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11-6-1868

### Brinckle, Anna to Mrs. Dupont, 11/6/1868

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COPY

My dear Mrs. Bancroft:

Looking over letters, on a rainy Sunday, I came upon this one written by my Aunt Anna Brinckle, who was secretary to Bishop Lee, about General Howard and I thought her great admiration of him, and her anecdotes, might interest you. The handwriting is not very easy to read, but an original letter has so much more interest than a copy that I send it along. Please don't bother to answer or to return it.

Sincerely yours,

(SIGNED) Gertrude Brinckle

Wilmington, Delaware,  
Nov. 11, 1935.

COPY

Nov'r. 6th, 1868,  
Friday evening.

My dear Mrs. duPont:

My first impulse when anything interests me is to tell it to you, so I am going to give you my impressions of Gen. Howard, whose conversation I enjoyed so much at the Bps. yesterday evening. I have always heard so much against the Freedmen's Bureau that I feared that I might find its chief not altogether to my taste, but I was much pleased to find him such a quiet, simple, unassuming man, and such a warm-hearted, right-minded Christian. The subject of the colored race and their improvement is uppermost in his mind, and he talked much about it, and told of many arguments and conversations he had had with Southern men about them. He has just returned from Texas where he made many speeches and met with no violent opposition. He says the reason was that they expected to find him a wild beast, or something like Ben Butler, and that when they saw such a harmless little fellow, they were quite disarmed. He says the Texans are in deep need of the Gospel, and that they are hungry for it. He had a meeting in a colored church, a few days ago, at which he just talked to them about their Saviour, and both whites and colored people were in tears.

He mentioned a circumstance that had touched him greatly; when traveling through Vermont & N. H. - the latter, I think, is his native State - a young man, who had lost an arm, was selling books in the cars, and the Gen. asked him where he lost his arm, "At Chancellorsville, where did you lose yours?" "At Five Oaks." The young man said, "I was in that battle." He mentioned the number of his reg't. and Gen. H. said, "That was in my brigade." The young man looked puzzled and said, "I was in Howard's brigade." "That is my name", the Gen. said, and the soldier then recognized him, and seemed much pleased to meet him, and begged him

to accept of a little book he had. Some time after he came into the car, and said, "General, I went to your headquarters, one day, to ask for two rations of whiskey. You did not give it to me, but spoke in such a way that I resolved never to taste ardent spirits, and that talk with you was the means of my conversion."

*President of the U.S.*

I was much interested in all he said of Gen. Grant, and deeply impressed with the duty of praying for one who is soon to be in such a weighty office. He is much attached to Gen. Grant, and says he is not a drinking man, as the Southern people allege. But he told us (the Bp. and myself) the circumstances which led to the story that he was seen drunk in the streets of Washington. Gen. Sheridan had asked him to drink, and he is so easily affected that a comparatively small quantity induced intoxication, and Gen. Hunt took him to his own house along one of the cross streets. One of his friends asked Gen. Howard to speak to Grant about it and when a fit time came, he did so, urging his great influence in the army and the injury he might do by his example. He said Grant replied with great frankness that he was deeply mortified at what had occurred and that he felt all he had said most deeply. Not long ago they met at a dinner party in Washington and Grant took Mrs. Howard to table; when asked to take wine she declined, and so did he (which shows how much may depend on a woman's conduct in such cases). In answer to Gen. H's reproof, Grant said, "I do not drink as much in three months as Hancock ~~do~~ in a day! He says Sherman takes more than he ought and that McDowell, who was said to be under the influence of drink at B. Run, never takes even wine. Alas! in these days of emancipation and reform how little is done to check the mightiest evil on the earth!

I was interested this morning in a conversation on the second coming of our Lord. It is a cheering sign of the times to me that the eyes of Christians seem so generally drawn to look for His appearing.

I found Mrs. Lee lying on her couch yesterday evening, and thought she looked weak and weary. Julia had been in bed in her own room all day with neuralgia in her head, and the Bp. in Phila. Julia was very anxious <sup>to come down</sup> to tea (I found Julia Lee quite sick, but she was able to come) and after a cup of coffee was quite revived. She was filled with pity for Gen. H's lost right arm, which seemed to her a far greater privation than her own. He must have been surprised at the Bishop's thoughtful care in cutting his food and helping him in various ways, if he did not notice Julia's similar affliction.

I went to the Bible Society, which was rather better attended than usual. Mr. Latimer and Mr. Cookman made the addresses. The latter has an odd manner and evidently stands up for old-fashioned Methodist ways, but his address was interesting. In comparing Romanism with the skepticism of many so-called Protestants, he said, "I would rather have Jesus with Mary than no Jesus at all." Mrs. Chandler says he has a meeting every Tuesday afternoon expressly for Christians, to aid their growth in grace, which are attended by many from other churches, and by some Orthodox Friends, Mrs. Howland and her daughter, W. Hilles, Miss Dixon and others. Mr. Cookman conducts the meeting and any who feel disposed express their thoughts. Miss Howland spoke at one of them, and another Quaker. Grace Church is very splendid; I think the old fathers of Methodism would turn in their graves if they could dream of such a place. Grobe plays the great organ, and the singing is very chaste and superior to any choir I have heard in the town.

After the Bible meeting, I went to the Institute and heard the closing sentences of Gen. H's speech. There were about 300 colored people there and he gave them some timely exhortations. The audience was a mixed one with a large proportion of men. Judge Hale presided, which rather surprised the Bp. and pleased him. A brother of Gen. H. was present who had commanded a colored Reg't. in which every man who could not read learned to read and write while in the reg't.

I had no opp'y to talk with the Bp. about church matters. His sermon is not yet out and he seemed vexed at its slowness. It is in the hands of a printer in whom Dr. Colton Smith is interested.

Mrs. Lee made me sit by her and tell her about everything this morning, but she was still in bed when I left between 10 & 11 - and her cough seemed to exhaust her very much. The least movement brings on shortness of breath. But the Bishop seems hopeful and eager to try remedies that people recommend. It is well, perhaps, that he does not know the sad truth. Clammy is coming this evening to stay two weeks. The Bp. has not yet gone to Norwich. I told Mrs. Lee I would gladly come and stay with her any time he was away and she and Julia alone. She held both my hands some time when I bade her good-bye, and said, "I want my friends to pray for me. I know you pray for me. I have great peace of mind."

I have written till I fear you'll tire with reading, dear Mrs. duPont, and have mixed my pages sadly. I alluded to your husband's early and steadfast interest in the education of the colored race and Gen. H. warmly echoed what I said. I told him how the Admiral was pleased with the answer of the boy who said, "Mama, I's gloriously in earnest," he had not heard it before and said it was worth remembering.

At last I close -

Ever yours,

(SIGNED) A. B.

[Anna Brinkley]