

*Freedman's Hospital, Washington, D.C., August 19, 64
James P. Thomas, Esq.
St. Louis, Missouri*

Dear Uncle,

Your letter of the 13th is before me. I had come to conclusion to "damn" you if I might use the expression.

I am always glad to hear from you and our St. Louis friends, but I am a little afraid I will be considered as a very poor correspondent after awhile, on account of the few letters I write. Indeed Uncle James I never worked so hard, and had so little rest, and felt so tired at night as I do now.

Of my success and failures, for I have both, it does not become me to speak, for your satisfaction and of those others who kindly feel an interest in me and my welfare I may venture to say that my mentality... so far stands approved by the Med. Director of the Department to whom I make daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly reports.

There are many ladies here from the East, blessed old Massachusetts always in the lead of good works engaged in teaching and general supervision of the interest of the Freedmen in this City.

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They are a class the most indefatigable and earnest laborers I have ever seen engaged in any cause—wind, rain and storm never stop them—night and day these Angels of Mercy may be found engaged in the miserable filthy hovels of these poor people doing the most servile and menial duties.

Foremost and bravest of these is a Miss Harritte Carter of Mass. Do not imagine Miss Carter to be an old and homely "one" who hasfor some one to love for many years in vain, and has when up this occupation, perhaps as a penance for youthful indiscretion is

saying "no" when somebody thought she ought to have said "yes." By no means--Miss Carter is 24 with rosy cheeks, pretty eyes and a of the softest brown hair you ever felt, and as full of learning as an Episcopal Minister or a Catholic Priest and would make even Henry Green laugh at her humour and with.

She is never seen with a sober face. And in making my daily rounds, I always encounter her, and have a half...pleasant chat before I assume the duties of the day.

I have but little time to visit and therefore have but few acquaintances, and these poorly cultivated. I am socially speaking a "stick" and have but little pleasure as you know in making new friends. I much rather presume upon those I know.

In our Hospital some changes have taken

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place. Surg. Horner (white) supercedes Surg. Powell (colo). The change was for the... of services and I believe complexion had nothing to do with it. Surg. Horner is a skillful and well educated Surg, and polite agreeable gentlemen.

Dr. Powell is retained as Asst.

I have thought of resigning in Oct. for the purpose of attending lectures in the University of Harvard in Boston and trying for a Surgeon's Post in the spring.

Perhaps I may, perhaps I may not give up this idea—I am undecided.

On the 14th the most eventful event of my life occurred—I drew \$100 less war tax \$2.50 for Medical Services rendered the U.S. Government. My draft was in favour of "Acting Asst. Surgeon Rank Ist Lieut. U.S.A." I read the address several times—I liked it tho' I confess it read strange to me.

In the spring I want my drafts payable to Maj. John H. Rapier Surg. U.S.A.

I do not like the U.S. Service. However half loaf is better than no loaf. It is better to have a blue coat than no military coat. I would rather have the Mexican Green or English Purple.

But I must tell you coloured men in the U.S. Uniform are much respected here, and in visiting the various Departments if the dress is that of an Officer, you receive the military salute from the ground as promptly as if your blood was a Howard or Plantagenent instead of a Pompey or Cuffee's.

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I had decided not to wear the uniform but I have altered my mind—and I shall appear hereafter in full dress gold lace, pointed hat, straps and all. Mr. Fred Douglass spoke here last night to an immense audience and to day the President sent for him to visit him in the Capitol. Did you ever hear

such nonsense. The President of the U.S. sending for a “nigger” to confer with him on the State of the Country.

I have been invited to take supper with Mr. Douglass to night. I am proud of it. He visited the Hospital to day. He is a fine looking gentleman. He made a fine impression on the public.

I exceedingly regret to hear of Miss Virginia’s ill health and hope she may be well soon. I shall write to Miss Pauline in a few days to whom make my apologies for not writing earlier. I have an opening here for Lady Teacher. Pay depends on her qualifications. It may be \$50 or \$30 per month. If I had the money I would send for Sarah—I believe she could get \$50.

If you go to New York, come by Washington if you can. I am sorry I have not money in my pocket to offer you a big time. But wait until September 30th and I will do the “clean thing” by you.

In all Washington there is not an a number one place for a Col. Gentleman to stop. But I will “fix” you up—if you give me “due and timely” notice. Write to me. Direct my letters John H. Rapier, M.D., Actg. Asst. Surg. U.S.A. Tell Mrs. Bailey I have written to her. Remember me to Mr. Clamorgan and the Johnsons, Mrs. Pritchard and Mr. Pritchard. Write soon.

I am as usual yours. John Jr.