



Harriet Jacobs

Selected Writings and Correspondence

Jacobs relates to Amy Post of the difficulty in writing of her sexual oppression while enslaved. "Woman can whisper—her cruel wrongs into the ear of a very dear friend—much easier than she can record them for the world to read."

June 21st [1857]

My Dear Friend

A heart full of thanks for your kind and welcome—letter which would have been answered immediately—but for want of time to think a moment. I would dearly love to talk with you as it would be more satisfactory—but as I cannot I will try to explain myself on paper as well as I can—

I have My dear friend— . . . [**obliterated**] Striven faithfully to give a true and just account of my own life in slavery— God knows I have tried to do it in a Christian spirit— there are somethings that I might have made plainer I know— woman can whisper—her cruel wrongs into the ear of a very dear friend—much easier than she can record them for the world to read— I have left nothing out but what I thought—the world might believe that a Slave woman *was* too willing to pour out—that she might *gain* their sympathies I ask nothing— I have placed myself before you to be judged as a woman *whether* . . . [**obliterated**] I deserve your pity or contempt. I have another object in view— it is to come to you just as I am a poor slave Mother— not to tell you what I have heard but what I have seen—and what I have suffered—and if their is any sympathy to give—let it be given to the thousands—of of Slave Mothers that are still in bondage—suffering far more than I have— let it plead for their helpless Children that they * . . . [**obliterated**]* may enjoy the same liberties that my Children now enjoy— Say anything of me that you have had from a truthful source that you think best— ask me any question you like—in regard to the father of my Children I think I have stated all perhaps I did not tell you—that he was a member of Congress—at that time all ~~that~~ of this I have written— I think it would be best for you to begin with our acquaintance and the length of time that I was in your family you advice ~~about~~ about giving the history of my life in Slavery mention that I lived at service *all the* while that I was striving to git the Book out but do not say with whom I lived

as I would not use the Willis name neither would I like to have people think that I was living an Idle life—and had got this book out merely to make money— my kind friend I do not restrict you in anything for you know far better than I do what to say I am only too happy to think that I am going to have it from you—

[at top of separate sheet] *1st*

I hope you will be able to read my unconnected scrool— I have been interupted and called away so often—that I hardly know what I have written but I must send it for fear the opportunity will not come to morrow—to do better— Professor Botta and Lady with Ole Bull eldest *son* is here—on a visit from the City beside three other persons that we have had in to spend the day— and Baby is just 4 weeks old this morning. houskeping and looking after the Children occupy every moment of my time we have in all five Children—three girls—and two boys. Imogen is at home **[at top of separate sheet]** *2* for the Summer Louise came up and spent a week—with me she desired much love to you— she is not well but looking miserably thin—

I have been thinking that I would so like to go away and sell my Book— I could then secure a copywright to sell it both here and in England—and by identifying myself with—it I might do something for the Antislavry Cause— to do this I would have to ~~have of~~ *get letters of* introduction. from some of the leading Abolitionist of this Country. to those of the Old— when you write tell me what you think of it I must stop for I am in the only spot where I can have a light—and the mosquitoes have taken possession of me— much love to all my friends—and Willie— and believe me ever yours

Harriet

Citation:

Autograph letter, signed; Isaac and Amy Post Family Papers, University of Rochester Library.