

Dear & Co's



Helena Oct. 10, '63.

I shall write again jointly to you & Aunt. Please send this to her by first mail.

A month ago to night I touched the wharf in Helena in a storm, it is snowing now, has stormed two thirds of the intervening time. The streets are almost impassable except for heavy mule teams, they & the mules in the ponds, fall in the holes in in the mire, often so there & die they are so exhausted & abused; two are now lying within sight of my window - wagners act, upsets, break - pedestrians sink to their boot heels & pull them out by their straps. When the objects of my charity come to my room for ~~charity~~ relief the first civility I offer them is a strip, broom & mat. I ride to the front a ~~invited~~ ^{invited} ~~travel~~ ^{travel} of ~~them~~ ^{them} in the heavy army wagons which give more of a shock than a galvanic battery, beside the bear, as I go down first on one side & then on the other, in depths unknown. Sometimes I venture on foot, get where advance or retreat is alike impossible, when some giant of a man either white or colored, passing, takes me in ~~his~~ ^{his} arms & carries me over fences & thro' private yards to my destination. The last of my dreams, this, that I should ever be mistletoe on a slave. The last of my desires to be so, long, or ever many of them. We have seamstresses, ironworkers, wiremen, shoemakers, carpenters, &c. detailed from the centralized camp by Chaplain Sawyer, an excellent man, one of his own heart for that department of benevolence. The Surgeon & steward are

humanity, kind to the sick, which their predecessors were far from being, but they render no aid in reforming or improving the host, saying all their duty is defined in the word "medicate." I found the poor creatures in such, such quarters, void of comfort or decency, their personal conditions so deplorable that any idea of change for the better seems utterly impossible. Many of them seem to come there to die, & they do die very rapidly. This wet weather is fully increasing the sickness & mortality among our soldiers. The carcases, filth & decay which 20,000 have scattered over this town, will make the mortality fearful when warm weather comes. A woman came to the host in anticipation of miscarriage caused by fighting. Her two children & 2 boys necessarily came with her. One was very sick & died, & the younger of the two children too, soon died. Another came with her two children because her husband must come; he died in a week, she still remained. In a few days came out with small pox removed, the children still remaining. Another poor creature waded in his stocking feet, having lost his shoes in the mud to the Surgeon's Off. said he had small pox & wished to be carried to the quarters. This was 11 A.M. & it was 4 P.M. before the license team & driver could be here. He had been waiting in an out building & then it was too late to go two miles in this mire, so a bed had to be made for him in the wagon & he left there for the night; the next morn. there were two others to be removed with him. So much formality attends red tape, & so few friends have the negroes among the Officials.

We have found a lying in ^{the} Host beside, so many lie
in camp & lie on the ground that it was proposed to have
the most destitute cases taken to a house near, with two
rooms, where the sick had been, & an Aunty skilled in
such duties to live in one room & take care of these movel-
ties in the other. The first case came last Sat. night. I went
to see it, & was carried in a negro's arms over one crossing
to get there. The mother came with only one old calico dress
& skirt. The expected had one article only, but as we had
two days notice, we conjured up some things. Such arti-
cles made of strong material would be of great service in my
distributions. I need great quantities of them made of
the strongest material. They wear no crino line, but
narrow short dresses. I had in one box a quantity of
homemade sheet & blankets, & have had the sewing
woman convert many into garments which do nicely.
I wish those who send boxes would see that every article
is in wearable order, few of them can repair such things,
& it takes much time which could be better employed;
beside heretofore no female has had the charge of things,
they have gone to the Chaplain, & he gives them out as
they are. I am the first female sent by San. Com. to
contrabands in particular, as Agent. One man came
to Mr. Sawyer & said that his wife had lived in a tent
with soldiers, had been sick; they being ordered away
pulled up the tent & left her on the ground, she had
died & now he wished her buried. Storming terribly as it
did, the good Chap. started, but found her so far out
that she could not be buried that night, for the teams
could not get there & back, so they covered her as well as

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they could with her blanket & left her. In the noon, they
 found her babe a few months old lying with her under
 the blanket, some person having become tired of it plac-
 ed it there for the Chap. to see to. The baronities from our
soldiers are imparable. But; yet with such men as Gor-
 man, Steele & others of their kind for Genl. Phelps & Co., for
 military Gov. & Sec. of State all proslavery, such a Med. Di-
 rector as Gessop, Post Surg. as Dennis, detailed Phy. by him
 to the blacks as junk, all & what, what can we expect.
 Col. Thayer came under the Emans. privilege with full
 powers from Gen. Curtis to organise a Col'd. regiment
 & detail from it the bands of workmen as they were need-
 ed. Gorman denounced the idea & forbade it, Em. Gov. pre-
 tence, (Phelps in St. L. is whether he had gone to canvass for
 Senatorship) vetoed it & his word was superior to all, so the
 work ceased. Measures are in process to have the two
 Genl. deposed, then we hope Col. Thayer can go to work.
 Three Col'd. men were killed here in one night, two for
 their money, & one for his cabin. A good man detailed as
 ward Master in the host was arrested & taken back
 to his mistress here in town. Mr. Sawyer remonstrated,
 the guard our soldier, told him, he rather shoot an aboli-
 tion any time than a secessionist. Such cases are contin-
 ually occurring. One family of 20 plantation negroes came
 to this town, some, did very well for a time, several got work
 but the change of life, weather, & being robbed by our sol-
 diers of clothing & bedding till they were greatly expos-
 ed & became sick & 13 of them died, others must die, when
 their master came to persuade them to return most of them
 went. They did not wish to go, faltered, changed their minds

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daily, so a week, we encouraging them all we could, but as destitution, famine, & death stared them in the face the sad sufferers, went back, they were of a superior type & training, or they would never have endured as they did. This sickly, pestilential, crowded post, is very unfavorable for their colonizing, but it is the only one below Memphis, which is full of the same class, where there is nominally an army to protect & furnish food & employment. Our soldiers suffer untold privations here, they require twice as many houses & huts as they have. Some of their encampments are now flooded. What is to be done for either class of sufferers under these discouragements? I know not, & more of the army are yet coming back. Another plantation colony was boot. Last Sat. by a gunboat with others they had picked up. The 82 negroes were left here, the cotton carried on up the river. One of the women, a cripple came to me to-day, said they had been so abused & starved already that they wished themselves back. If Govt. could put up quarters so that as they flock in they might have a place to shelter themselves, it would encourage them, but Govt. has much to do, & here there is little interest manifested. One Col. shot his sergeant coolly for drunken misdeemeanors & went from tent to tent searching until he found him, came very near shooting the wrong man, yet it was all right, & the next week he was made Gen. Who then will care for the murder of the poor negro? Jack, whom I wish allowed to do all that was done by a surgeon, & of whom the poor things were afraid, told those in attendance that if in diarrhoea, so prevalent here, any made trouble without getting from the bed, to whip them; & it was often done, & to some who were dying.

W. H. C. S.

One surgeon said, "it is all who do not take care in the food by ropes." They have only the army rations, plain meat is poor & scarce. He has not had any beef for five days. Many have died in consequence of the food, every thing is so expensive here. Milk 20 cts per qt, eggs 30 cts per dozen & not any fowls here. Now what are we to do? This is the first comb. aboard has the Com. has tried to organize. It is out of their province, almost out of their duty in one sense. These organizations having been made for this & nothing else, officers willing at heart to aid the negro say they cannot do it until Gov. says so. The noble, wonderful men composing the visiting Board at St. Louis, decided to try, they are wealthy & could meet all the first outlay made from their own purses if there should be any trouble, which however they do not fear — but how far they will go how long continue the experiment with so little aid I do not know. When it does seem as now arranged, but the moving of a ripple vast as soon as seen, all that we have done for these poor wretched beings. But because we can see only the momentary relief, shall we do nothing? I confess, it is an earnest spirit, within me, to know how much, in what manner we should pursue the work. My only hope is in doing for, & improving the healthy as a permanent blessing, & here what an extensive field opens, if ever the weather allows us to go out to them. They are the better class. I have been a few times, & found many interesting families. ~~But~~ the best are improvident, but how can it be otherwise? Why,

need relief & aid in all ways. Some could make clothes if they had the material, others if articles are cut; others ~~some~~ & those the most destitute, could do nothing.

Now can you not Aunt L. & Sister interest some of the Antislavery advocates & friends among you to raise a sum of money, more or less; any amount would be useful & interest it to my discretion if you please, or to me subject to the Com. whose agent I am; or to them entirely by their own, they appropriating where & as they think best; that some articles of clothing may be got ready for the many now here & the multitudes coming? 40 landed from one boat last night. The Priest of the San, Com. I think a wonderful man for his post. The two Chaplains here Gorman & Sawyer are admirable men, particularly the latter, the appointed Supt for Central bands. But it needs an exhaustless fountain to supply these demands. No class of charitable objects ever before appealed to the benevolent, where it required so much to accomplish so little, yet it must be done for will their moral & intellectual elevation ever commence until their physical nature is improved. They are confiding, come to me with their peculiar simplicity, look upon me as ^{having} come, to, in some way promote their interests, but how they cannot foresee, are willing to be advised, & need it over & over again. If any thing is done for them, it must be done quickly. Some die, others get discouraged, & returns to their

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 masters & report their sufferings, & yet others, will
 themselves to our soldiers, who have made this
 place a Sodom. Money is the best aid you can give,
 because boxes of clothing if ready made would not much
 for transportation, while it would be doubtful if they
 were reached here. Probably the best way if any friends
 are disposed to help in this way, & I do hope they will,
 is to authorize me, or me with Supr. S. Amos Sawyer,
~~or me with the Supr. Conn. or whoever they please~~ of these
 parties to expend a certain amt. & when they receive
 security or receipts that it has been done, then for-
 ward the check for the same. But do be sure that
 it comes in some safe way. It seems to me that aid
 should come from the East, & that they must work
 with the West in this enterprise. Public sentiment
 is older, riper there than here, & the position the
 East has long taken obligates her to work anywhere
 as places open to her view. In the Am. field they
 have labored & contributed together. I hope they will
 do this, but ~~we~~ ~~are~~ ~~not~~ ~~prepar'd~~ ~~to~~ ~~do~~ ~~this~~,
 who are in earnest in the former.

[James K. Mann]



Let money be sent by mail
 to Rev W. M. E. & St. Louis -
 to be forwarded by him
 to Miss Anna Mann -
 Helena - or the Mr
 Sawyer mentioned here