

Augusta Dec 15<sup>th</sup> /65.

General

(What is written on the other pages was with the expectation that you would visit Augusta; when I promised myself the satisfaction of calling on you in person. Observing by the papers that you had visited Savannah & New Orleans, we fear you may not think it material to return by this way. I am sorry that it proves so. It would have been a satisfaction to invite you to visit and inspect what is called here a "pen" for the comfort of the poor negroes who have left their former masters. They admit that they were well cared for at home, but they were told they were free — and they seemed to be enjoying the practical benefits of such liberty. About 100 men, women & children are gathered in a building in space 100 by 30 ft. — You can make your own calculation how much room that gives for each. Not a board covers the sides of the building; a lofty but light roof, protects them from the rain & dew; the wind has free access. The divisions for each family are the filthy rags they hang about them. Of course no fires can be made in a house without chimneys. I did not discover a fire even out of the house, and my first visit was on an icy morning. I saw the pick, and asked what provision was made for them. Was told that no person had charge of them, that

each provided for themselves. They were free -

I am willing to think that your benevolent heart would bleed to witness such suffering, and still I fear it is not the most aggravated instance of the misery of these deluded people; I have heard of worse from several quarters. If it was the grand object of your people to destroy the happy relation existing between the master & slave - I say happy - I need not repeat the motive - You know it well - You have accomplished your purpose most effectually. The Negro, no longer willing to work for his master, has no longer a claim for protection and care, in any way - And the often fanatical teachings of your licensed incendiaries Keelpath & Fennell, have taught him to be insolent, where he was once respectful and respectful - You abolish slavery and tell the Negro that he is the equal of the White man, and can enjoy his liberty as well - You know all of you that that is simply a lie - You must and do know that the Negro never has, & never can attain to civilization without the influence and example of the white man. You know that in a state of slavery he has been elevated from the brute to civilization - And now that you have destroyed one of the most benevolent of God's appointed institutions that has ever existed, to gratify a fiendish impulse, you would have the world believe that it is for a holy purpose - Do you people believe in a hereafter, that there is a search of hearts that there is an eternity - a Hell? It is a pity that your philanthropy is so partial, I might have begun nearer

home. Why have you not looked to the evils attending on your Factory system. To the coal & mining pits, some of the operatives who never see the light of the sun. Are they as well off as the most abject slave? Do they any less the slave to enrich the capitalist? Intemperance prevents you seeing the beam in your own eye, whereas you would cast out the mote. Suppose we had sent amongst you incendiaries like Nedpath -

Phoebe, what a name  
He was christened(?) in blood,  
And his path is the same -

To change your labor system, how long would you have endured such interference?

By the time you have returned to Washington, you will, I hope, have satisfied yourself with the prospect of the new state of things. It will gratify me to hear Gen Howard's private, honest, opinion, whether he thinks Christianity, Civilization & the Negro have been advanced by the convulsions and new order of affairs. -

The promptings of duty influenced me to visit my former home, and to inquire into the welfare of those who were once my slaves, and who I left in comfort at my plantation. As I had heard, my plantation-building had been burned, including those at my own residence. A perfect desolation existed, where cheerfulness and industry, once existed both master and slave. - A day's ride from



This place brought me on the track of Sherman's March. I am told General that you commanded the wing of that Grand Army. It may therefore be pardonable for me to tell you that I saw all the evidence of a relentless, revengeful savages, had turned a peaceful happy people. All to satiate a various thirst. I saw through two entire days rides nothing but chimneys erect and alone, buildings burned, all burned. And you tell me to pray for <sup>such</sup> enemies? My poor human nature revolts at the thought -

I visited Beaufort & Hilton Head where my people (175) had been forcibly carried. I left them on the 15<sup>th</sup> Jan'y well supplied for a year or two. Their houses were as comfortable as my own. With blankets and clothes such as the times could afford, in abundance - all, all, had been taken from them, and they were forced to leave their home. I found some of them in and near Beaufort, but the most of them at Hilton-Head - Some were so haggard from care & want that I did not know them. All approached me, and greeted me most kindly. They informed me that they were living in cattle huts; a contrast to their roomy wooden houses. They told me that the pay for land that had been assigned them, had not enabled them to make provision but for a few months, with some not to carry them the winter. They told me that in instances where the white Yankees had

in a measure ~~of~~ their labour they were stimulated  
more to make Cotton, with the traffick. I found them  
all anxious to return to their old homes. As most of  
them had grown up under me, and the right of property  
no longer existed between us. I claim that a dis-  
interested impulse prompted me to advance their purpose.

Accordingly I applied to the Agent at Beaufort,  
Mr. Innes, representing to him the circumstances  
under which these people had been removed from  
the main land - That they had been forcibly taken  
from their homes in Tullytarr, and were obliged to  
leave their provisions, clothes, and comfortable  
~~houses~~ houses. That they were now anxious to return  
with the little provisions they had made, and to prepare  
for a better crop the next year, and to occupy their  
comfortable homes, all of which had not been burnt.  
He was told I had not the means to assist them.

The answer to the reasonable request that he would  
afford me the use of Flats for the removal, was, that  
he had none, and did not consider himself respon-  
sible to aid in their removal although he had granted  
it to others. To appease at this point, I hastened to  
Hilton-Head, and applied to Capt. Monfard at that  
Port to grant me transportation by Steamer to remove  
those suffering people; representing that a  
Steamer might go and return in two days. The answer  
was even more repulsive than the other. In perfect  
pudency I was obliged to leave the people to fight their

6<sup>th</sup>  
run battles with their masters. Arrived  
at Savannah I represented the matter to  
Col. Sickles for his opinion, relating to him <sup>and</sup>  
the circumstances of their removal. He sustained  
the other officials in their decision. Consequently  
I now appeal to you, the highest authority, to fulfil  
the assurance you have made to the Freedmen that  
you are their best friend.

At Beaufort I found the negroes all quite  
civil, and all greeting the arrival of their old masters;  
but none of them were willing to contract for work the next  
year, at least not before the 1<sup>st</sup> Jan<sup>y</sup>, when, or before, they were  
expecting some event. All were more desirous to plant  
their own crop, and as they chose. They seemed quite to  
expect that lands were to be apportioned to them. They  
had phantoms of 10 & 40 acre in their conceptions. The  
Order of the 19<sup>th</sup> Oct. Circular No. 8 had not been promul-  
gated to them. Many of our Planters willing & anxiously  
waiting, under all the discouraging circumstances to embark  
under the new order of things, are repulsed at every point.

No labourers are to be had; and no security that if  
contracts are made, that labour will be enforced. And  
so it is wherever I have seen or heard from. Our country  
is paralyzed, and our people disheartened - desperate.

If the planters are not prepared for actual work by the  
1<sup>st</sup> Jan<sup>y</sup>, it will be a hopeless attempt for any but a very  
small crop. - The vandal host having burned every  
house on the plantations. The earth remains only because



*M. W. [illegible]*

*[illegible signature]*

they could not destroy ~~the~~ consume that also.  
More Hellish friends were made any Country;  
and all for that envious hatred, for reason that  
we were superior. — Now that the deed is done, we can  
discover that there is a desire on the part of those in  
authority to shift the responsibility of those furnished  
<sup>people</sup> on their old Masters, who can ill afford to support them  
although the feeling is strong to do so. — I submitted  
to Mr. Judd the following question — Suppose as an extreme  
alternative, a planter, for want of means to ~~be~~ support  
the freedmen, is obliged to engage with them for the hire  
of his his land, to take a certain amount of the product,  
and that when the period arrives to be paid, no more  
than the quantity agreed on has been made: How am I  
to be paid? Take what you can find, was the answer.  
What! Take all? He will starve. Yes take all, he  
will then learn that he must work. It gave me an  
opening for remarks, but I upraised.

From what I observed while at Beaufort, I am  
inclined to think that Mr. Judd, with the shop-keepers  
generally in the Town, are most thrifty Cotton-dealers  
and I am credibly informed that the freedmen are  
duped and cheated in every possible manner and all  
by Northern traders. But that the carcass is nearly  
consumed and the vultures are about to leave.

In its place I omitted to give you the

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evidences how many people had suffered. Will it surprise to tell you that in 7 months from the 15<sup>th</sup> Jan 15-<sup>th</sup> of mine had died, and I can tell you of an instance of much greater mortality on the Ogeechee river Geo., where on a formerly well conducted plantation 15-8 Negroes had died out of 340, and that in <sup>in 5 months</sup> months. I think Gen. that I am not far from the truth when I assert that they are a doomed people. Thank God he has not made us the instruments of such cruelties with the hypocrisy attendant. In his omnipotence he has ordained that a people should be trained for such a work. We thank him that our portion with that unfortunate race is evidence that we were unsuited for such a purpose.

I am informed that there are instances where you have addressed the Freedmen & given them advice - That should be shaped stipendiaries have followed in your track, to undo your work. Can you doubt the motive of such men? It is no wonder that you advise the continuance of the Bureau, when such officials are the assistants.

I need not repeat to you how completely private as well as public property has been destroyed. But I will point to the impeishable Mounds of earth which have been fortified for the defence of our beloved country. They can never be leveled with my consent. Let them remain as memorials, confirming history and tradition - That when "Slavery was killed

There liberty was tried - now now  
rooted and nourished by thousands  
of our martyrs - flourish. Although it has upturned  
the ground where the lance once glowed & bloomed,  
in its turn it will again yield to the lance emblem.  
And may that period be not far distant. -

If you will take the trouble to read what I  
have written; I trust General that you will make  
me some acknowledgement, if it is only in two lines -  
I have the kindest feelings towards you, because I  
believe that you are sincere & honest, but passionary,  
excuse me for the freedom of the expression. -

But if I am in any-way persecuted for  
this effusion - you may be certain that no one  
will more cheerfully suffer and even die for a cause  
than I shall. Even Stephen in all his glory cannot  
eclipse me -

I have the honor to be

Yours respectfully

Wm Howard

of South Carolina

Augusta George

2 Beards 15<sup>th</sup> 1865

William Hyman

St John's Canton

Emancipated reform. But  
opinion with reference  
to the political position  
of the new, and the state  
of the people.

