into the darkness last evening, (while I stood waiting for Mr King to open the school-room for me) and said- “Is that Miss

Lucy? Wont you come in, and sit by the fire?" And she ushered me in right sweetly. Gave me a warm seat, stooped to the stature of her broom, fresh from the green-pine tree, made her hearth clean and attractive, lighted a new pine-knot, and held it, more gracefully than hand of stone can do and told me of her husband with the rebels-her only remaining child of nine sold, she feared, "down South." My last child died two weeks ago. She was so high and she was amazing helpful. She could sew and knit.

She could spin and weave, and mind the chickens, and tend the children. Oh I should go wild, if I had not any children to look upon." A feeble cry from the bunk and she rose, and took in her arms a young infant, a motherless child, her charge. "My desire is mighty to hear from my husband," she said. Sad faces were around her, and each had her sad story to tell. They seemed willing to go upon farms. One of them said, "I think all of us have a good deal to be thankful for, just think, we haven't been sick since we've been travelling." "Travellers" indeed they are, poor creatures. Coming from nowhere, and going nowhere. "We went to Yorktown first, then to Hampton, then to Craney Island, then to Newport News, then here again, and now we must go again; but I am willing, for I like the Union folks better than our folks," said one woman last night. Our home-girls and many others, have pitched their tents on many fields since they "entered the army." I told Mary-Jane last night that her aunt was going to a farm today, and gave her leave to go with her, but she begged me to let her stay with us, and live with us when we go to Norfolk. "I shant leave Miss Lucy and Miss Sarah as long as they stay here," said our Ary, fond and true. "And I'll stay with them wherever they go, if they'll let me." Ary came to us when the Browns left, said not a word about staying, and heard not a word, but claims us, and keeps with us and means, evidently to leave the running away for us to do. The dear child was in tears, all last evening. "We must leave the Island," grieved her. Old Sukey, our house-cleaner, asked Ary one day, where she got her straight black hair. "My father gave it to me," she said. She told us that her father "Left word, on a piece of paper, that he loved her as well as he did his other children, and that he wished her, as his youngest, to have the largest share, requesting his oldest child to take charge of it, until she came of age, but before that day, the war broke out." She often speaks of her fathers affection for her, and says; "If my father had lived I should have been free. ..." They warm my heart, these warm-hearted people. One almost worships the wealth of love with which God has blessed them, and willingly forgives the barbarous assaults they make on ones patience and forbearance, remembering that slavery alone is responsible for the scars which so disfigure them. The aristocratic pride of the F.F.Vs, is here to trouble us. "I an't going with those North Carolina niggers," say the F.F.Vs, when they are called to go to the farms. "I'm willing to go any-where, where the Union folks put me," some say. "I think we ought to be thankful that they think so much of us. "I 'm willing to do any-thing but be put outside the lines." "I wouldn't uh come away, if I hadn't uh been." They chuckle with satisfaction, and a feeling of reverence [?] when they say, "The Union-folks own all the States now." Proud as they are of speaking of the wealth of their old masters—"Oh, Master was very rich, he owned five farms, and five hundred negroes!") their pride and importance is greatly increased, now they are in the hands of the "Union," who owns all the estates of all their masters! We asked a colored woman we met in Norfolk, to whom she belonged. She said, "I don't know, I reckon I'm Massa Lincoln's slave now. ..." I wrote this letter, for Fanny, Mrs. Brown's cook. "Your mother is ceasted (deceased) [sic], and your sister Sally. I am right well, I thank you. All your inquiring

friends and sisters is all well.” Nancy said, after I closed her letter, “I hope I shall hear from it very soon. It will console me great satisfaction.” When North Carolina came to bid Mrs Brown good-bye, she told us that her daughter was recently confined, and was “as well as could be respected, maam.” She said she herself had had a great many children. “I used to have one, every Christmas, but when I had six, I put a stop to it, and only had one every other year. I think they have too many children here. I think the business better kind uh dry up till things is more settled.” Nancy, mourning over her absent children, said, “They did every-thing for me except eat. . .” Our school children delight us. Their bright faces, bright heads, and bright little ways would win us easily to make pets of them, if we had time to think of them except as parts of one great whole. I wonder if white children pore over books as my colored little ones do! And I wonder, also, if any white child ever leaped into the mastery of the penmanship of his own name with the agility which characterizes my little children. I told Dr. Russell that I let pot-hook’s go hang, and rushed my scholars in one day, from little A to their full names. All do not learn so rapidly, and I do not approve of writing-made-easy plans. But five slates is all I possess, and, as each scholar is ambitious to write, I feel obliged to hurry their little fingers. I let them pass from letter to letter, only when they form them well; and, knowing that a tomorrow may take them from me, I strive to stimulate and fix their ambition to write by letting them see that they really can write their own names. Even Nancy, old as she is, wrote her letters, at once, as well as if she had been a month at the writing-desk. Perhaps if I was more used to “beginners” my amazement and delight would not be so acute. In answer to a letter I read from New York, a few days ago, I asked from the Friends a thousand slates, which I look for very impatiently. Eliza Dodge led me to expect to be obliged to make the negro dialect a study, but I have found no difficulty in understanding it. I do not aspire to graduate elegant talkers from my school, but I try to teach the children that act does not spell “at,” must does not spell “mus,” n o r is not “nur,” and are is not “ur.” Sarah and I take our kerosene-lamp, occasionally, to the school-room, and call in the sweepers, and squad-men, who are busy during the day. There is something truly solemn in the earnestness shown by the men students. They are so warm, and emphatic, too, in their expressions of thankfulness that I feel crushed by my own sense of obligation. Perhaps my little nephews would like to hear my scholars spell? What does Dinner spell? “Dinner.” What does s-u-p-p-e-r spell? “Supper.” What does Hood spell? “Breffust,” screams a little boy who has kept his mouth open and his eyes fixed on me during the whole lesson. I hang a card on the wall, and point to Be set. “B-e (be) s-e-t (set).” “Beginning to set.” I point to sleep—s-l-e-e-p. “Sheep.” “No, sheep is s-h-e-e-p.” “Oh, yes, that’s lamb,” screams a little voice, for all my children scream, and I am forced, as Sarah says, “to outscreech the screamiest.” We have found a number who learned to read in slavery. Before our school was opened, we asked Jane Washington, a good reader, if she would not teach the children in her neighborhood. She said, “Fur as I am able I do teach people in this camp. Fur as I know the A.B.C. book I teach my children. I had all the chance when I was young, to learn with my owners.” Men come home tired with their labors, sit in their door-ways, with their open books, till dusk drives them to the fire-light and are joined at their fire-sides by their little ones, with whom they “Stumble along right smart.” Harrison’s Landing is the name of our spirited boy; our wood-chopper and errand-boy. I want to see you all here, and I wish every-body I love would cross my threshold but I am; not at all eager to make a display of my housekeeping. If you want any-thing done just do it

yourself, seems to be the maxim of the Islanders. "MaryJane, put some warmwater in this jug, and clean it for molasses," I say before tea. After tea, I say again, "Mary Jane, put some warm water in this jug, and clean it for molasses." I go to bed. In the morning, I say, "MaryJane, put some warmwater in this jug, and clean it for molasses." Two days afterwards I clean it myself. "Oh, your fire is going out, Mary Jane, put in some wood." In ten minutes the fire goes out, and put in the wood myself. "You may boil some eggs, Mary Jane, put the tea-kettle on, and let the water fairly boil." "It has boiled, some time ago, Maam." Before Dr Brown left us the reins were in our hands one

day, while Mrs Brown was in Norfolk. At dinner-time the mutton came on cold, and we sent it to the cook, to be warmed in the oven. Not coming in, in due season, we went out to look after it, and found it in the center of the kitchen-floor while cook, waiter, and other attendants were eating their dinners puss-in-the-corner fashion. To gather about the table is not the negro fashion. Facing the corner wall, like a naughty child in durance, is their habit. White people are looked upon as intruders in their kitchens. We put broom and brush at work, vigorously, the moment the kitchen was ours; and fondly trusted our garnished closets would remain clean, but a day had not worn away before everything had slipped from the bag, (which had lost its string) and was most emphatically "lying round loose." Ground-coffee, hard-tack, pork, ham, tin, earthen, and glass-ware, with my cherished Potomac-bread jumbled into hodge-podge, strewed the shelves. . . . Milk is a fluid that does not circulate here. Meat we are sometimes without, and all the oysters we get we send as a

gift to Dr. Brown. Potatoes too, are wanting, both because they cannot be had at the Commissarys, and because those left us by Dr. Brown, left themselves with fifty children Sarah called into the attic, when she was unable to go to the school-room. "What shall we have, rice and homminy, or mush and rice?" I ask Sarah in the morning. "Shall we have rice and boiled eggs?" says Sarah at noon. "Lets have mush we both say at tea-time. I am really learning to like Southern corn, and I am convinced that it maintains a more amicable agreement with the stomach than yellow-meal does. If you could eat the negroes corn-cake, you would no longer ask for scalding water, milk, eggs, soda, or yeast for your "Indian-cake." Comes one day, in a pitcher, some milk, a present from Mr. Moss, a half pint it is, but we prepare for a pudding for dinner, promise ourselves chocolate for supper; design to reserve a cup-full to make cake to serve as a treat to Dr and Mrs Brown, when they call on us, and show great want of calculation in our great calculations. Chocolate we will have.

I measure the chocolate, hold the pot while Mary Jane pours water into it, say "Enough" when there is enough, and am satisfied, since I feel sure that we shall have chocolate as thick as cream, if we don't have cream for our chocolate. Comes to the table a pot filled to the brim, and every pitcher in the house vacantly declares it "Hasn't had a drop of milk in it since it came into the army!" Oh! I never loved a dear Gazelle! &c!! Morning comes. We are hungry, but cool. Yes, quite cool and collected. "Harrisons Landing, did you say there was no bread at the commissary?" What shall I do. We have no yeast. I highly approve of soda, when tisn't to be had; and it was never so high in my estimation as now. "No meat, you say, Harrison?" "Beans and pork we'll have for dinner, Mary Jane." Home from school and into the kitchen, to find Mary Jane mashing the beans into pulp. "Because they an't done enough Maam." Sarah said she was tired of mush, and had hoped to find variety in beans, but there was mush

again. Sunday comes, and we go to Norfolk, and in Commodore Pegrim's house (where Dr Brown makes himself very comfortable). We find "The Virginia Housewife, or Methodical Cook." We pocket it (with leave) fancying we are carrying a larder to the Island, but when every receipt calls its roll of ingredients, we are obliged to answer, "Absent without leave." Order refusing to reign in the kitchen, we are determined to attune the parlor. Desiring to know we were clean, that we might have a reason for feeling clean, we set Sukey to washing the chairs. After she had washed rebels, unionists, and contrabands from their backs, she, resting from her labors in each one, wiped out her work by wiping herself into them. When I asked Mary-Jane, this evening, to hand me a glass of

water, I called her attention to the unclean tumbler, which she speedily made clean with the towel to which I was indebted for clean feet. All seem to prefer wearing the tare to taking the stitch. Dresses given out one day for wear look the day next as if they should be called in for repair. I have clothed two women, today, who have been through the winter without petticoats, their dresses and chemises alone covering them. I have no doubt there are still many equally destitute. "Clothe them in squads, Clothe them in squads, Miss Chase" has been Mr Coleman's command, from the first. "I'll send them to you. You won't know who were clothed before you came." "Pray don't give out irregularly." "They lie so, you'll be constantly deceived." I saw, at the outset, the absolute necessity of meeting the greatest want, let it be in "Granville's squad," or in "Uncle Billy's" in the tents or in "No 5 Barrack"; but my judgment was set aside. Next winter, even, will find some unclothed from our stores, and if we keep up our system of order, many of the most needy must suffer. We strive to guard against deception, by keeping a list of articles and recipients. But that is not all the safe-guard we need. Sarah and I, finding six or eight rolls of Georgia gray upon the storeroom shelves, set ourselves at work, almost immediately after we came, in cutting them into dresses; cutting waists and sleeves, and preparing linings. Feeling that not a moment should be lost, while there was nakedness in the camp, and creeping ourselves with sympathetic chills, we worked upon them until we were exhausted. But our forty-five or fifty dresses never came to light. They were Georgia-grays! and, falling not into field-hands, were made into under-skirts! Shoes here are an anxiety to us. They stand in such need of insurance against fire. Whether cold, or warm, a blaze attracts the negro, and into the hottest fire he plants his shoes. We were at home, last Sunday and made the circuit of the ramparts, for the second time only, since I came upon the Island. Within one or two minutes walk from the house and the office, is a view of great beauty, and surpassing interest. Norfolk and Portsmouth can be seen from our parlor windows, Sewall's Point from our bed-room. But the view of which I speak, adds to the picture, Fortress Monroe, Hampton, Newport-News, and Pigs Point, and the waters are ever alive with sail-boats and steam-boats. A week ago, the Army of the Potomac moved from Newport News to Suffolk, and for several days gun-boats and transports passed the Island in rapid succession. . . . My steps were constantly dogged by whining and complaining beggars. "Oh, can't you let me enjoy myself! I've been here three months, and have had no time, till now, to look about the Island. Why you'll make me afraid of you all, and I shan't dare to look about me again." "I never tease white folks, I don't go near you. I have not had a thing given me since I came here. If I only had some shoes, I could get along, I didn't bring nothing with me. This here top-frock is all I've got," with similar original, novel, and interesting statements. If we wish to see a little home-life, and enter a tent or barrack, after the fathers have come in from their

work to sit at their own fire-sides, we raise discord, and mar our picture, before we have fairly looked upon it. "Oh what a bad cough you have!" I say. "She wouldn't have a cough, if she had some shoes," says a surly matron, who pokes the fire, and proffers us no hospitality. When waylaid in a city, from morn till night, the most benevolent can conscientiously say to the beggar, "I haven't the wherewithal." Doubting somewhat, to be sure, but silenced, the beggar turns away, with a "God bless you," with no curse following after you and blessed yourself by your will to do, you pass on, with your moral courage unabated. But woe rests on her who holds the key to the store-house on Craney Island ! She knows the gift and the power to give are hers, and the Islanders know it also. She knows the needy are many and the greedy and lying are more, that she may withhold where she should give; and that error in judgment may work mischief.

When one pair of shoes is in

the store-room, and one hundred feet go bare, she wonders which of the fifty will, next week, walk into her grave, because her feet are unshod: —wishes she knew today, as well as she will know then. When Philia sends a dozen shawls, and every woman who comes to the clothing-room declares she has nothing for her shoulders, she wonders if she does right, when she sends the strong and healthy from the door, and piles again her dozen shawls, reserving them for the old and sickly. "Please Maam, give me a comforter, I've only one thin blanket," says everybody. One thin-blanket is not enough in the airy-barracks on windy Craney Island, but there are some without the thin-blanket, and a double gift to any-one enrages a whole barrack. We must not only guard against robbing the needy, by giving to the comfortable, but we must strive so to regulate our charities as not to educate paupers, and to demoralize ourselves; and the task is no small one. Norfolk March 30th. No one is allowed in the streets here, after 9PM without the pass-word, and every citizen has been forced to give up his fire-arms. A few nights ago, the pickets at Fort Norfolk were fired upon and an attempt was made to rescue the prisoners. The same night an attempt was made to burn the Customs House here. Randall, a boy the Dr brought from the Isd, was mobbed a few weeks ago, because he was a "Union-man's nigger." Secession-feeling is rampant here; and the women are often noisy and disagreeable. When Sarah was crossing the ferry, she was entertained by two of the F.F.'s, who talked loudly against Massachusetts. Dr Brown commanded some ladies, one day, on the ferry-boat, to hold their tongues. He said their impudence was intolerable. Upon Henry A. Wise's farm, the Dr found a poor man, whom he allowed to stay, until repeated fits of intoxication compelled him to remove him. After which step, the Gov's brother sent to the Dr's overseer a violent letter of remonstrance. "Please inform the Dr. that while I do not wish to threaten, I will be heard by a candid world, even if my appeal must be made through her Britannic Majesty herself." A notoriously eloquent family is the Wise family. This letter was made doubly ludicrous by a rich expenditure of rhetoric. The Dr offers us the care of the negroes on the Wise farm, Gov Wise's house for our own, and his beautiful estate for our enjoyment. But we think, when it becomes necessary to leave the Island, we shall take charge of the negroes on two adjoining farms. One hundred and fifty negroes will be under our care near Portsmouth. I suppose we shall also have some supervision of most of the scattered Islanders. When schools were opened in Portsmouth, a slave-holder there said, "The schools will destroy fifty-thousand dollars worth of my property." One of our main-land neighbors, at the Island, is disgusted at the very thought that any-body could be found so silly as to come out here to teach the negroes! "I'd poison a Yankee, in a

moment, if I could get a chance," she says. Another neighbor, who has lost all his negroes, says, piteously, "I should not have cared, if they'd only given me notice that they were going!" Poor man, they went and left no sign! no farewell fitly spoken I am beginning to take quite a fancy to Norfolk, dull and dead though it is. It is beautifully situated; many of its houses are fine, and most of them are home-like, and pleasant; and its streets are (now, certainly) kept very clean. Business is dull here. No jeweller has taken the oath, and the jewellers are not allowed to sell, though they can make repairs. "Sunday morning used to be the great market-day. There is so little business done here now, no store-keeper cares whether he opens or not." Sarah and I heard a sermon in the Episcopal Church which I suppose was designed to be discerned by spiritual ears the ears of Southern spirits but whose literal interpretation was unmistakably "Let my people go out of darkness into light, out of slavery into freedom. State St and Wall St could have cried, "A rabid anti slavery discourse!" if their ears had heard it. "The chains of slavery are galling, though they be wreathed with roses." "The house of bondage is a prison-house, however ornamented its architecture." "Your deliverer has come, the boon of freedom is offered you." "Who would choose slavery, when freedom might be his?" "The children of the bond-woman shall not be heirs with the children of the freed-woman." "The Romans held slaves, but the slaves might become free." And so talked the man, on and on, for a hour. The slaves in the gallery stooping over the balustrade, and giving keen attention to every word and the people, motionless, keeping their eyes fixed on the preacher, and putting on airs of patience, and acquiescence. The minister was from Portsmouth. I presume his hearers did not question his soundness, but, knowing not what ears were there to hear, they might have doubted the propriety of the man's mode of treatment of the subject. The church is the oldest in the town, having been built in 16—. It is very light and pleasant. The singing was excellent. The congregation had the air of decayed gentility. Well-kept men in well-kept Spanish Cloaks, and women making the most of well-kept finery of past days.... The Dr. no longer thinks Genl Viele will supersede Genl King tho' he said to him, the other day—"When shall we have you for our King? You are, you know our heir-apparent." Military discipline seems to be very lax here. I wonder the guard are not required to report treason on the ferry-boats. Miss Smithheard a noisy lady say, on the boat, "I wish all the Unionists had one neck, that one blow might sever the head from the body." Travelling secessia is obliged to go under the Stars and Stripes in crossing the ferry; and I suppose the forced recognition of protection adds gall to the already envenomed tongue. The ferry-flag once waved before the Provost Marshal's office, in the Custom-house; but, as Norfolk would walk around it, and not under it, it was hung where Norfolk must, would and should, go under it. Dr. Hand passed a night with the Brown's, last week and told them of the bitterness of Southern feeling at Suffolk. He said an Adjutant called recently at a house which the officers frequent, as guests, and was there introduced to a young-lady caller, who immediately raised herself, and said, "I wish I had a pistol, and I would shoot you." The Adjutant replied, "You must excuse me, if I do not know exactly how to respond to such a salutation. It is a style unknown among the ladies at the North, and I have never been educated how fitly to meet such advances." The next day, the Adj. asked Dr Hand if he would like an excellent house for hospital-purposes, adding, "I know of one where a rabid secessionist lives." The Dr took steps toward taking the house, but when the old father humbly begged pardon for his rash daughter, he desisted. He said to Mrs Brown, "It is as hard

for me, as it [is] for Genl Viele, to turn women and children out of house and home." I rode, today with the Dr, upon one of his twenty-odd farms, the only one I have visited. It is charmingly situated upon Tanners creek. The water sweeps in a curve before the doorway; narrows the strip of land about the house, and flows on either side of it. We took turnips from the ground, saw cabbages of large dimensions, peas promising plenty, and that speedily, and talked of the tobacco and cotton to be. Monday morning. While we were waiting in the Dr's office, this morning, for our boat, Mrs. Gayl[?] and her daughter from our first confiscated farm—came in to beg a bedstead and a chair from the Dr. The daughter was young, and very pretty, but fire was in her eye and fury on her lips. While they were in waiting the Dr received an order from Genl Dix put in his hand (designed to overrule Genl Viele's conciliatory courtesies,) to retain, in safe-keeping, all property found upon the confiscated estates, except such articles as he (the Dr) might permit the occupants to carry away with them. "Well, you promised me the chair before you received this." The daughter encouraged her mother in making appeals, and the Dr said, "When your daughter comes here with the stars in her hair and the red, white and blue in her bonnet, I'll see what I can do." "You'll never see that," said the daughter. "I'll starve, first." "Oh, you'll be a good Union woman, some day," said the Dr. "Never." "Do you know what the ladies did Fast-day?" "Fast-day, what Fast-day," said the Dr. "Why, last Friday, the President's Fast." "Oh, did Prest Lincoln proclaim a fast, for last Friday?" "No, Prest Davis, our Prest." "Oh, I've heard of the man," said the Dr. "Yes, I

reckon you have," said the miss, "and reckon your army has too, and will hear of him again, very soon." "You would not let us go to Church Fast-day, and I'll tell you what we did. The ladies fasted and prayed at home." "Did you fast?" asked the Dr. "Yes, indeed I did, I took a cup of coffee in the morning, and I did not take anything else all day." "Well," said the Dr "I never saw you half so pleasant, as you are this morning, if you would fast very often, you'd soon fast all the Secesh out of you." "Hmmm I dont wish to do that. I'll never do that."

Avery little girl said to Ary, in Portsmouth, "I don't like you, I'm secesh, I don't like any-body who came from the North. I don't like my mother because she came from the North." On our way from Norfolk we stopped at Fort Norfolk, to see the wife of the surgeon, who has repeatedly called on us. Secession-ladies have been in the habit of flocking to the Fort, and talking treason noisily. Mrs. Ensign heard some ladies threatening to "make the Yankees leap," the day of the attack. A lady from Richmond arrived in Norfolk within a few days.—In rebel-correspondence, recently received, it is stated that boats from Norfolk run the blockade three times a week. The lady of the badge (who forged a pass in the office of the Pvt Marshal,) has finally succeeded in running the blockade.—Between here and Norfolk, we see [a] little white flag floating over the wreck of the Merrimac. At low-tide the boiler of the Merrimac can be seen. From an old boiler at Fort Norfolk and from the doors of the barracks the soldiers have made ornaments, and have made fortunes by selling "Bits of the Merrimac." Our copper bolt and our wood were taken by Mr Kings own hands. With my own hands, I bore away from Pigs Point, shrapnel, and made my horse bear away a lignum vitae cannon-wheel. Mrs Brown found, in her house, a letter from—Pegrim [sic] who commanded the battery at Pig Point. He said all the harm he could do the enemy was to grin and make faces at them. Newport News lies opposite the Point. The James River, and the Nansemond were protected by it (supposed to be). We found cannon in the fort, one still mounted. Seven of the cannon were casemated. The land-sides were protected by breast-

works, and the quicksands outside the casemates were forced to inertia by elaborate wickerwork. The chimneys are standing of a well to-do-house, which stood within the fortifications. Flowers were blossoming in the garden, and I brought away roots from the soil. Our ride took us through the Louisiana and Georgia Camps. The Louisiana Camp, which in an early letter I called the Georgia Camp, has given its last log to our fires. The Dr was very much distressed, early in the work of destruction, by finding the houses deserted in which two or three colored families had been sheltered, and he called his workmen to account, thinking they might have molested the people. But he learned that they fled from fear of their former master, who since they set up for themselves, and refused to come and go at his bidding threatened to burn them out if they did not speedily leave his soil. The Georgia Camp was built upon twelve broad streets. The rebels burned the barracks cold comfort for us Islanders. Peach-orchards abound in these regions. We passed several in our ride. Three weeks ago the peach-trees were in blossom in Dr Brown's yard. It has always been supposed that peace alone enables a man to sit under his own vine and fig tree, but to war, alone Dr Brown is indebted for the beautiful fig trees which now promise him fruit. A large evergreen mulberry stands before Dr Browns door. The live-oak, branching like an apple-tree with leaves like a berry is one of the glories of this region. The magnolia is common here, and other beautiful ornamental evergreens, whose names I could learn if I could succeed in finding a native who knows them. "Have you ever been married, Miss Lucy?" asked one of our very few kind-tempered and sympathetic women (whose goodness is patent.) "Nor Miss Sarah either?" "Well, a good husband is very comfortable, but its mighty bad to have a bad one." My kitchen "people" quarreled today about the question of honor due each other. One of the boys was an overseer, and he demanded of the others to call him overseer. Mary Jane said, "My master would kill any-body who called anybody but a white person Missis." Ary boasted of her white blood and all the others became at once enraged. "Well, how near do you think my child was to being white? My father was white, and his father was white." "Well," said one "Just tell me how many folks it takes to make a white person?" Ary was obliged to answer, "One white man and one white woman. Ever very affectionately Craney Isd. April 1st '63 Lucy

June 13, 1863 Lucy Chase to home

Describes the local homes, her own quarters, and the response of Black and white people to her work.

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Whitehead Farm No. 1

5th mo. 1863

Dear Ones at home:

Sarah and I are domiciled with the man who wrote the following, to Dr Brown; "Dr Brown, Sir I wish you would be kind enough to let me know if those ladys that were at my house to day are coming up here to teach school if they are I shall be obliged to move my family for we have never been used to Negro equality nor to White Ladys going in the kitchens and kissing the Negroes. Sir, I am a union man and ever shall be but I am not an abolitionist nor never can be as fer you I believe you are a perfect Gentleman you have always treated me as such and I am willing to do all I can for you and the Government but if you allow those Ladys to live on the farm you will get very little work done by the Negroes and it will end my peace fer this year as fer Mr. Giny he need not give himself any trouble about their teaching my children I am able to school my children as yet without sending them to a Negro school.

Yours Respectfully,

Wm Wakefield, Overseer"

Sarah glories in being nomenclator of the first babe among the new-born freemen upon Gov. "Wise's estate. "John Brown Wise" he is hight, and Sarah highted him, and she stood on Gov Wise's threshold, when she said "This be thy name!" I had the pleasure of taking the inventory of Gov Wise's household goods. I handled every dish of his superb dining-sets (said) I wondered if his blood-stained fingers gave the rosy hue to his finger-bowls; counted his very neat and pretty carpets; sat on the sofa where he has found rest, and which, he, perhaps, is now longing for. Saw his books, papers, and pictures, and thought How long it would be before he would see any of them again. I could not help mourning with the Wise-mourners, when I saw the carefully saved noses, handles, and covers, of very old and probably sacred pieces of china; and I really wanted to put them again into the hands that once itched to cement them. Gov Wise's farm is upon the East branch of the Elizth river, which makes a sharp turn around his estate, and heightens its picturesque beauty. Noble ash-trees stand on his lawn and the house, though old, is large, and wears a certain air of country stateliness. Six or eight negroes were left by his family in their old quarters. They told me they had no wish to see him back again; and they spoke of him with little affection. One woman told me she often heard the Gov talk with his family and friends about John Brown. The Govs elegant family-carriage stopped the way at my front-door, this very morning, and I was honored with an invitation to ride upon its cushioned-seat. To the Gov. we are indebted for our milk and butter--Sarah and I, for the time being, are sole proprietors of one of his cows....

As little milk as she can give gives the cow, and as poor (perhaps, also, as much and as rich) and her butter is not golden. Then to the tender mercies of Gov Wise's carriage I trusted myself, and, on the comfortless seat I sacrificed the vigor of my back-bone. The roads are hard to travel, and we expect in vain when we fancy the Virginians will mend any of their ways. Level as New Jersey is the country, round about, but over hill, then into hollow rolls the carriage, tumblety-bump; and, after rain has fallen, horse and wheel plough through mire (when the mire does not hold them fast.) A drive in any direction takes one through the woodlands, which are novel, and of surpassing beauty. The Southern pine, of delicate foliage, shoots its straight shaft far up into the blue; the hanging moss festoons the branches, and brambly vines luxuriant and various, bind all the motley trees in close fellowship. The foliage of the trees is more delicate than that of our forest-trees, the leaves sport in the breeze [?] more freely, and more grace and beauty crown the

Southern trees. The farm-houses, (Every-body out of town lived! on a farm) are invariably distant from the street, to which a gate by the roadside gives them communication. The houses are generally small, and unpretending; but those that have fallen into our hands are mostly very handsomely furnished, and, as good luck did have it whether it would or no, are charmingly planted on the river-banks. On the Bradford-farm we pant for breath; there, the woods fell for one-man's comfort, and the encircling woods of the hollow-square where his house is planted say "There is no beyond." And you believe them and you hope for nothing, and care for nothing, but keep on sighing because there is nothing. Martha Chase is shut in by woods on the Baker farm; but her horizon politely retires a quarter of a mile from her presence, and a road that starts from the plain and hides in the woodland premises something with its perpetual, "Come and see." But no house with its outside kitchen and negro-quarters can look lonely. Outside kitchen!! Sarah's and my horror by day and our servant's chamber by night! We run to it, scream to it, send to it, try hard to get something done in it, and try still harder to get something brought out of it. It is our haystack, and every-thing that belongs in the house is the pin we must hunt for there. We have four regular servants; and volunteer-aids, unnumbered; but, if we call on Polly, she summons Betty; and "Mary Jane do this," is sure to wake the echo, "Oh, Albert, whar's Albert!" Our kitchen is a heart-wearying treadmill. We can't get ahead of our smutty servants and their smutty kettles. A kettle clean, and in waiting for its stated work is a kettle that can not, could not and will not be seen! Our china is washed in our parlor, that porcelain and delf need not mar each other; but when the stores go from parlor to kitchen the china goes also; the silver seeks society, and goes with the saucer, the pitchers go to the pump; because we have four pails, and because they are very small and because the cistern is a great way off, and when they come back they stop in the kitchen because they don't belong there, and because that is going visiting. All the "people" stop "in the kitchen" also, because they don't belong there and because we tell them so. And our some-time smoking food stops in the kitchen, because its long past meal-time, and it did not happen to find its way into the parlor half an hour too early. From our large, four-sided, Craney Island house we came to our present crowded quarters, and when we put our stores into our parlor-closet, the uninvited, a host that no man could number, came in to partake of them. While I write, I listen to the music of falling grains of rice which the flies work from a dish to the floor. If the sugar bowl is uncovered for a moment, the blackness of blackness enshrouds it, and, like lumps of (negro) sugar the flies lie piled to its mouth. How hard it rains! thought Mr Lovell and we, as we woke in the mornings. The flies make their mark, emphatically, upon current literature. They work faster than I do, and fill all my sheets in advance of my pen. Our other dark little friends, who swarm about us do their best to relieve us of the pests. They fan us while we eat, and while we sleep. Oh! give me a slave to fan me while I sleep! (as the poet did not say) They would fain worship us, the little things. I suspect my head will fall a victim—not to the fever and ague, but to the fevre de negre, which is to scratch the head of himself or any other. I, one day, foolishly gave up my head to four little beseigers who robbed my head to enrich their own. They drew my torn hair over their wool, appealing to each other for compliments on their good looks. They like to handle us, to pull at our hoops, and hang about us. We find we can't keep them at a distance, so we let them creep, kitten-like into our parlor, remembering we are in Virginia, and doing as the Virginians do. But we are obliged to deny them the coveted comfort of

a seat in our rocking chair, since my fine-toothed comb has detected in my head what was once seen on a church-going lady's bonnet. . . .

Soldiers and their horses are constantly in our door-yard. Suffolk is pouring its hordes upon us. Genl Getty has taken one of our farms for his head-quarters, and is running a line of intrenchments through two or three others; and we expect the labor upon five or six must be sacrificed to the invading friend. Two or three fortifications are building very near us, and we confidently look for the war to come into Africa.

Four days ago, an order came from head quarters to send out pickets to seize all negroes and their teams on the highway without passes. And I, with my permanent pass, was startled by being stopped just beyond a picket-station near home, by some dusty soldiers, who demanded my pass. I asked for an explanation, and was allowed to pass on with Shorty whom the soldiers coveted. Very few people have passes for an indefinite period; and one soldier said to the other, "She's got the very best kind of a pass." On our return from the farm, three other wandering soldiers screamed out to Shorty, "You'd better look out, or you'll be confiscated." Whenever our servants have wished to go to near farms I have written passes for them; and yesterday, knowing that all men who cannot give a good account of themselves are to be put at work upon the fortifications, I wrote "My servants," on the boys passes. Thanks to the accident of my living on a Government Farm, and holding a pass which takes me to all the Farms in this Department, my passes pass; and I saw my boys again. On the Farm where Genl Getty and his staff are quartered is a flaxen haired blonde, the fairest of the fair; who sits alone and sings and paints. Four or five months ago, when the Dr took the farm, he found her living upon it, with a slave woman belonging to Mr Wilson, who was in the rebel-army. He cross-questioned her with little satisfaction, and was convinced she was a spy. He tried to convince her that it was unwise for her to remain; and he urged her to join her friends. Finding, two months ago, that she was frequently visited by officers, he begged her to come and live under our protection, but she refused. Determined to do all in his power to protect her, he obtained from Genl Viele an order forbidding soldiers to trespass upon Government farms and caused the order to be posted upon that farm, and upon neighboring farms. Pretty and accomplished though she is, the colored woman cannot be made to acknowledge herself to be her mother but the neighbors know that the black and white are mother and child.

When I made my first visit to the nearest farm the overseer's wife tracked into the kitchen after me, and said, "I should like to know why folks don't go round giving white children books and slates!" My time was too precious to heed the intruder, and so I went on with my talk to the negroes. Mrs Armstrong, standing six feet high, was determined to show me the extreme lowness of her stature as a Virginia white! and, while I offered a book to a woman near me, said, "Jane, what's the use of your learning to read, I'd like to know. You're a great deal too old, you cant learn." So Jane refused my book and slate, and "Did not wish to learn!" A few days ago, I visited the farm again, with clothing; and Mrs Armstrong (having, I suppose learned that I represented power it was wise in her to respect) was extremely gracious with her, "Miss Chase, would you like this?" "Oh yes, Polly, study all you can and learn, you ant a bit too old to learn." "Have you got a book, Jane?" "Oh Moses, you've got one, that's right."

Upon one of the farms this letter was handed me for Dr Brown. "Mr Willis Criss has been hear and wanted me to have him, and I dont want to have aneything to do with him and I dont him to

come here where I am. Mr Jerimiah Standing has been hear and has ben hear ever since last Cristmust on the place and I want to take him as my Husband and he has ben my husband ever since he has ben hear. I want to keep him as my husband. Mr Criss has ben hear and has threatened to kill my husband. I want you to keep him a way from hear and he does not belong to the farm at tall. Hannah Standing."

Coming from the Wise farm a few days ago, we picked, up five miles from Norfolk an old negro man with a runaway's pack on his back. He misunderstood our driver's inquiry and said, "No, I shant go back tonight, I reckon I'll stop awhile." We told him to jump into our clothing-tumbler and we found he was taking his first free walk. Refugees crowd into Norfolk and Portsmouth. The colored residents hold weekly charity meetings to aid them and government strives to feed them, and give them work, but hundreds are overlooked. While we were at the Wise farm a woman and two children found an asylum there--an asylum in the human stable, now washed and made clean by the blood of John Brown! "What do you need?" We say as clothing-women. Not being understood, we say, "What do you want?" To which in the language, that is plainer than words, there is one invariable reply, "Whatever I can get!" With no means of knowing what is greed and is need our anxiety and responsibility is unceasing and wearisome. We dined at a distant farm, the other day, and the colored cook, who had taken great pains to make the table attractive, to us, said, after dinner "I should have been very much interested if you had not eaten dinner here." Sarah handed an old man, (a good reader,) a testament, and he inquired eagerly, if he should find "Revolutions in it." Our servants ask if they shall "Pull any rubugs for us." If they shall pick "snaps" (string-beans) for dinner. If they shall "Cup the cow." Laugh, convulsively, whenever we say, "Hark!" to each other. Saying they never heard anything but Stop!" The mail! the mail! and the mail carrier. Excuse my short letter.

Ever lovingly LUCY,

Portsmouth Va—June 13 1863

Lucy Chase to Lizzie, July 8, 1863 (no transcription)

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September 30, 1863 Lucy Chase to home

Lucy offers an account of the move of a freedmen's camp, commenting on both the enthusiasm of the people and their difficult circumstances She emphasizes their passion for learning and love for their families and reports on a touching reunion.

<https://collections.americanantiquarian.org/freedmen/Manuscripts/Chase/09-30-1863.html>

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Craney Island, Sepr 30th 1863

Dear ones at home:

This last day of Sepr. 1863 is the last day of the occupation of Craney Island by the Contrabands! Two hundred negroes have just left for Hampton; and Sarah and I are awaiting the arrival of a Norfolk boat, that we may accompany the remaining negroes to Norfolk. Memorable indeed, will be these last days on the Island. Yesterday afternoon, the John Tucker, a huge steamer, "came into port," bringing orders for all destined for Norfolk to be ready for an early boat today, and designing, herself, to hurry away to Hampton with negroes and with bed and board of the contrabands; but though the beds were packed when she came, the boards were still in barracks, and though the eager "Travellers" snatched at their own rooftrees, the tide fell before their work was done; and they stayed to help us remember our last night on Craney Island!

After dark, Sarah and I took a pour prendre conge stroll, when we longed for you all to bear us company. Fires were blazing in the fire-places of the lonely chimneys, and picturesque groups were crooning over the embers. Out on the plain blazed fires, the centre of just such groups as you have heard of "Groups for a painter!" As we drew near one circle, we Oh'd for a Darley, a Walter Brown,² or a lead pencil. Facing us, sat an old man, with his withered, whisker-shaded face almost lost under his slouched hat; with his shoulders comfortably and cozily raised, as if to fondle his good-natured cheeks; and with his hands resting on the shoulders of a little child who stood between his knees. Around him stood all ages, sexes, sizes and conditions, but prominent amongst them all was the pomegranate young mother, the young wife of the old man upon whose loving and really lovely face all eyes were fixed, because her hand held the skillet, with its promise of supper. That out-stretched hand, grasping the long iron handle, its kindred in color, the golden steaming corn-cake, the fond and hungry children, the crackling fire, doing its best in a picturesque way, outlining each figure til it became a shining mark, the evening darkness, the desert plain, the long rows of house-deserted chimneys, the water all around and very near, and Sarah and I looking upon it all!

At one of the fire-places, whose sides were as numerous as the points of the compass, our welcome was very hearty. The good-dame said, "When my husband came it was 'God bless Miss Chase, God bless Miss Chase, God bless Miss Chase,' all the time! and I said, 'Who is Miss Chase?' He said, 'Oh, she's a good lady, if hadn't been for her I could never have got to the Island !'" "Yes, yes," said the man, "I shall love you always. I shall love you as long as I live." Sarah told me that when she came to the Isd she found him at the office, eager to get permission to come to Craney Island for his family, for whom he had already built a house. Permission was refused but my sister entreated in his behalf, and not in vain, and he was happy and his wife was happy, and they were both thankful. Around one fire the boys had gathered to dance and make merry. The door of a fallen barrack was their springkeeping and upon it they performed their jigs and horn-pipes, time to a variety of strange accompaniments the rapid and regular falling of the

hands upon the knees, the beating of feet, or the pleasing accompaniment of a tenor and base voice singing alternate strains of music. Of one of their Union songs I remember a few words "Richmond town is burning down." "High diddle diddle inctum inctum ah." The byplays and interludes were as good as the play. If a well-to-do dancer had his coat-sleeve pulled or was threatened with a tripe be turned from his partner, and almost before he was missed was rolling and tumbling with his teaser in the sand. Then all were challenged when one boy said, "You can't spell every." "Ev -ev ry ry- evry," said one and another each trying, all interested, and those who could say, with the pride of sure knowledge, "Ev- ev, Er-er- Ever-y," looking, for a moment, every inch the pedagogue. Spelling is with them an exciting pastime. When at work toting the barrack-boards to the wharf, men, women and children spelled aloud for their own private ears, though we heard now and then "B-o-a-r-d, Board," "H-o-u-s-e, House."

Under the fallen roofs some of the evening fires were built. in doors and out many families were preparing for a feast of rats! Under every barrack the dogs have found more rats than they had power to worry. One hundred and sixty huge rats were found under one barrack. Let many or few come to light, when the floors are raised, the negroes eagerly seize them, skin them, cook them and eat them. "Oh, they taste like chickens," you are told. "What are you cooking, Auntie?" "Some calls em squirrels, but they 'r altogether too tame for squirrels; I call em pigs. They ran all round my head last night, crying 'Peat weet.' They've lived long enough on my good things to be good eating. One night they ate up the whole of my ration of meal and meat, and now I'm going to take my pay. I reckon they'r as good eatin as possum. They only eat bread, and such like. I don't see any-body around here that won't eat em, any way. They say no, at first, but I have not seen any-one who did not say yes, after the first taste."

Sarah and I walked from barrack to barrack to say Good-bye. Every-body was packed or packing, but every-one had a smile for us. Though most of those we found upon the Island were recent refugees from Suffolk, (and strangers to us) our relation to them is much more intimate and sympathetic than it was with most of our last winter's friends. They are a superior class; have but recently become paupers and are not demoralized by long clinging to the skirts of the army; (from which insecure position the last winter Craney Islanders were so frequently shaken—dropped as they were at Yorktown, to be dropped again at Hampton, then again in Craney Island, then to be removed to Newport News, only for a season, to be turned back again to Craney Island upon the arrival of Corcoran's Legion at Newport News.) Then, too, they do not beg of us (probably because we came empty-handed) and consequently have no refusals from us. And, as we are "White folks" it "seems like home" they say, "to have us about," and they are really glad to see us.

From the barracks, we went, last night, to a religious meeting, where we beared a preacher worthy of a high seat in our Newport synagogue. He is from Gates County, N. Carolina, & and I feel very sure that he must have lived very near Friends, for his musical intoning can have been picked up nowhere but in Friends meeting; and his mode of appeal, of argument, and of illustration were decidedly Quaker-like.

Sarah's stay here has been a fortnight; while I have' been' here a week. We have taught the children, visited the sick, clothed some of the most needy, and done what we could to make the road easy for those who are seeking to join their families. One woman who always came to the school at the first sound of the bell, said to me, one morning, "I feel so anxious to learn ! Every

once in awhile I come to the name of God,—and the love of it, the name is so sweet, I can't help trying to learn!" We often hear the negroes singing this— Jesus been here, been here, been here,—Dun bless my soul, and gone." Some of them show, unmistakably, that their souls are blessed.

Sarah's stores for the sick, were, by mischance, left at Norfolk. The well on the Island were suffering for food; and we had nothing with which to tempt the convalescing. The Island has, until recently, been freely supplied with sweet potatoes from one of the Dr's farms, three or four miles from the Island; but a few days ago, Mr Lessing received an order from the Commander of the Pass-boat near Norfolk forbidding the removal of potatoes from the farm. Failing to receive rations from town, it being supposed there that each day would be the peoples last on the Island, none were sent, sweet potatoes were our main dependence. For several days, the people have lived on half rations; and have been obliged to work hard in tearing down and removing barracks. Sarah and I, contrary to good military order, had made, some days before, very satisfactory visits to the farm, and designed going again, on second day last. We were unable to go when the car cried, "I wait" and so lost a chance of being made prisoners. Our sweet potato cart with its potatoes, was seized and taken to the farm, but the horse and driver were allowed to return. Mr Bidgood, the owner of the farm, had come home, and we supposed took advantage of the fact that there was no overseer upon the farm, and that the farm is now outside the lines, and getting the Comr of the gun-boat into his buggy, he won him to his side.

Oct. 1st! Last night Sarah suggested to Mr Moss that all the beans in the commissary should be cooked at the cook-house, and distributed; so we watched with interest, all news of the progress of the cooking. The beans were few and dried peas and meal were added to the stew, but yet all were not fed. Of meal every-body had enough, so they could hardly be said to be starving, but when good things are lacking, the negroes say "They have nothing to eat.—" They tire of meal, of course; and many of the so lately well-to-do Suffolk people would go hungry before they would make it their staff of life.

Some grumbled this morning when we went our rounds; and most of the people, tired of looking for the moment of departure, "Should be glad when they saw the last of Craney Island." One jolly soul, who hurried in to a barrack as we were hurrying out of it said to her friends, "Oh I'm sorry she's gone; I love to hear her talk; she talks so pretty." She stepped forward to us, and said, "Oh, it's so funny not to have anything to eat." It was funny to us to see the different faces put by different dispositions upon the same hard fact. A few days ago, Mr Hand forbade vegetable carts from the mainland to vend their wares on the Island; and the loss of garden-"truck" aggravated the mental suffering, and perhaps accounted wholly for the complaints.

It was a very novel sight to look out in the morning upon ten or twelve market carts, the centre of a greedy crowd. A market on Craney Island would seem to be as unprofitable as coals in Newcastle though from a far different reason. The Island was cold, and bare, and strange to us, when we first made its acquaintance; and it was, in all respects, so savage that it seemed to be the truth I spoke when I said, The tents were left by the Arabs when they silently stole away. The waiting Islanders sit, in these last days, in their doorways, wondering what the future has in store for them. "I want to get a foundation and go to work," said one to me, "I should enjoy my health better, I know; Ise always used to work."

Few of them were aware, until we told them, that each man will have a few acres of land attached to his cabin. "Oh, that's a blessing," said one. One mother rejoiced for her children. "They'r all hemmed in here. They've always run all about the corn-fields, and climbed the apple-trees." "What to be done this winter?" asked a man. "To those whats exposed to take their families empty-handed, that's what I want to know." One asked me how "We hands whom that's worked at Suffolk could get their pay. Capt Sykes is a more punctualar man than to go away and carry the books." One man gave us a reason for many of the slaves near the lines remaining still with their masters. "Because they ant willing to go through no supperments."

When genl Foster visited the Island be ordered large openings to be made in a roofs of the barracks; and they have served, admirably, to keep sickness out in dry weather, and to let it in, in wet weather. In every rain-storm floors and beds were flooded, and colds came after, in due season. When the Genl ordered the removal. of the people Dr Huckins thought it as well to take the logs from the rebel-built cabins for fuel, as to send to the woods on the main-land; so one cabin furnished back-logs for all the cabins. But Dr Clark spared the remaining houses. One of the negroes said to me "We had to tear down the houses on account of the colored population having something to burn."

Octr 2nd. No boat for us yesterday; but today a tug and a barge came early. Upon the tug stepped Mr King, Sarah and myself; and into the barge went the colored people, with all their worldly goods. We left upon the Island, the Commissary and the Druggist with a few colored men to complete the destruction of the barracks.

It was a very pretty sight to look upon the confused crowd of the animate and inanimate floating at our side. Barrel-heads and human heads, canvas-bags without number, all in-doors turned out of doors; looking strangely "not at home." All enlivened by dashes of brilliant color on the head of or shoulders, and in the faces too, for there is an amazing variety in the hue African. Give me some vermilion, some blue, and some white, and you shall see a tint to be proud of. Lo, behold, this is the blood that runs in my family. Now give me some cadmium, golden cadmium, the very "Rays of the Sun" '—Dont be afraid to take too much of it. No matter if 'tis the most costly of colors shall it not picture the blood of the F.F.V's.

The blood of the F.F.V. 's, enriched and beautified by its admixture with the sang d'Afrique? Give me some Lake too, some. Prussian blue and some white. But I wont neglect the darker skins. The warm chesnut nut color, shining as the nut from which it borrows its name; enriched and glowing as no white complexion can be with its rosy blood. Purples that might well be called "Royal!" '—and Browns of many shades— I notice as much individuality in the faces of Negroes as I do in those of the whites. Their features are so much lost in the single shadow with which Nature has veiled their faces, that I once fancied that they would be bard to find and recognize. Every shade that light drops upon our faces lifts some feature into greater prominence. But black Sue looks herself as well as white Sue.

We hope to go, in a few days, to the farms where they will be established. No one can grieve over the loss of Craney Island; but we sympathize with the many loyalists cut off from market by the change of "Lines." A loyal German at Pig Point can reach no market with his sweet potatoes, and must go without flour. He showed his loyalty some months ago, by releasing from prison in Richmond a Union officer, whom he kept secreted for a month in his own house. Of course he is only one of many. Farmers break their contracts with Negroes unscrupulously. Some taunt the

negro with his loss of protection, and refuse to share the harvest with him. One farmer steadily refuses to share a large crop with his negro workman "Because he does not pay him twenty-five dollars he owes him." Knowing well that without a market the negro cannot get \$25. I called the attention of the Adj Genl to these cases, and he proposes securing the crops, and dividing with the negroes. He says there is no legal way by which to aid the German; but he promises to hire a lighter (of course no govt steamer can be employed) and bring up the potatoes making an exception of the German. We have a very familiar acquaintance with the Adj Genl and his wife. We broke his wife down, you know, in our buggy, one day; and then we all broke down together one day, in one of the Dr's large, three-seated carriages. I had interested them in the flaxen haired, blue-eyed girl, and her negro mother, on the Wilson farm, and we were on our way to see her.

We are frequently charmed with the delicacy and tenderness with which the Negroes express affection for each other. They know how to love, and how to remember. We sometimes witness the unexpected meeting of scattered members of a family. When the John Tucker was at the C. Isd wharf a little girl who had wondered where she should go, as she had no friends to go with, or to go to, strolled upon the deck of the steamer and found in one of the hands her father! After reaching Norfolk there were other surprising meetings and recognitions. Sarah assisted mans- to find their friends, and she found homes for some, and work for others. For some young boys she found work upon the fort near us, with the promise of ten dollars a month. Sarah teaches at the fort, first days, and she exults over the progress of her pupils. We are near the war-fields, still. The guard on our bridge are from a regt just come to town; and they seem to be as ignorant of military proprieties as they are of military officers. The evening of the same night the P. Marshal and his wife took tea with us, and as they seemed inclined to hurry away early, I said I would send my guard to the bridge to tell the sargeant that Maj. Beauvais would cross late in the evening. "I dont believe Maj Beauvais sent you, he would have sent a written order. Besides, I don't know him from Jeff Davis," was the tale brought back, so the Maj thought it as well to leave before the bridge was drawn. I looked from my window just now into a cloud of dust, and saw forty horses tied in one knot led by an artilleryman. They were followed by other troops and multitudes of horses which were knotted together.

Just now too, the four little children we have in our family, wild always, and irrepressibly playful, made such a bustle at our elbows that Sarah cried "Hark!" with amazing spirit. All hushed at once--but the always unquenchable Albert, who burst out in a muffled growl. Little, few-years-old Bennie, his dignified rebuker, who is as solemn in the parlor as he is playful in the kitchen, and who puts censure in his eye and surprise and sorrow on his young lips whenever the other children fail in showing due respect to "white folks" joined with Annie, (whose merriment is never below the gushing point,) in sternly reminding Albert that "Miss Sarah said Hark." "Oh! I thought she said Bark!" said ingenuous Albert. Annie said, just now, to Sarah, "What do you think I have found?" "Oh, a louse." "Is it a body-louse," said Sarah. "What do you call lice found upon the body?" "Jeff Davis's Calvary," said Bennie. A gentleman from Yorktown told us a secession song in honor of Jeff Davis and his steed—

Jeff Davis rides a fine bay mare,
While Lincoln rides a mule.

Jeff Davis is a gentleman,
But Lincoln is a fool.

The Adj Genl says the rebel mail brings to light many curious caricatures of Lincoln. His face to perfection, but always set upon foreign shoulders. When the Adj genl was speaking the other day, the excellent opportunity offered for the escape of criminals by the removal of officers, he said many would slip free, through Naglee's removal. Among them was the Capt of a boat, then lying at the wharf. The boat brought into port eighteen hundred gallons of whiskey secreted beneath her iron-sheathing. In the Genl office is now a loaf of bread in which a whiskey flask was buried. The loaf was found in a soldiers mess-box which was undergoing examination at the Custom House and the tin flask was discovered through a small crack in the loaf. Every body declares the loaf was baked in the flask; and I suppose the whiskey may have been introduced through a very small tube. Measures are to be taken to discover the firm enriching itself in this strange contraband fashion. We sometimes see officers breaking whiskey casks and pouring their contents into the gutters. We see little boys too, dipping their hands as in to a brook into the filthy, street-running stream. -

Ever yr's

LUCY

Oct 5th Va '63

November 29, 1863 Lucy Chase to Miss Lowell

Lucy congratulates Anna Lowell on the inauguration of the United States Commission for the Relief of National Freedmen, which was formed from the merger of the New England Freedmen's Aid Society with the Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, and Chicago aid societies. Reports on her work and says "We want everything! At all times! And in all quantities!"

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Norfolk, Va. Nov. 29th 1863

My dear Miss Lowell:

Let me congratulate you on your new "Organization." You work at home, and my sister and I work here, and we all give thanks for the day that has dawned, and for the work it has brought with it. I will trust myself in your hands, especially since the Moth Socy will keep me tied to its apron strings. I thank you, kindly, for your willingness to call me one of you. And I will gladly write to you occasionally.

Two or three days ago, 4 hundred negroes followed on the heels of a force sent out from Norfolk in search of guerillas, and now we find them at our doors. Two weeks ago, four hundred other negroes, accepting a cordial invitation from colored soldiers, came to town. Not to spend the

winter, not to tarry but a night, but with their faces firmly turned forever and a day from their homes? Such floods we look for all through the winter.

The dark flock run out of their clothes, and run away from their beds, you will “fit” if we will measure, is it not so? I have never found it necessary to send directions for cutting and making. Let all material be stout. Shirts made of bagging, or something of the nature of linen-crash, are very desirable. Colored shirts of stout cloth are useful. Stout pantaloons for men and boys are always wanted. Stout dresses too, for women. Baby-clothes are in great demand. Sewing materials, shoes, and knitting yarn, we look for, (but don’t find) in each box we open.

We want everything! At all times! And in all quantities! Is that intelligible? It is so very true, that I feel very much disinclined to tell Societies of any special need. Why should not some societies send shoes only, others shirts, other dresses, and all send what they can most easily secure? “A little of all, if you please”—though, I am willing to say, since I speak not for myself.

I wish you could go with my sister and myself into Hall’s Jail Yard, and to the Pest House, just after the arrival of refugees. Tumbling about amongst boxes, beds, tables, and tubs, the little ones with their shining eyes and frolicsome ways, sing “Jubilee” for the whole community. While the more anxious parents sit on table-corners, or lean against the brick walls, too unsettled in the face of an uncertain future to find rest either for body or mind. My sister saw many reunions yesterday. One woman came to her, leading a girl of eighteen, and said, “See my daughter, they sold her away from me when she was just old enough to rock a cradle, and see how they’ve done her bad, see how they’ve cut her up. From her head to her feet she is scarred just as you see her face.” A man from one of the farms just came to me for a blanket, saying, “I make out tolerably well myself, but my children, you see it grieves my mind.”

I feel obliged to confine my charities to refugees, and to the laborers on Govt farms, though Norfolk and Portsmouth swarm with pauper-stricken negroes. Ten acre lots are offered the refugees, and until their own hands have raised the cabins, Dr. Brown finds homes for them. Genl Butler has made housetaking so easy that the Dr proposes putting them into houses in town. With our new Genls here and at the Fortress, we hope to be recognized as a “Department” worthy of reverential deportment from the powers that be.

Our general care-taking includes, of course, teaching, in which our success has been brilliant (so much I say for the African, alone.) Yesterday, my sister repeated an oft-repeated experiment of ours.

She formed a class of the new-corners at the Jail-Yard, and made of them discipline-drillers and boys of letters! in a few moments. Satchels and school-bells make truants and idlers; but, to the dark ones who have broken through the fence of wit holding, and have run into golden opportunities, round O and crooked S are a surprise and delight. And the picking-up propensity which slavery engendered in the pinched African, stimulated anew by enlarged opportunity makes thrifty husbandmen of them all. So they shoulder the ax a-x, pick up the b-o-x box, play with c-a-t and d-o-g and fill their baskets with a multitude of words.

Will you be so kind as to tell Miss Stevenson that we think her proposition to send another teacher to Norfolk a wise one. We will promise to find work for her, and will give her a home with us.

Tell her to bring bed-tick and bedding, and, if she fancies good things, preserves.

Yours,
LUCY CHASE
Norfolk, Va. Novr. 29th

Dec. 1863 Lucy Chase to Mr Pierce (no transcription)

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