

Clifton Grove Dec 10th 1853
Saturday

My dear Parents,

You last was received Tuesday Evening, some of the Dr.'s friends at Snow Hill sent us word that there was to be preaching there that evening & we were well paid for going & we heard an excellent sermon from Mr. Miner, an Agent for the Baptists State Convention, and in addition received your letter & papers. Mr. Miner is from New York State & also his wife, he is talking of coming to Snow Hill to live, Ben has offered to give him an acre of land there if he will build on it & another to Mr. Dowell the Teacher of the Academy, the latter accepts the gift & conditions, whether Mr. Miner does we have not yet heard. Mr. Dowell has a pleasant wife, she was from Alexandria in Virginia. I have become quite well acquainted with them, we expected them here last night to spend today with us, but a severe storm has prevented.

You ask if I am allowed to do anything I attend to the part of the house I am in, keep it in order however it is Mrs. Williams has furniture & a right, though she seldom enters it. At present there is sewing a plenty on hand for the Servants at this season the women have each a thick dress, chemise, shoes, blanket-given them. The men pantloons & jacket, shirt, blanket, & shoes, besides caps and bonnets, the Children too are clothed in the same materials- now many keep a seamstress to do this, but Mother Williams has always done it herself with the assistance of her daughters when they are home, of course I choose to do my part, one week we made seven dresses & a few jackets and pantloons are sent to a poor white woman. I have made two pair of pantloons & we are now to work on the underclothes. The Servants have three suits of clothes a year, & as much more in clothes and money as they choose to earn, but as a whole they are naturally filthy & it is discouraging to make for time for it- is some in dirt and rags. There are exceptions of course. You wish a description of my house- the part I stay in, on the lower floor is the parlor, and my room, in the former I took up the carpet & had it put up stairs excepting mine would have been here long ere this, but it is not yet they are all insured so we consider ourselves safe- my furniture has all arrived uninjured with the exception of our Bureau & where that is we don't know. When my things all come I shall have in the Parlor, a tapestry carpet, a sofa, a piano & stool, a corner stand, 8 sofa chairs, 1 sofa, rocking chair, 2 easy chairs, 2 mirrors about the size of Mary's, 1 Marble top centre table, & my four framed pictures- the glass of one got broken but stays in, & a sel-of girandoles on the Mandel, muslin curtains. In my room which opens out of the Parlor & where I sit most of the time is a carpet, a scroll bedstand, a bookcase well filled & which gives us entertainment, a marble top bureau, & washstand, cane seat-chairs & rocker to match & one large rocking chair & a tea table, with a small astral lamp on it & a blue spread, books & my work box & by which I am now writing, there are two windows & two doors at which are red curtains, which I intend putting upstairs, as soon as mine come. I have not got quite regulated upstairs & cant till my things come. I feel the need of good closets I assume but the houses here are built without one, only a

small one under the stairs. On my bed I have the dark quilt you gave me, I assume I shall be very glad of the pettequilt you spoke of giving me & am sorry I did not bring the cotton one. We need quite as thick clothing as you do, the houses are not as lightly built as with us & they use fireplaces altogether & there is a chill in the air, I have been very sorry I did not bring my wooden sack, there too the people most always sit with open doors, even though they sit over the fire shivering. Last week I met with the Dr. to visit his sister Mary, staid to nights and a day & had a very pleasant visit. We are expecting her here to spend some time at Christmas. Hattie we found living very quietly in a beautiful oak grove. They are living in what is to be their kitchen. Mr. Faisone will build this year a very large & commodious house. Ben has gone on to Sandy-Run (his other plantation) to see how they are getting along with his Turpentine, he intends returning by Snow Hill, & I am hoping for letters & papers in yesterday's mail. Richard & John may return with him. We made them a short visit in their Bachelor home the other day, everything was neat & tidy & they always seem in first-rate spirits. John is going to take his Servants in February & going on to another plantation, & house, tell Eve I can't help wishing she was going there too. I almost forgot to tell you of my baking. I have made pumpkin pies or helped twice & the last which were the best, I made all alone crust & all. They never have had them before & Ben particularly likes them, so of course my success pleases me. Soda Biscuit- I have made over with good success & Measure Cake. Not till you come here can you imagine how entirely different is their mode of living here from the North. They live more heartily, there must always be two or three different kinds of meats on Mrs. Williams table for breakfast and dinner, red pepper is much used to flavor meat with the famous "Barbacue" of the South, & which I believe they esteem above all other dishes is roasted pig dressed with red pepper & vinegar. Their bread is Core Bread just meal wet with water & without yeast or saleratus (My note: baking powder) & Biscuit with shortening & without anything to make them light & beaten like crackers. The bread & biscuit are also brought on to the Table hot.

Now I want you to send me a recipe for Bread & yeast & your Core Bread. Is there any way of making yeast without hops or Irish potatoes, I wish we could send some of our beautiful sweet potatoes & yams, the Dr. spoke of it & it is now too late & too cold as they would spoil before we could get them to you, perhaps another year we shall be more fortunate. They tell me that they have beautiful peaches & apples but we were too late for the peaches & the apple orchard is young & they say the Negroes get more than their share, you don't know how I have longed for some of those in the cellars at home & for a slice of Peggy's good Bread & Butter. In the season we have fine grapes.

Evening. John came home with the Dr. from Snow hill, we have just had Dinner & my Pumpkin pies have been highly complimented of course that is gratifying. Tomorrow is the Sabbath, here I should like to hear Mr. Payson & occupy my old seat for one Sabbath at least. Ben & I are reading Barnes notes and are much interested in them, we have read too little Medicine & are now reading Hyperion.

Monday 12th Dec.

Yesterday was spent as I do not like to pass the Sabbath. Ben, James & Wife & seven children & Nurse came to spend the day, also Sister Mary & her husband & servant. The latter has started for South Carolina to purchase Turpentine land. His Wife & Mother Williams went home with Mr. James Williams, to spend the night, thus leaving Ben & I alone with the Servants for the first time. With the assistance of the cook. I had a very good Breakfast, coffee, beef hash, fried chicken, sweet potatoes, corn bread & soda biscuit; the latter may own my own make & tell Peggy they were as good as hers. Dr. Did not think strange of the Ladies for hinting about the fee, but quite enjoyed the joke, we are quite impatient to get the letter. I hope they'll all write something.

He says he will write sometime, and sends love, he is just getting ready to go on to Sandy Run, we are expecting company today. The other day I had calls from a Mr. & Mrs. Patrick, & Dr. Harvey, the Lady consisted of flesh & bone put together very prettily, without a surplus of brains but beautifully dressed. The Gentlemen were exceedingly agreeable and intelligent, Dr. Harvey an unmarried gent would create quite a sensation in New Hartford. I shall be much obliged for a paper, if you choose to send one. Remember me with much love to all. I received a letter from Elizabeth & Anne Brown, not long since, the latter's enclosing a beautiful plain gold room. Mary too has written a good long sisterly letter, & I have written another to her & James, also to Luther & Lucin in correspondence, my parents have 1st place. My Brothers & Sisters the Second always & lastly my friends, so I see no good reason for Lucin's being jealous.

John has gone to a large wedding in Sampson Co. a Sister of Harriet's Husband is to marry a Mr. McDougal, a Lawyer & member of the Legislature. She is to be dressed in white brocade silk, there are to be 12 Bridesmaids dressed in white satin waists & pink skirts & as many groomsmen. John is to be one I believe. Last night after the company had all left, we read & sang & I felt better satisfied with the evening than any portion of the day. Every day we speak & think of you and nights I often dream of you and the pleasant home we have left. I really flatter myself that not many years hence if our lives are spared we may remove North. Ben likes the idea & I do of course.

But I must close this as I wish to send it to Snow Hill. So write often both of you, anything will interest that you have time to pen.

With your affectionate daughter,
Sarah