

Roanoke Island, N.C., April 7, [1864]

A storm is raging without, and it is the fifth we have experienced within two weeks, each of which lasted two days and nights, and was almost fearful. However, I think we shall have an abundance (if not a superabundance) of sunshine. The sun is sometimes exceedingly brilliant, and one's eyes are apt to be inflamed, caused by the peculiar glare of the sun upon the sand, and need to be protected by green glasses both at the side and front. Miss M. B. [Mary Burnap] is here and will remain. She is a comfort to my heart every day. She lives for Christ, and is endeavoring to cheer and raise his desponding and long oppressed little ones. The work increases here, the appliances also increase; still there is a demand for two of the necessities of life unmet—shelter and clothing. Much as been done in *both* directions, and yet there is great need.

The saw-mill, which, it was stated, was in successful operation, is not yet erected; the *foundation* is now laid, and this, on this sandy soil, has been a *great* labor. When this is built, houses of every needed description will be speedily erected. The houses have thus far been made principally of boards which they 'rive' out, and this Southern phrase is correctly defined, for the wood is torn asunder, consequently nearly two thirds of every piece of timber is wasted. And still the people come, and though boxes and barrels of clothing, substantial proofs of Northern generosity, sometimes pour in upon us, yet the amount received is *by no means* adequate to the demand.

Were it in my power I would love to thank those generous hearts that have so nobly manifested their sympathy for these liberated sufferers. I believe that in the great day of account, Christ, impersonating these little ones, will say to such, "I was naked, and ye clothed me," and He who hath declared a cup of cold water given in his name shall by no means be without reward, will say: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of *the least* of these, ye did it unto *me*." And yet they *die* from lack of clothing. There were seven funerals (burials rather) last Saturday, four Sunday, and five Monday, and these not from any prevailing disease, but from "deep colds," as they expressed it. They take severe colds from lack of *shoes* and stockings, and these *cost* something.

The people are grateful for what has been done. They are bundantly aware *now* that the North *care* for them; that the 'Yankees' are indeed their friends, notwithstanding Southern teaching to the contrary, and they are *astonished* at what is sent. There are those, of course, among them, unable to appreciate such favors, but there are also people of uprightness, of sensibility, of refinement; and prayers are daily ascending to the God of Sabaoth for those who have liberated, and are now endeavoring to elevate them in the scale of nations. Surprise has been expressed by some at the North that so little has been done here. *More* surprise perhaps would be felt and expressed by these same individuals could they see the difficulties which have been met and overcome, that so *much* has been accomplished.

I suppose it will be allowable for me to say that our Superintendent, Rev. Horace James, is bending all his energies to the work, superintending with a careful scrutiny even the minutia, and infusing his own vitality everywhere. But it is impossible for man to *create*. The God of heaven can alone do this. Mortals must have materials to work with. Large bodies move slow, and it is impossible to metamorphose this great, uncultivated, uncared-for mass, into an enlightened, cultivated people suddenly. Time is needed; but

with patience and perseverance, obstacles, many of which have already disappeared, will be overcome.

["From Miss E. James," *American Missionary* 8 (June 1864): 140-41.]