

New York, March 28th 1838

My dear Mr. Nicholas,

I have deferred writing to you month after month in the hope that Elizabeth Spencer's affairs would be drawn to a conclusion, and although two or three weeks have now elapsed since the final settlement has been made, I have been too much engaged to carry my intentions in regard to you into effect. As I know you will desire to hear every thing connected with the matter, I must go back as far as last summer. I had as I believe you know, written to Buragoa. As Mr. Robertson had sold Rebecca, I was under the necessity of employing the agency of Mr. Foulke to effect ^{her} the purchase of from her new master. During the summer, I learned from Miss Percam that Mr. Robertson was expected in New York, on her way to England, and that she would probably bring Olive and Rebecca both with her. In August, she and her son arrived in New York, bringing Chlorine, but without Elizabeth's other children. Elizabeth's distress on learning the cause was beyond measure. They were both of them likely to become mothers. I now learned for the first time that Olive had a child before, which Elizabeth from some mistaken motives had concealed from me. The affair was now evidently much more complicated and difficult, than I had anticipated at the commencement, but it was more important from the greater number of human beings involved in it, and having commenced the affair, I felt strengthened to prosecute it. I accordingly bought Olive of Mr. Robertson for \$186, and an agreement was signed by her, promising for that sum to cause her freedom and that of her offspring to be procured in Buragoa; after which it would be incumbent on me to effect ^{their} her transportation to New-York. The business was all transacted in a very agreeable manner. Mr. R. is a very ladylike and agreeable woman, and her son a very well educated, gentlemanly young man. They both of them treated me with very great politeness, although their indifference to the feelings of their slaves, and their apparent forgetfulness that they were moral and accountable beings, could not but strike me very unpleasantly. Of Olive, Mr. R. gave a very high character, but did not speak so well of Rebecca. She wished to have taken Olive to England with her, and said she was much disappointed when she found she could not do so. She told me that in regard to chastity, she could not place any dependence on any of her slaves, and seemed to think that to give them better principles was impossible. While she was here, Spencer paid to her \$180 for the freedom of Elizabeth. During the winter Elizabeth received news of the birth of Rebecca's child, but she has

^{not yet} received the same intelligence in relation to Olive. Mr Foulke received no definite answer from his correspondent in relation to the purchase of Rebecca, until about a month ago, when he announced to him that she had been bought and the expenses of manumission defrayed for \$309.96. This was one hundred dollars more than had been subscribed, and I was immediately obliged to go to work, and collect more money. This at the present period was no easy matter, and I felt many misgivings about it. I applied to the Trustees of the Estate of Lindley Murray, who have a residuary fund at their disposal for charitable purposes, and received fifty dollars. The remainder (except ten dollars) has been subscribed by individuals, and the money paid over to Mr Foulke. They are now to be brought here, with their children, and some expenses are still to be incurred. But I feel now willing to make any exertions to ensure their arrival ~~here~~ ^{in this place}. The laws of the island will not permit them to come away under a year from the time of their liberation, and they were not manumitted until last October, so that unless the laws can be evaded, they cannot be expected for some time. Mr Foulke has a niece going to Curacao, shortly and he promises that she shall do all that is possible to get them away. You will very readily imagine that I have had a great deal of perplexity and trouble, but the thought of rescuing five human beings from slavery and degradation is more than sufficient to compensate for all. I feel however that nothing is accomplished, until they are removed from the atmosphere of slavery, and placed in a situation, where I can myself be instrumental in elevating their moral and intellectual characters.

I have as yet said nothing about Chlorine, and to pass her by without notice, would be an unpardonable omission. If you could see her, I am sure you would agree with me in thinking her the most engaging coloured child you ever saw. She is a ^{light} mulatto, with bright black eyes and a countenance of great animation and intelligence. She is well-formed, and active, and even graceful in her movements. But what is most interesting is, that she is a child of uncommonly quick parts. Since last September, she has come daily to our house, and has received instruction from my sister Eliza. When she arrived, she could speak only the pablimento. She has now forgotten it, and speaks English fluently, although with a very pretty accent, but what is more remarkable she reads English with facility. She has not had great pains taken with her, and I think her progress very remarkable. If the remainder of the family are at all like her, they will richly reward any labour that is bestowed upon them.

But after having occupied so large a portion of my letter with Elizabeth's affairs, you will be glad to hear something of our own. And it seems to me that so many events have been crowded into the compass of one year, that I scarcely

know where to begin. When I last wrote to you, our family circle was unbroken, and our hearts were filled with joyous expectations. How soon, and how mournfully the scene was changed you know very well. You know too, for you have been called to drink of the same cup, how bitter it is to be separated from those we love in their dying moments. Franklin was my favourite brother, the pride and hope of our family, and no one but those who cherished them, can tell how many fond expectations were laid in the dust with him. The thought that he should have died among strangers, and without the consciousness of his situation, ~~is a thought~~ I am not even now able to dwell upon. Yet, if I have understood my own feelings, I have not murmured at the decree, or doubted that the event in all its circumstances was best for him that was taken ^{and} those who were left.

You will I am sure be interested in hearing of Margaret's confinement. She was very unwell all winter, and so much more uncomfortable than is common in such circumstances, that we were extremely anxious about her. About two months ago, she was prematurely delivered of twins. One of them, a girl was still-born; the other, a boy, was a living and healthy child, and is now doing well. She has named him after our dear lost Franklin. Although she suffered very great prostration of strength, she had no bad symptoms, and seems now quite well, although she has lost much of her colour and flesh.

But, I have yet another change to relate in our domestic circle. Eliza is shortly to be married to Dr Macdonald. It is an event that I did not at all anticipate at the time you left New-York, although I need hardly say that it is very gratifying to my feelings. The only draw-back to my pleasure in the connection is, that I do not consider him a decidedly religious man. Yet, there are few persons, with whom I could more unhesitatingly entrust Eliza's happiness. I have known him so long and so thoroughly, that there seems to be no room for mistake. He has resigned his situation at the Lunatic Asylum and has come to New York to practice physic. They will remain in our family for the present, and I could wish might be induced to do so always. Our family has been so broken up, that I cannot bear to think of parting with Eliza. My father has purchased a house in Clinton Place, and we shall remove into it on the first of May. Eliza will be married soon after.

Mr Macdonald came to the city with his brother, and has resided near us in Houston Str. all winter. His general health is very good, although he does not regain the use of his limbs, and is entirely incapable of application to business. He walks now almost daily in the street (though not without assistance) and seems to have overcome much of his repugnance to being seen. He has been at church without me almost every Sunday.

evening), and is I think pleased and interested by Mr Williams' preaching. I do not however think that he evinces as much sensibility on religious subjects, as he did when he was at Bloomingdale. He is not now so much out of the world as he was then, and seems to have a less painful sense of his misfortune. My fears and anxieties for him are very great, but I bear him constantly on my heart in prayer, and I believe that my prayers will ultimately be answered.

The church is increasing in numbers, and I trust in holiness and usefulness. There has been a series of unusual meetings held here in most of the churches, as well as in many other parts of the country. The results I believe generally have been en-

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couraging. At our last communion-day, ten were baptised, which is a larger number than has ever been added to the church at one time. The church was crowded to overflowing, and the ordinance was unusually striking and impressive. There are a number of other persons who are enquiring, although there are but three candidates to appear at our church meeting. Two of these are a sister and sister-in law of Mr Charles Roberts. They are both of them very interesting young women. Mrs Roberts is the wife of Elbridge Roberts, who removed here from Boston last spring. Mr Williams is in every respect very much as usual. He is I think ^{more} thinner and and pale than when you went away, but does not seem to be absolutely out of health. Last fall he appeared to be very unwell, and the church passed a resolution to dispense with his services for a few months, hoping that he would go abroad, but he declined availing himself of the opportunity.