

William, or prejudice against
color

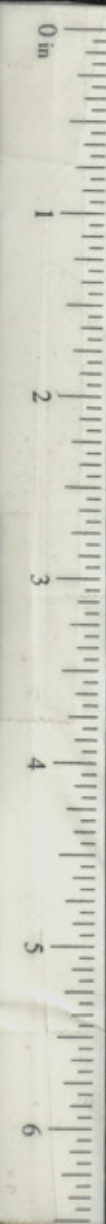
Stories for children

Original manuscript

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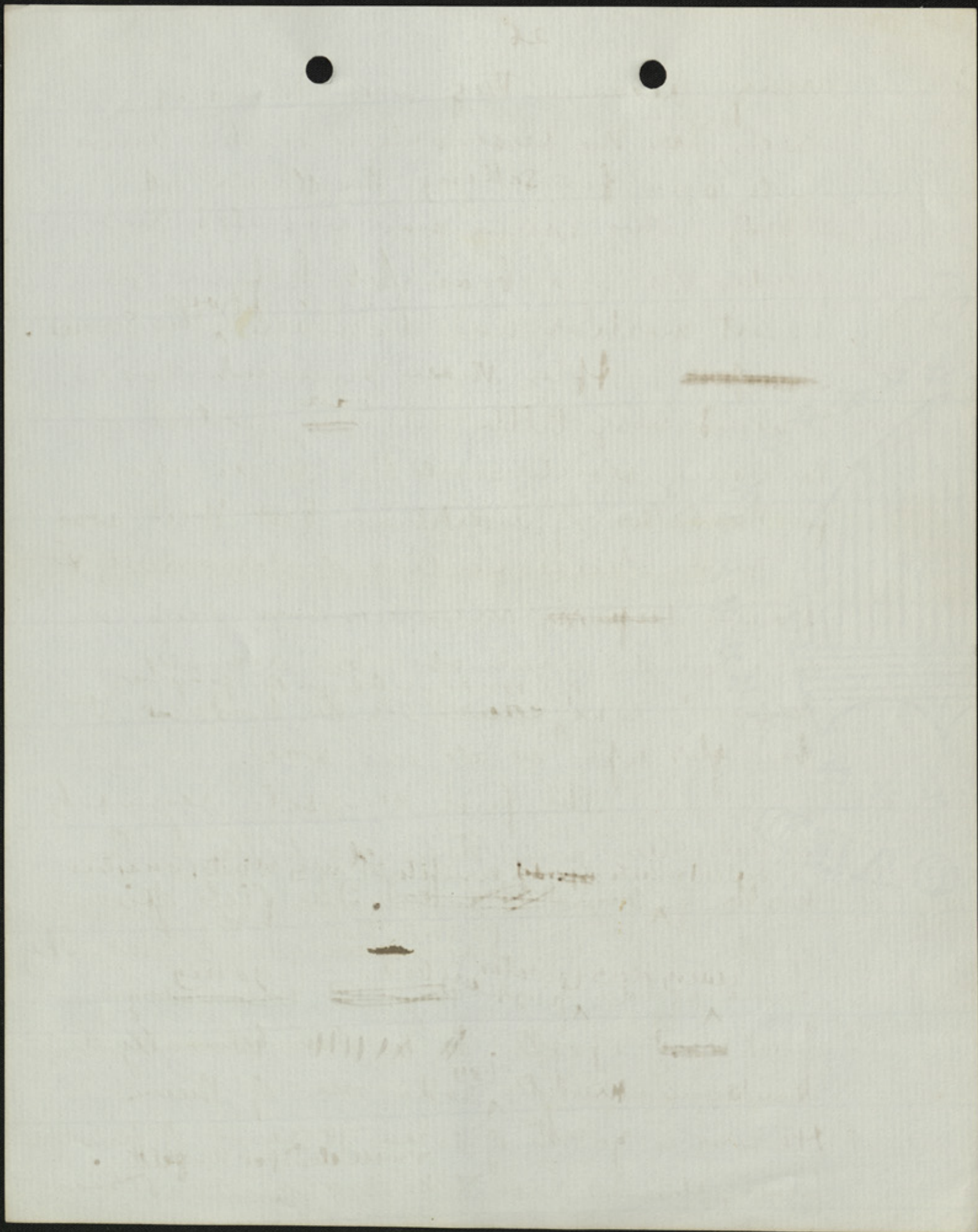
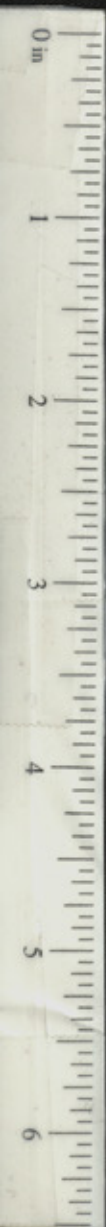
William S^{on} prejudice against color.

During the winter of 1862 & 3. I commanded the 2nd Division 2nd Corps. We were encamped near Halloworth about a mile north of the Rappahannock. It was after General McClellan had been relieved from the command of the army and when the prejudice against the blacks ran high. A young man who came out as an officer in a Maine Regiment, made great ado about the president's freeing the slaves and declared that he would never serve in an abolition army. He was brought before a court martial for using disloyal language and some other like offense and dismissed the service. In another regiment, where all but one or two of the officers were german, a young American was long and vociferous in his denunciation of the government of the President the general commanding the



army - because they were turning a
 war ^{for} the preservation of the Union
 into one for setting the slaves at
 liberty. This young man was also put
 under charge, brought before a
 court-martial and dismissed ^{from} the service.
~~and~~. After these eminent cases
 I heard very little in ~~the~~ ^{our} portion of
 the Army which could be seized upon
 for the sake of discipline but there was
 a widespread feeling of discontent, &
 some deep ~~no~~ murmurings deep if
 not loud against the "accursed
 negroes", who ^{of course believe the grovelling} caused all the hardships &
 brought upon us all our woe.

The first Minnesota regiment
 of volunteers was stationed a little to the
 north of ^{the tent which apparently constituted my winter quarters} ~~my winter quarters~~. The field officers
 of the regiment had some good horses. They
 were ^{every day} ~~pushing~~ ^{pushing} ~~the tent~~ ^{going}
 back ~~and~~ forth. ~~to~~ ^{by} ~~night~~. Generally a
 handsome mulatto ^{boy} rode one of them.
 He was a youth of some 18 years of fine
 figure, pleasant face & manners. ^{I well liked for his part.} Doubtless



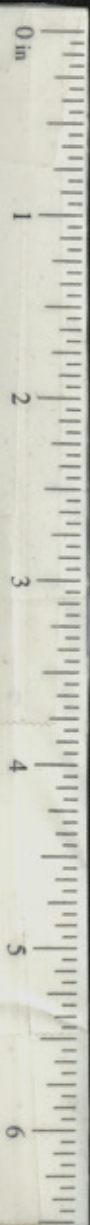
The lad was somewhat vain & a little pompous at times. Certainly he appeared very proud when he was mounted on that good horse. ^{He appeared to afterwards even} when he had only a saddle blanket under him.

One day as he rode past some Irish soldiers I heard one of them cursing that "nagur" "The scalp of a black nagur shall never ride ^{have} me walk; ^{Some} an ^{there's} ~~the~~ good stuff in me rifle!"

I thought it was only talk and only laughed at the man's expression.

But very soon after this as William was riding just at the foot of the steep south of my tent, moving along at a slow trot, sitting with erectness & displaying the grace of his horsemanship, a shot was fired from amidst a ^{small} group of men.

William was hit ^{benignly} ~~in the chest~~ ^{in the shoulder} & would have fallen had he not been caught by some ^{nothing} ~~one near him~~ ^{at the moment} ~~I ran out~~ ^{who followed the shooting} to see what had happened. ^{The} ~~lad~~ ^{had} been taken from his horse & was being carried gently toward the Minnesota hospital. He looked up cheerfully in my face



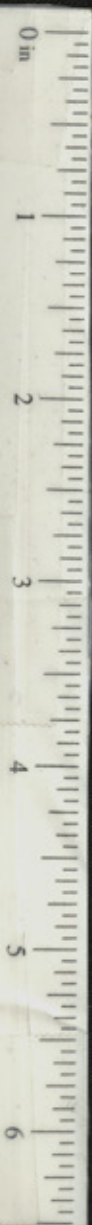
[Faint, illegible handwriting on lined paper, possibly a letter or document. The text is mostly obscured by fading and bleed-through from the reverse side.]

as I spoke to him ²⁸
~~at my salute~~, and ^{said} that he was badly
wounded but he hoped he would get
over it. I do not remember his words,
but I remember his bright, cheerful face
and how brave & hopeful ^{then} he ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~then~~.

He was taken to the hospital & put
in with the sick men of the 1st Minnesota.
He was always treated kindly there. The
surgeon took the utmost pains to save
him, but ~~his efforts were~~ ^{his efforts were} of no avail, he
lingered a few days and then died. No
harsh word fell from his lips. He spoke
kindly of the enemies of his race. He
lived a sweet christian life & died with
the indescribable joy in his heart.

We searched long for the
murderer but he was covered by his
regiment & could not be found. He
knows & God knows that he is a wicked
murderer.

The death of this youth whose ^{only} offense
was the color of his skin, made a
strong impression in our camp. We
knew that the time was not far off when



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Slaves would go to the wall - but
 we said, how can our Father use
 such instruments as these, whom
 this murderer, his companions and
 abettors so markedly typified? This incident
 showed us how poorly united we then
 were to ^{the} move the real cause of our
 sorrows - our nation's curse, Human Bondage.

But how hopeless to Stephen must
 have appeared the cause of his master
 from any human stand point when
 Saul ^{kept} ~~held~~ the clothing of his murderers,
 while they were stoning him to death!
 "Is not it a picture?" And they stoned Stephen,
 calling upon him and saying Lord, Jesus,
 receive my spirit!

And he knelt down & cried with a loud
 voice, "Lord lay not this sin to their
 charge." And when he had said this he
 fell asleep.

The same observing friend, carried poor
 patient William into the company of
 the angels when his color is no offense.

Dear Sir,
I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. in relation to the matter of the ...

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