

[To Mrs. M. E. Pass. Faizon, N.C.]

Reedy Fork, Decr-31st, 63.

My own Dearest;

The old year leaves us in a flood of tears, whether in grief for past associations or sorrow for our transgressions I cannot tell. Within a few hours we may commence the round of another year with its joys and sorrows. And whether it is to be one of usefulness and happiness depends much upon our own conduct, then let us commence it with a zeal and determination to leave no effort unemployed, so far as in us lies to make it one of happiness to all within our influence and control, and to make it one of usefulness and pleasure to ourselves. Your very kind letter of the 26th & 27th inst. came to hand on Tuesday, and I need hardly to tell you that it was soon opened and that its contents were greedily devoured. Your little note of the 23rd came to hand on last Saturday. I was truly glad to learn, from both, that you were enjoying yourself so well, and that the health of Dean Baby was good, and earnestly pray for a continuance of both your happiness and good health.

I have been about home most of the time since I wrote you and have ^{been} very unwell for several days past, but am up to day and feel pretty well. I have attended to but little business this week. I believe that a bill will pass Congress to employ negroes in the Army for everything but fighting, and am inclined to think that I will hire most of mine on the R.R. Brother Ed got here last night from the Mountains, and made arrangements to make Iron in copartnership with Mr John Robson near Rockford. He went to Salisbury to day to get a government contract. If he gets the contract he will go into it, and if he does not he will not make Iron. He was at Father's while up and says they were all in good health - Says Mollie looks very well.

I am unable to say when I can get ready to start
down to Sampson though hope to do so soon, as I am
very anxious to see you and hear Babo

The Bill before Congress putting men into service
who had furnished substitutes is creating a little
excitement up here, and there is quite a stir with
some of them to provide against it; I think it a very
just measure however, and wish it may pass the Sen-
ate and become a law.

I am inclined to think that I would not like to live
in your Uncle Claiborn's neighborhood as it is too
far from a P.O. and then there are two Rivers
to cross to get to end; and another reason is that
I think Slavery doomed, and without negroes we
would have no use for land in that Country - I think
that I should leaving Mr Brinkley's place, as I
might use that to advantage any way, though \$40 or
50 Thousand is a little higher than I want to go. So
you see clearest there is all ways something in the way
of my getting a place - a home. Is it you or I that
have done something wrong, that there appears to
be a fatality that separates us so much - or is it
for your ultimate good. Let us try to be more de-
serving, that we may be, more together. I wish to be
able to come down soon, and then we can talk a
great deal that I can not write.

A happy New Year clearest, Many kisses from
our dear Babo, and my prayers for your
health and happiness

Yr Obedient