

Clifton Grove Nov 18th 1853

My dear Parents,

You have before this received mine mailed at Wilmington, we had a very pleasant time there, Harriet & quite a large party of her friends met us there & we returned with them to Sampson Co. & from there to Duplin Co, to visit her Mother. We returned home on Tuesday & found Mary & her Husband (Dr. Blount) here, they remained two days with us. Our furniture arrived during our absence all but one Bureau & I feel most tired out putting things in order there is but one closet in the house, so you may imagine that I find some difficulty in knowing where to put things & Mother Williams ways are so entirely different from anything I have ever been used to that I sometimes feel disheartened & discouraged, she is so kind to me & I intend making my will hand to hers in every respect but I assure you I miss the order & neatness which pervades a Northern home. I can but feel that it would have much better for us to have gone to housekeeping at once, even if we had deferred our marriage a year. I do not pretend to know much of housekeeping but I know I could improve on somethings here in the way of order.

The weather today is summer like, I have windows up all through the house & doors open, the Dr. & I sat on the piazza for a long time this morning & our roses are still blossoming in the yard. The Synod was in session in Wilmington & we attended several of its meetings, you may imagine I appreciate the opportunity of once more attending an orderly religious service & the gallery were colored (I should say slave population for some are quite to light colored to be negroes) people & quite a large portion of them found their places in the Hymn-books & joined in the singing so it seems that some at least can read. I think I told you in my last one (a house servant) in our own family who reads and asks me for a Testament. I gave her one & a Tract but the print of the former is too fine & I intend to get her a larger once, I told my Husband & he approves of my course.

I received four papers from you the other day, which were almost as good as a letter I thought the direction looked like James. I have been much interested in the accounts of Judge Bronson's dismissal & can but regard this answers to the Secretary as noble & perfectly characteristic. We had had some accounts in our papers, but none so particular as those you sent, I can assure you the Express Evangelist & Messenger looked like old friends to me. I have some notion of taking a Utica paper, how much is the Weekly Gazette? I believe that is Seward's is it not- I wonder if James & Mary have ever received my letter written when first arrived here, I received one from Luther the other day & blowing me up for not writing & they had not received mine written at the same time, or written a day or two of my first one from here to yore, so perhaps I have been judging James & Mary to harshly.

Tell Emilie I cant write to her first for I have so many unanswered letters on hand, but if she will write me, I'll try to answer it, tell her to write me a real gossiping letter. I want to know what everybody is doing & saying.

My love to all the good people. I have been helping make pumpkin pies, a new dish here, & they promise to be good, we made a short time since which were very good. Write soon to your affectionate daughter, Sarah.

I have forgotten to tell you that servants here have some means for self-support. Dr. had one man who will probably lay by fifty or sixty dollars this year, he attends the pine trees & Ben gave him a certain slave & he told me the other day he would make that sum.

Since writing last Mr. Minter & Baptist Clergyman & family have moved to Snow Hill, they were formerly of New York State. Mrs. Miner is a native of Madison Co. & I think he was settled in Monroe Co. I called upon them a short time since, she told me that she had been South three years & had but just got over being homesick, so entirely different did she find everything from what she had been accustomed. Mr. Miner will probably preach once a month at Snow Hill, I have heard him twice & was much interested so in this respect there is an improvement, the Methodist Clergyman too has just been appointed & came with his family a few weeks since. I found his wife a very pleasant woman, he has a circuit of 13 churches & will preach at Snow Hill once a month.

The Baptists are making a move towards building a Church, the one in Snow Hill belongs to the Methodists, I feel willing to help them at the same time they will not admit me to communion & at present I feel no disposition to change my connection with the Church. I thought of you the last communion, also on Saturday. Ben has gone on to Sandy Run (his turpentine Ranch) so I will give his remembrance I think he thinks almost as much of getting a letter from you as I do, at any rate he shows much pleasure, as he holds up his letters on his return from Snow Hill. And now I want you to come out here next Spring, you can only make up your minds and we will meet you at Wilson, the Dr. says it is very pleasant the middle & last of April, or first of May, you can come by the way of New York and return via Ohio & then see all your children, just think seriously of it, and write me next time that you will come. We have received the letter from the Sewing Society. With love yours as ever

Daughter Sarah

We milk one cow & that gives one quart a day. There are 40 or 50 head of cattle on the plantation. The calf run with the cow & the negroes say they cant milk unless they have the calf to start it. The butter is made a good deal as Mr. Chamberlain said.

I have had the use of my hands all winter & no ugly cracks on them but still they break out some.