Catherine B. Dart to Lewis Allen Alderson

Several letters written by Catherine B. Dart to Lewis Allen Alderson and his wife, Lucy. Lucy died in February 1833. Lewis Allen Alderson later moved to Atchison, Kansas, in 1858 and was a prominent Baptist minister. He died in Atchison in 1881.

Date: 1832-1833

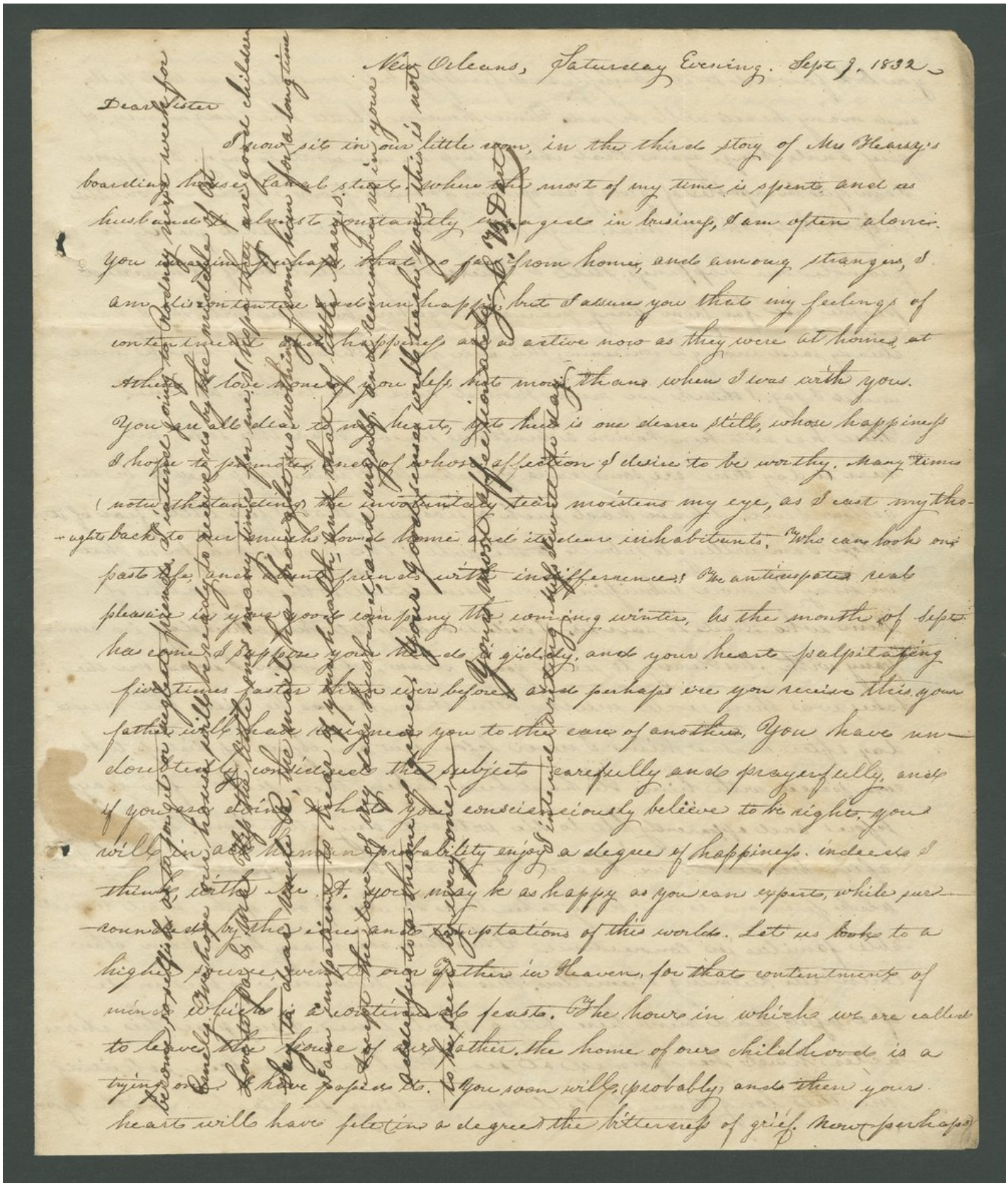
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Catherine B. Dart to Lewis Allen Alderson



New Orleans, Saturday Evening. Sept 1. 1832

Dear Sister

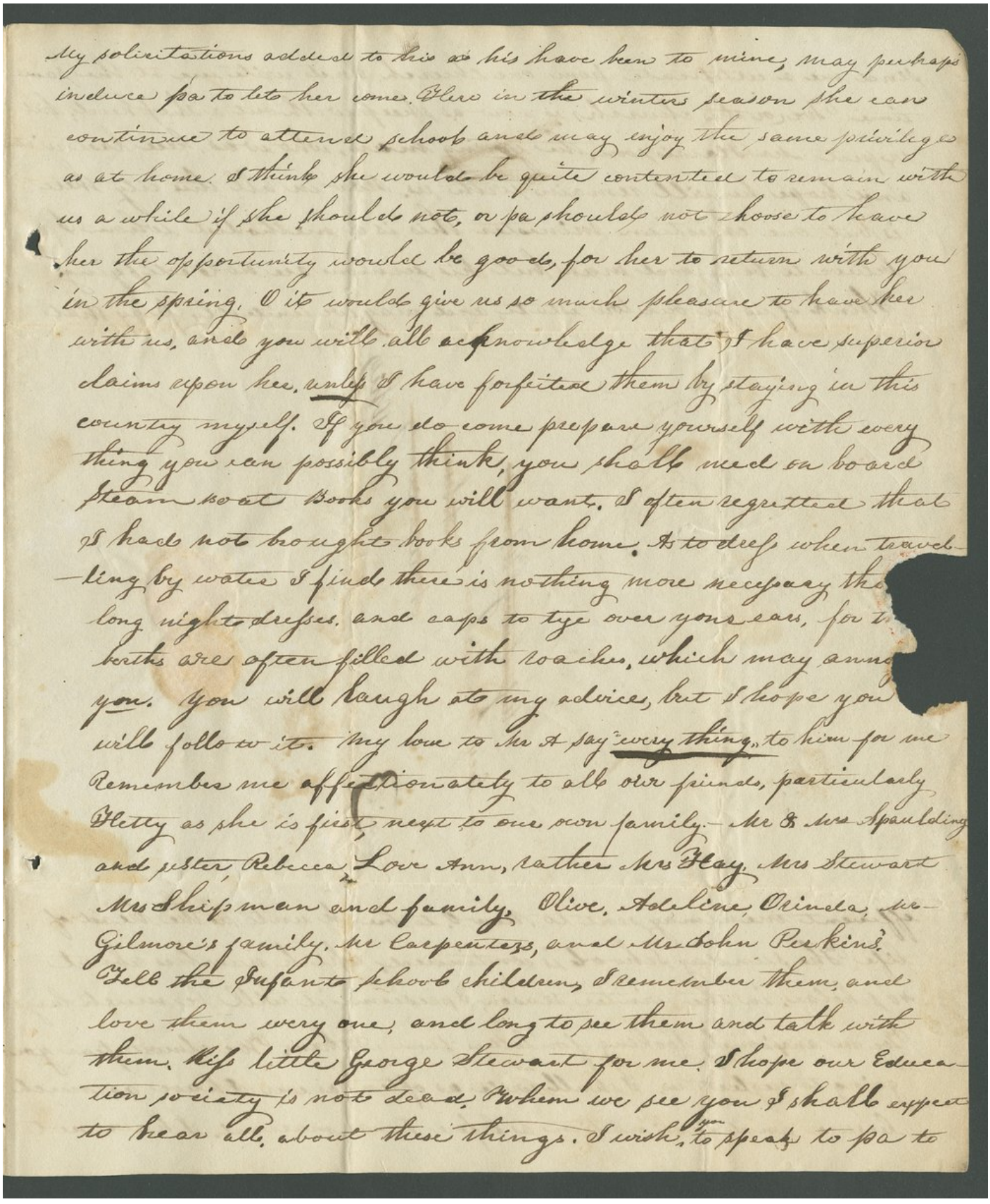
I now sit in our little room, in the third story of Mrs Kearny's boarding house, Canal st. where the most of my time is spent, and as husband is almost constantly engaged in business, I am often alone. You imagine perhaps, that so far from home, and among strangers, I am discontented and unhappy, but I assure you that my feelings of contentment and happiness are as active now as they were at home, at Athens. I love home and you all, not more than when I was with you. You are all dear to my heart, yet there is one dearer still, whose happiness I hope to promote, one of whose affection I desire to be worthy. Many times (note the tear drop) the involuntary tear moistens my eye, as I cast my thoughts back to our much loved home and its dearer inhabitants. Who can look on past life, many dear friends with indifference! The anticipated pleasure of your visit to our city this coming winter, as the months of Sept. has come I suppose your heart beats gaily, and your heart palpitating five times faster than ever before, and perhaps ere you receive this your father will have urged as many reasons as you to the care of another. You have undoubtedly considered the subject carefully and prayerfully, and if you are doing, what you conscientiously believe to be right, you will in all human probability enjoy a degree of happiness. indeed I think, with St. P. you may be as happy as you can expect, while surrounded by the cares and temptations of this world. Let us look to a higher source, even our Father in Heaven, for that contentment of mind which is a continual feast. The hours in which we are called to leave the house of our Father, the home of our childhood is a trying one. I have passed it. You soon will, probably, and then your heart will have felt in a degree the bitterness of grief. Now perhaps

Catherine B. Dart to Lewis Allen Alderson

you look forward to it, fearfully and fearlessly, but soon the tear will falle, and many hearts will be sade Time however blunts the poignancy of grief and, brings again that cheerfulness we were wonte to enjoy. I suppose I am quite incapable of giving an opinions formed from experience on this subject, but I think marriage, (from good motives) tends greatly to promote our happiness. Still I believe the greatest half of married people are far from living peaceably together. but you will say I have already said enough concerning this, were you with me how much more would I say. I think we never should have done talking. do come.

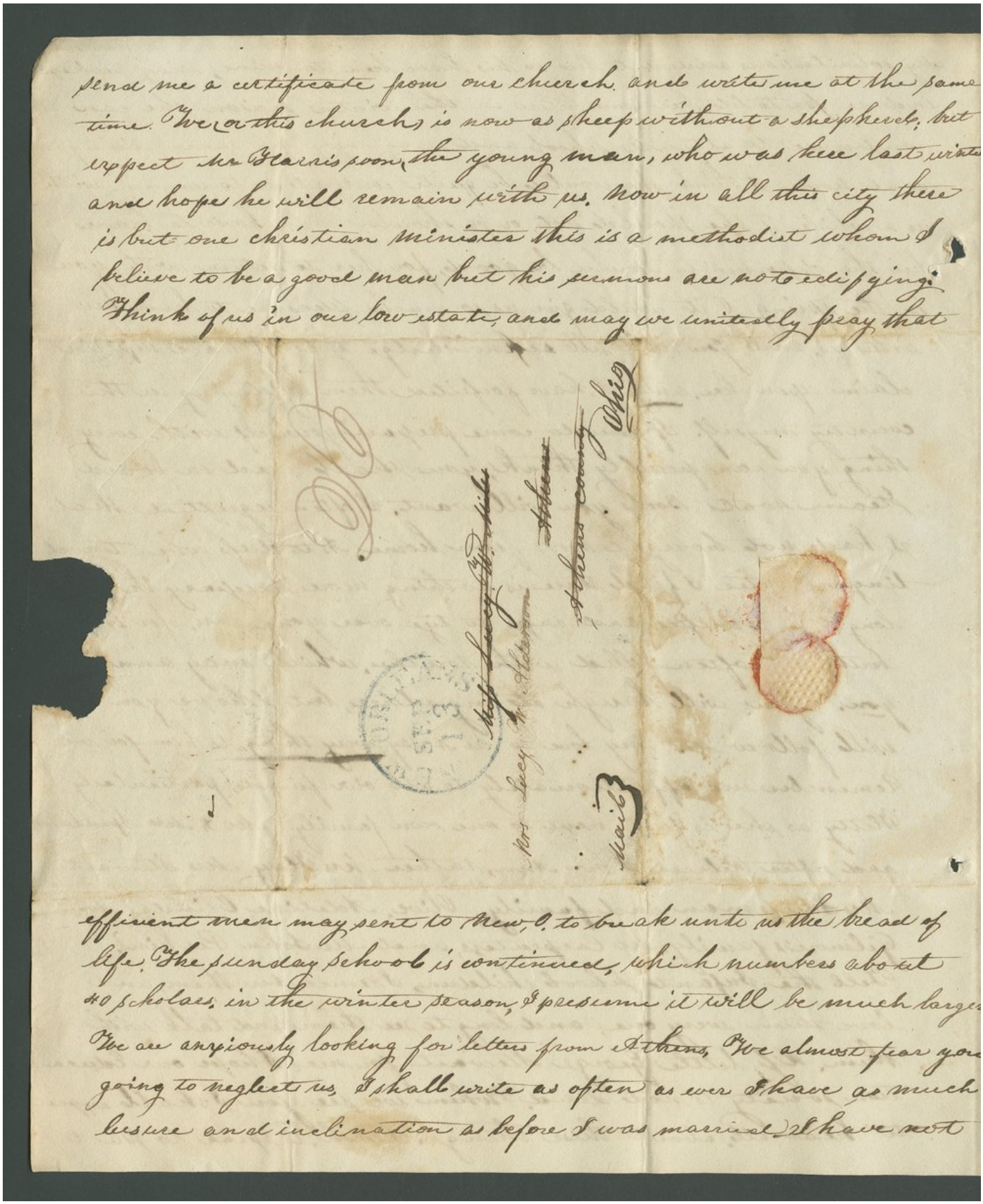
There has not been known a healthier season than this, so far, but we hear to day there are some cases of sickness in town supposed to be the yellow fever. I have had such a seasoning that I feel little fear of it. I hope I am willing to submite to the will of the Lords. pray for us that we may be more submissive, more assimilated to the character of him who died to save us. I visited a hospital the other day in company with Mrs Heasy to see a young man, who when I was over the lake, was there well much better than I was, he died the next day after we saw him I never before saw an object of distress, to be compared with him. He had been taken there sick a few days before and apparently left to die without any attention. The day after his death we heard he had been intoxicated the whole week previous to his being taken there He was of one of the most respectable families in Connecticut Thus there are many here from other countries ruining themselves. This man however was the mate of a vessel, had been here but a short time I suppose his character had been formed at sea, Husband has been soliciting me this long time to tell you to bring Sis Elizabeth with you

Catherine B. Dart to Lewis Allen Alderson



My solicitations addressed to his & his have been to mine, may perhaps induce pa to let her come. Here in the winter season she can continue to attend school and may enjoy the same privileges as at home. I think she would be quite contented to remain with us a while if she should not, or pa should not choose to have her the opportunity would be good, for her to return with you in the spring. O it would give us so much pleasure to have her with us, and you will all acknowledge that I have superior claims upon her, unless I have forfeited them by staying in this country myself. If you do come prepare yourself with every thing you can possibly think, you shall need on board steam boat Books you will want. I often regretted that I had not brought books from home. As to sleep when travelling by water I find there is nothing more necessary than long night dresses. and caps to tye over your ears, for the berths are often filled with roaches, which may annoy you. You will laugh at my advice, but I hope you will follow it. My love to Mr A say "every thing" to him for me Remember me affectionately to all our friends, particularly Pletty as she is first next to our own family. Mr & Mrs Spaulding and sister Rebecca, Love Ann, rather Mrs Hay, Mrs Stewart Mrs Shipman and family, Olive, Adeline, Orinda, Mr Gilmore's family, Mr Carpenters, and Mr John Perkins. Tell the Infants school children, I remember them, and love them very one, and long to see them and talk with them. Kiss little George Stewart for me. I hope our Education society is not dead. When we see you I shall expect to hear all about these things. I wish you to speak to pa to

Catherine B. Dart to Lewis Allen Alderson



send me a certificate from our church and write me at the same time. We as this church is now as sheep without a shepherd, but expect Mr Harris soon the young man, who was here last winter and hope he will remain with us. Now in all this city there is but one christian ministes this is a methodist whom I believe to be a good man but his sermons are not edifying. Think of us in our low estate, and may we unitedly pray that

efficient men may sent to New O. to break unto us the bread of life. The sunday school is continued, which numbers about 40 scholars in the winter season, I presume it will be much larger. We are anxiously looking for letters from Athens, We almost fear you going to neglect us. I shall write as often as ever I have as much leisure and inclination as before I was married I have not

Catherine B. Dart to Lewis Allen Alderson

New Orleans 16 Oct. 1832

Lewis N. Alderson Esq.

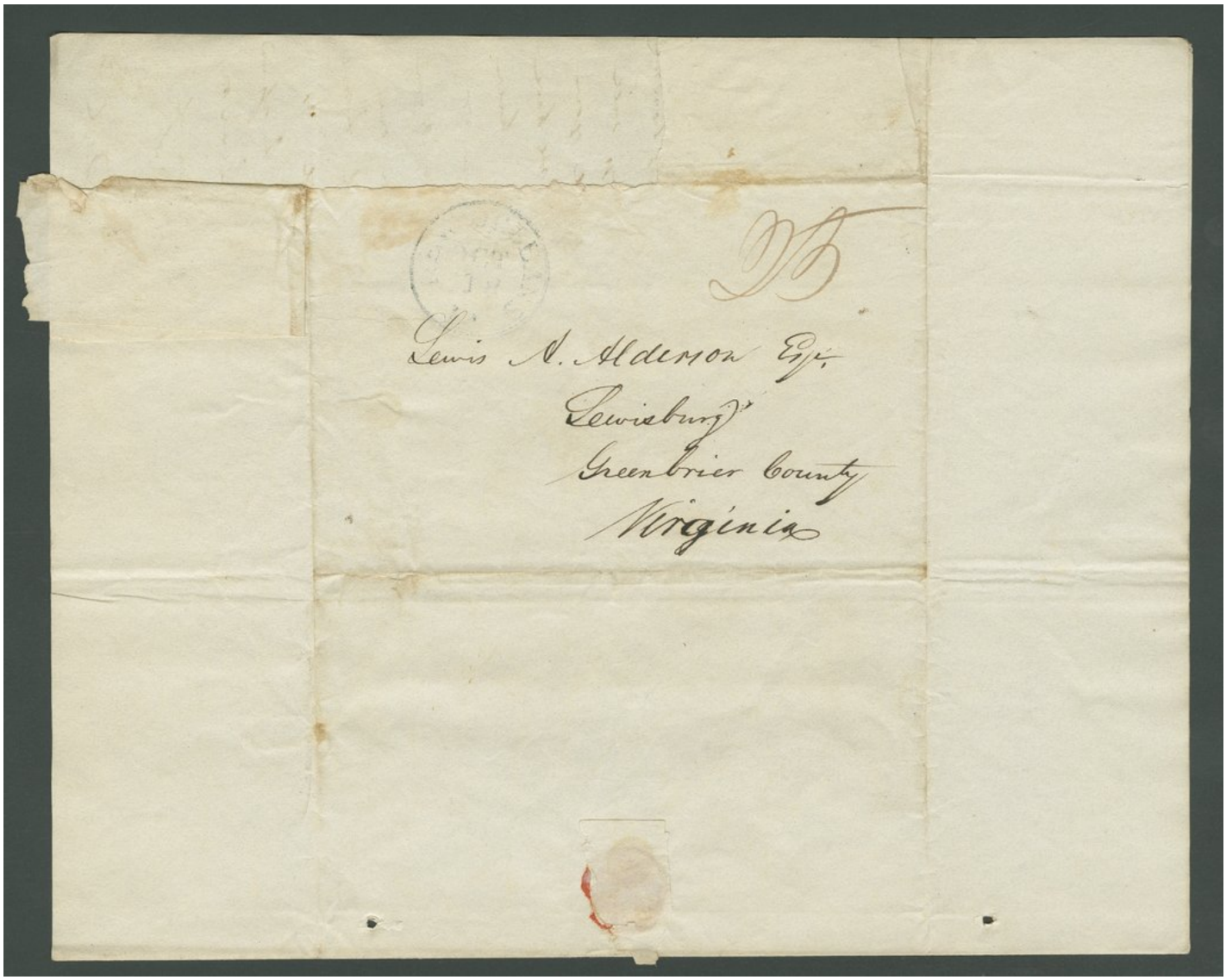
Dr. Sir

I would say "dear Colonel" in addressing you, as an old acquaintance, - I have for a long time been anxious concerning the health of your dear companion, and with the hope that if you would bring her to this country have taken a house much larger than I otherwise intended, This climate has had such a good effect upon the health of her sister that my connections were greatly strengthened in her case, - Your own happiness will wholly depend upon the health and happiness of your family, and awfull are those feelings that trouble for the future, concerning the life and health of the wife of one's bosom on coming here, if you find it too cold, a few days will land you in Cuba, it will be easy for me to find you good acquaintance there, but I think unless we have a very cold winter, you will find the weather here warm enough. - I cannot congratulate either you or your dear wife, because I fear the calamity that awaits you if you remain in the northern climate, but should you come to the south and find your wife restored to health, I will have as hearty a day of rejoicing on your account as any of your warmest friends. - If you come be assured of a hearty and cordial welcome - Give my love to Mrs A. and accept for yourself assurances of the highest esteem of

Yr. Obt. St.

C. Dart

Catherine B. Dart to Lewis Allen Alderson



Catherine B. Dart to Lewis Allen Alderson

New Orleans, ~~Tuesday~~ Thursday morning Nov 3, 1832

Dear Brother

With pleasure we yesterday received your kind letter of Oct 10 & 11 glad that you remember us though widely separated we no sooner heard of your having left Athens than both husband and myself addressed letters to you, directed to Lewisburg, those you have probably received before this. Our anxiety for dear sister Lucy is unabated. Before I had hopes but since the reception of your letter, I fear we shall not meet, this side eternity. I hope we may be resigned to the will of our Heavenly Father whatever it is, and that whether we live or die we may do it unto the Lord. We daily see what poor feeble natures we are, that our breath is in our nostrils, our life as the morning cloud and the early dew. that in and of ourselves we can do nothing. I regret that Lucy did not write a few lines in your letter, to hear that she is unable to write gives me indescribable feelings. I pray that my fears with regard to her may not be realized. Death now surrounds us on every side yet by the blessing of the disposer of all things we are yet spared. When I wrote you last month the yellow fever was violent, but now in addition to that the cold plague, and cholera are making unparalleled ravages. I suppose no city on the earth ever more strongly felt the hand of the Almighty. It seems as though the angel of death had spread his wings on the blast. and what in the evening was a mighty host, in the the morning is lifeless and dead. The first alarm from cholera was excited a week last wednesday by the death of two men on

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the levee, there died there in the street surrounded by a rabble altogether indifferent. Manifesting no feeling, nor even offering to render any assistance to the dying. The first died and was drawn away one side of the street, then the other, one was served in the same manner. These you will readily conclude were the very dregs of society, those who make themselves more like brutes than men. Those two on the first day, 6 the second, and so on until day before yesterday when the number of deaths was 177 the greatest number for any one day. Disease has swept this the upper part of the city and appears to be progressing towards the lower part where it now rages among the french with fury. No doubt it will depopulate the city of a certain class of people. The impruelent and intemperate are almost to a man victims. The poor blacks suffer largely. Some public works have lost nearly all their laborers. I have heard of one cotton press that has lost every one. Business is almost out of the question through the whole city. At the first fear and despair were depicted on almost every countenance, yesterday and to day the panic seems to have subsided a little. In all this commotion I have been blessed with a great degree of composure of mind. Husband has been very unwell three or four weeks. A severe cold and cough have caused him to become quite weak, and we very much feared he might be attacked with cholera. but since we have learned that the disease in temperate persons, is easily mastered, if taken in time, we feel less fearful. We are very careful, eating nothing but fresh meat and bread, we drink coffee. I should not fear to have you come

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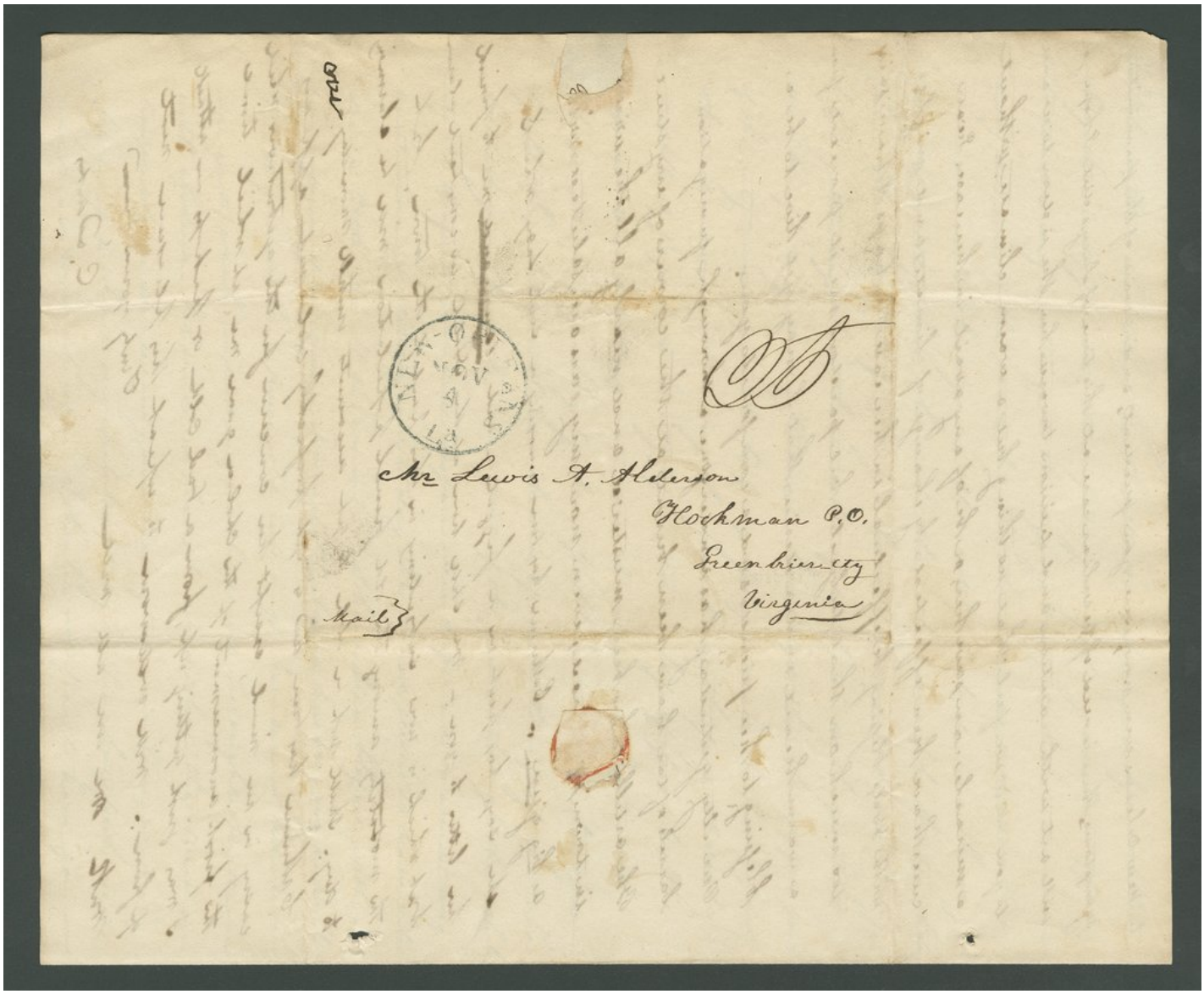
to New Orleans even now, were you present, and aware of the premonitory symptoms. There is need of peculiar care at this time of Lucy's diet. I hope you will act with caution and decision towards her. She is dear to us and to you and we feel that nothing but a warm climate, without a miracle can save her, or be of any avail in her case. Great cures have been effected by change of climate and might with Gods blessing be effectual in her case. Perhaps I have said too much on that subject: but pardon me, it proceeds from a warm heart and a desire that L may yet live to be a blessing to her friends and a comfort to you.

Our city yesterday has undergone a thorough fumigation. barrels of tar have been burnt at the corners of every street. The artillery has been mustered and nearly all the wits in town shattered, even now my ears are saluteless with a big gun. Catharine, has been nursing a sick lady, which she says has put her in a fright - and commands me to finish her letter to you. We still live at the Astor, in constant alarm but which is more subsiding in this part of the town, but the mortality among the old french population will be alarming to day. shall not be able to get accounts until Monday.

Catharine has been and is yet perfectly cool and appears easy in her mind, except her concern for the agitation which the first announcement of the cholra gave me, at which time I was just getting up, from a bad cold, or perhaps an attack of fever. will endeavour to repeat this pleasure next week. We are all well

Truly yours
C. Dart

Catherine B. Dart to Lewis Allen Alderson



Catherine B. Dart to Lewis Allen Alderson

New Orleans 24 Nov. 1832

Mr. L. A. Alderson

St. Jo.

I have great pleasure in now being able to inform you, that our city is once more perfectly healthy, the cholera & yellow Fever having done their work in a rapid manner and passed over, it is computed by many & I entertain no doubt of the fact that in about sixteen days no less than five thousand died out of this population of say 40 000 - It was so that the means could not be found to bury the dead even without coffins - Such another scene I wish never to behold - People of all ages sex & conditions fell, like grass in the meadow before the scythe -

Parsnip has resumed its usual unrivalled appearance, and promises for the future a fair prospect - Letters from Athens yesterday inform us of the low state of health of your dear wife, I can sympathise with you in your affliction, having once passed

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this dreadfull ordeal myself, our anxiety is great on her account and we still hope that she may be spared and that we shall see her yet in the land of the living.

We have now gotten into our own house, and shall we expect be pleasantly & comfortably situated, when we get our house fitted up in a suitable manner.

I ought to have told you that during all the time of the pestilence Catharine remained perfectly cool, though the people were dying around us in the rooms adjoining ours: and in our sight & hearing, the knell was in continual upon day & night. - When one was attacked with the Cholera, either day or night all were to help, servants and all. -

We are truly anxious to hear from you, and desire you to write very often. Catharine says she never had such health since she has lived, she looks as though she had nothing to fear from consumption, - this climate will agree with her, & she may live to good old age - all well. - Truly yours

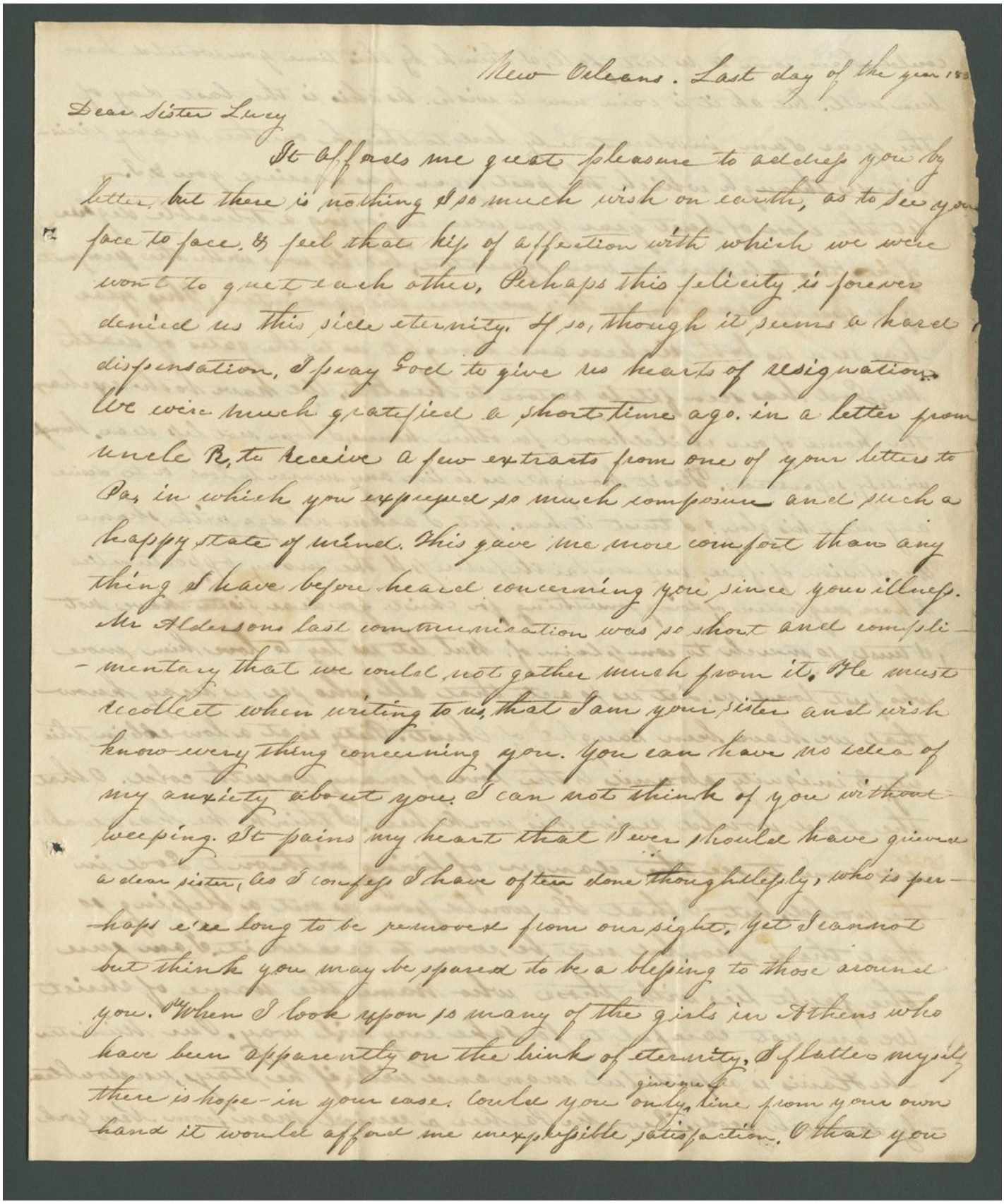
C. Dart

Our love to Mrs. A.

Catherine B. Dart to Lewis Allen Alderson



Catherine B. Dart to Lewis Allen Alderson



New Orleans. Last day of the year 18[illegible]

Dear Sister Lucy

It affords me great pleasure to address you by letter, but there is nothing I so much wish on earth, as to see you face to face, & feel that kiss of affection with which we were wont to greet each other. Perhaps this felicity is forever denied us this side eternity. If so, though it seems a hard dispensation, I pray God to give us hearts of resignation. We were much gratified a short time ago. in a letter from uncle R, to receive a few extracts from one of your letters to Pa, in which you appeared so much composed and such a happy state of mind. This gave me more comfort than any thing I have before heard concerning you since your illness. Mr Aldersons last communication was so short and complimentary that we could not gather much from it. He must recollect when writing to us, that I am your sister and wish know every thing concerning you. You can have no idea of my anxiety about you. I can not think of you without weeping. It pains my heart that I ever should have grieved a dear sister, as I confess I have often done thoughtlessly, who is perhaps ere long to be removed from our sight. Yet I cannot but think you may be spared to be a blessing to those around you. When I look upon so many of the girls in Athens who have been apparently on the brink of eternity, I flatter myself there is hope in your case. Could you only give me a line from your own hand it would afford me inexpressible satisfaction. O that you

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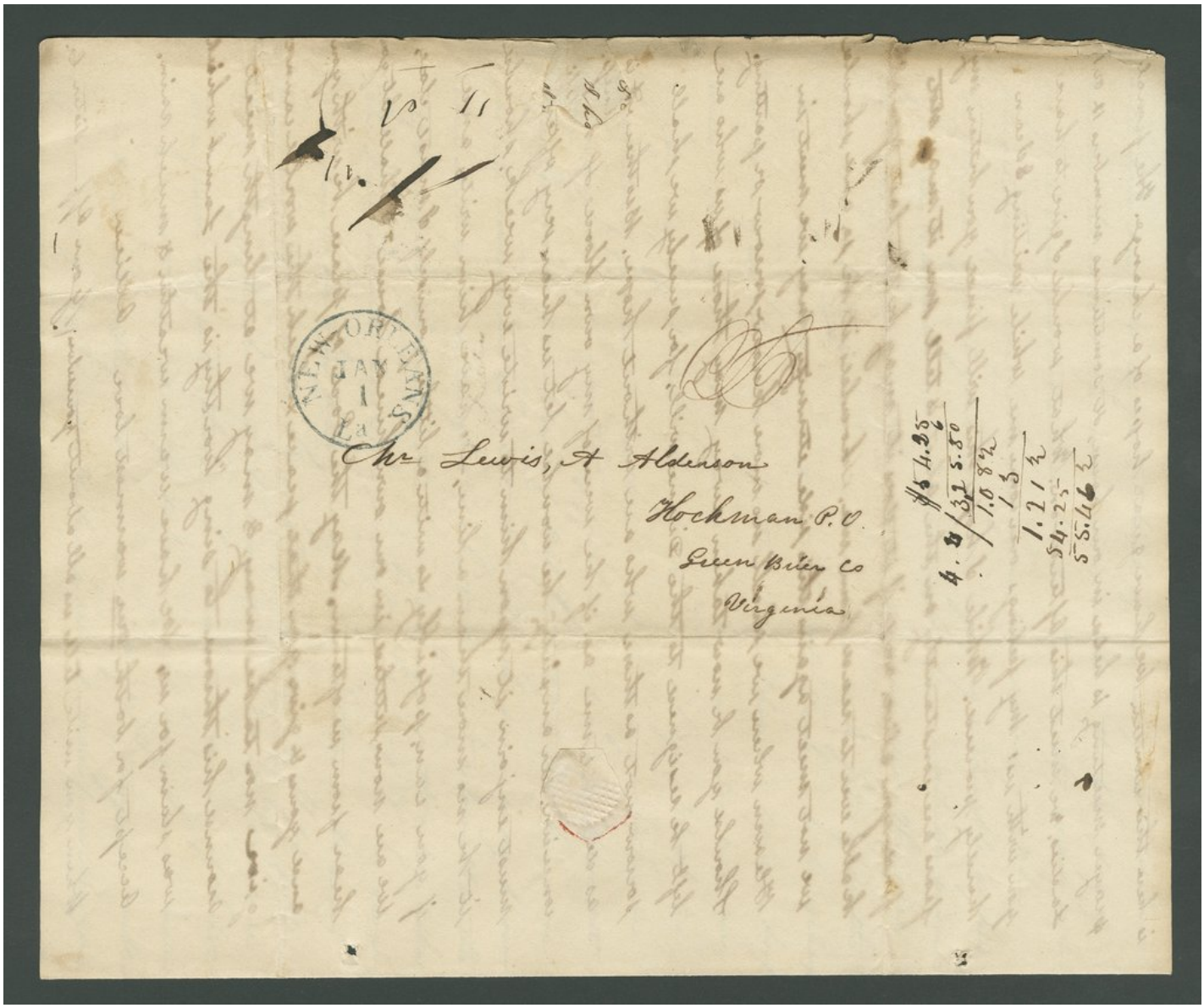
could have come to us last fall, I think by this time you would have been well. but ah it is vain now to wish. As this is the last day of the year I am involuntarily led to think on the many vicissitudes through which the past year has carried you & I.— At the close of last year you were enjoying a tolerable degree of health, to be sure we were separated, but it was with the prospect of a speedy reunion, in this we were disappointed This year has seen us both sicken and brought us to the gates of death Me, God has seen fit to restore to health, We have both exchanged the home of our childhood for other homes, I hope not less dear, though widely separated. Has it brought us to live any nearer to God or to desire any more his glory? I trust it has. Yet I acknowledge with shame & confusion of face, my unfaithfulness & the many opportunities I have neglected of doing something for christ. You dear sister have not I trust, so much to complain of. But let us try to love him more who first loved us. Let us so act that all who see us may know that we have been taught of Christ. Piety is at a low ebb in this city & iniquity abounds & the love of many waxeth cold. O that the Lord would revive his work here. I think he has awakened some to see the danger of living without God in the world, but O that He would pour us out a blessing so that there should not be room to receive it. I am sure the fault lies with those who name the name of christ We are not careful to forsake every evil way. Our Minister Mr Harris is a faithful man and will, if he stays, undoubtedly do much good. Rev Mr Parker a revival man from New York

Catherine B. Dart to Lewis Allen Alderson

is here this winter. We have great hopes of a change. The female prayer meeting is held in our house, & sometimes numbers 12 or 13 Ladies. We meet this afternoon. What would I give to have you with us! My feelings overcome me while writing & I can hardly proceed. While I hope this will find you better, my fears are constantly on the alert & tell me it may not find you alive. and if it does it may be the last you will be able ever to receive from me. Should it be so, and should we not meet again this side eternity may we meet in Heaven where we shall no more know sorrow or parting. Should you be now taken away may those of us who are left be resigned to the Divine will, for surely we shall sorrow not as those who are without hope. Brother [illegible] is as dear to me as if he were of my own blood & I [illegible] conceive our anxiety he would let us hear very often. I must enjoin it upon him to write every week, should it be no more than a line, Do have him write, and if you can, possibly do write a little yourself. I must close, We are now settled in our own "hired house" I shall let you hear from us oftener. May the God of peace be with you and yours & give you that peace which the world cannot give nor take away, & may we at length meet around his throne to sing "worthy is the Lamb which was slain for us. We have warm weather & much rain. Accept for both our warmest love Adieu

When you write tell us all about yourselves / Your Aff— Sister C

Catherine B. Dart to Lewis Allen Alderson



Catherine B. Dart to Lewis Allen Alderson

New Orleans, Feb 25. 1833 —

Dear Brother

This morning the intelligence, painful intelligence reached us, of sister Lucys death. Yes, though it had been long expected it came suddenly and though we are pained by it, what reason have we to rejoice, Our loss is her unspeakable gain. I am comforted by the assurances she gave that her trust was in the Lord her Redeemer. Although you perhaps could have wished that her life might have been continued as long as your own here upon earth, as near and as dear as she is to you, you cannot wish her back. O no, she is released from all pain and suffering, and we are left to prepare to meet her. Why was she taken before us? Was it not because infinite wisdom and a Heavenly Father, saw best. Yes, & He fitted her for the change. Undoubtedly we who remain needed this affliction. You as a husband, we as brothers & sisters & friends. we are so much attached to the things of earth that we needs afflictions to draw us away, so God calls the dearest objects of our affection to Himself, that our hearts may be directed there also. O what a lesson should this dispensation of providence teach us. This shows us how a christian can die, it teaches us that the ways of God are past finding out. We know not why, but he takes those who have just begun to act on the stage of life, with prospects of usefulness, even of doing something in His cause. He can do without us. whether we live or die, His purposes are accomplished. But oh the heart revolts at the thoughts of being separated from those we love.

Catherine B. Dart to Lewis Allen Alderson

when our dear Mother died we were not old enough to realise the loss we had sustained. Our dear Lucy then is the nearest friend we have ever lost. Though we so sensibly feel it, we can not have that keenness of feeling which you as a bereaved husband must have. Though our hearts were knit by the strongest ties of sisterly affection, they were not the ties of which bind the husband to the wife. Yet if we trust in the Lord, he has promised as our day is so shall our strength be. I need not, dear brother, attempt to offer any consolation. We have, God has given us any thing consolatory. He has granted, not only that she should have resignation to His will, but gave her a good hope through grace of a happy eternity in His blessed presence, and she has left a bright evidence that her hopes were well founded. Though my tears flow while I write a beam of joy gleams across my heart while I glance in imagination at the soarings of that blest spirit. now it has winged its flight to a brighter sphere, But the night advances I must close this scroll hoping soon to have an opportunity of answering a brotherly communication from you be assured you are dear to us all, more so now than ever before. Now you must come into our family, and supply as far as you can the place of her who is gone. How happy should we be to see you, we shall ever look upon you as one brought up with us.

Tuesday Morning. As I was too late to send to post this to the office last night, I added a few lines this morning.

When you write to which you must do directly, tell me what you intend doing, what is to be the principal occupation of your life. I have addressed a few lines to sister B at home as I suppose she is there before this time. I can not but admire the provi-

Catherine B. Dart to Lewis Allen Alderson

dence of God, in directing her to you at the time He died. The thought has always been painful to Mr Dart & myself that our dear sister should go so far from all her former friends to die, but I know that a dear husband is nearer than all earthly friends beside. and judging from my own experience I am satisfied, Husband as well as myself enters into your feelings deeply, he has been there with the same affliction, and he, as yourself has, reason to rejoice rather than mourn.

Remember us affectionately to your father & mother & the rest of the family, with the servant girl who was so attentive to Lucy, God reward her, and bless you, and sanctify to you & us this afflictive stroke. He sits by as a refiner & will only consume the dross. Accept much love for yourself

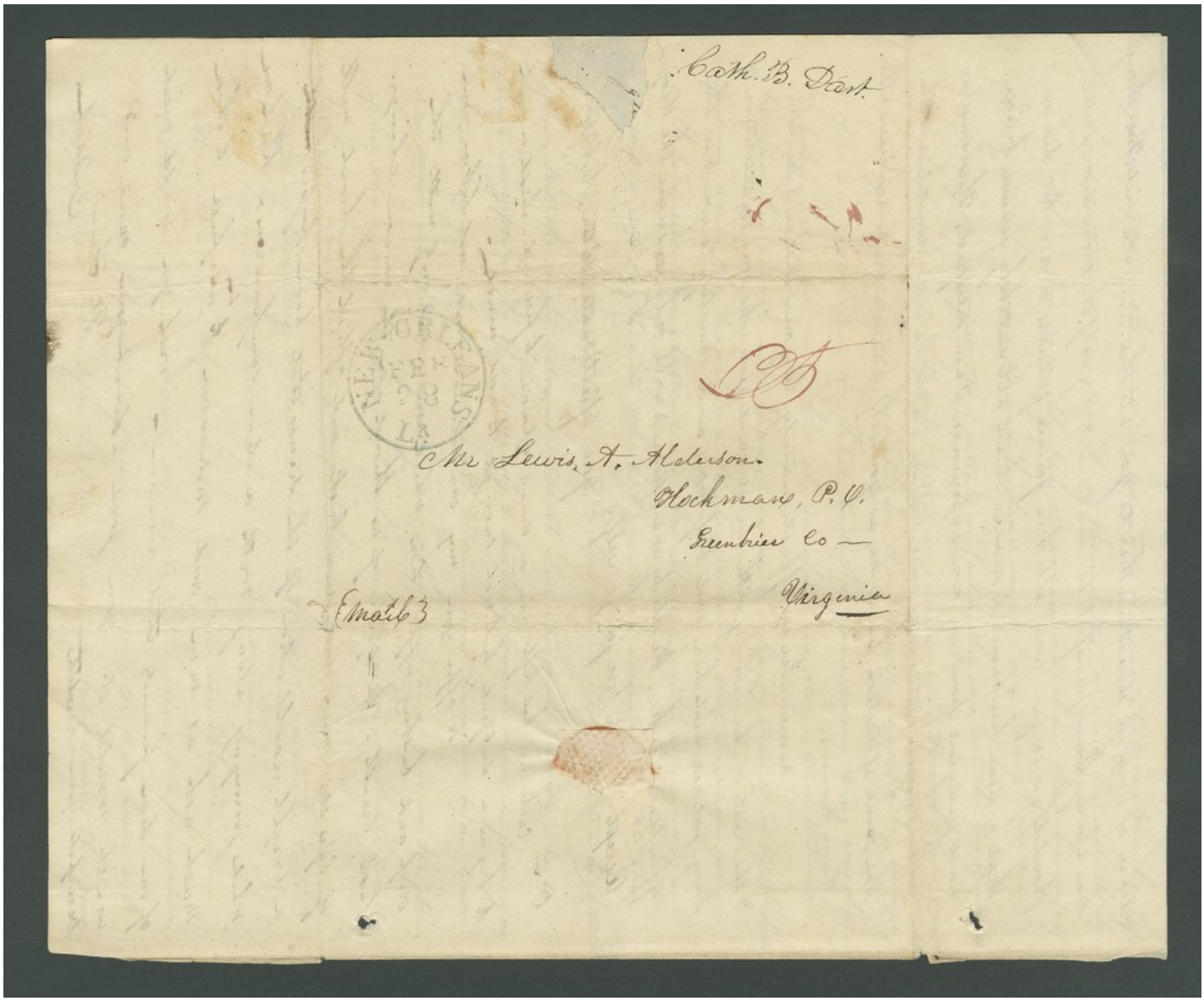
your affectionate sister, C. B. Dart

Dr. Sir Catherine has left me a small space to fill up - just enough to begin a subject, but not enough to add much -

To offer you my condolance will not lessen your grief and casting affliction, which will end only with the last breath, - In spite of us though all the various changes of life the mind will run back and reflect the heart with a bright recollection of the scenes that have passed with while journying along with a dear companion. But we must act as men, and endeavour to be useful to those of our dear friends that remain, - I wish you would visit us - it would do you good - divert your mind and benefit your health

Yr. Friend
C Dart

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Catherine B. Dart to Lewis Allen Alderson

Natchez
Nov 29 - 1838
friday evening

Dear Brother

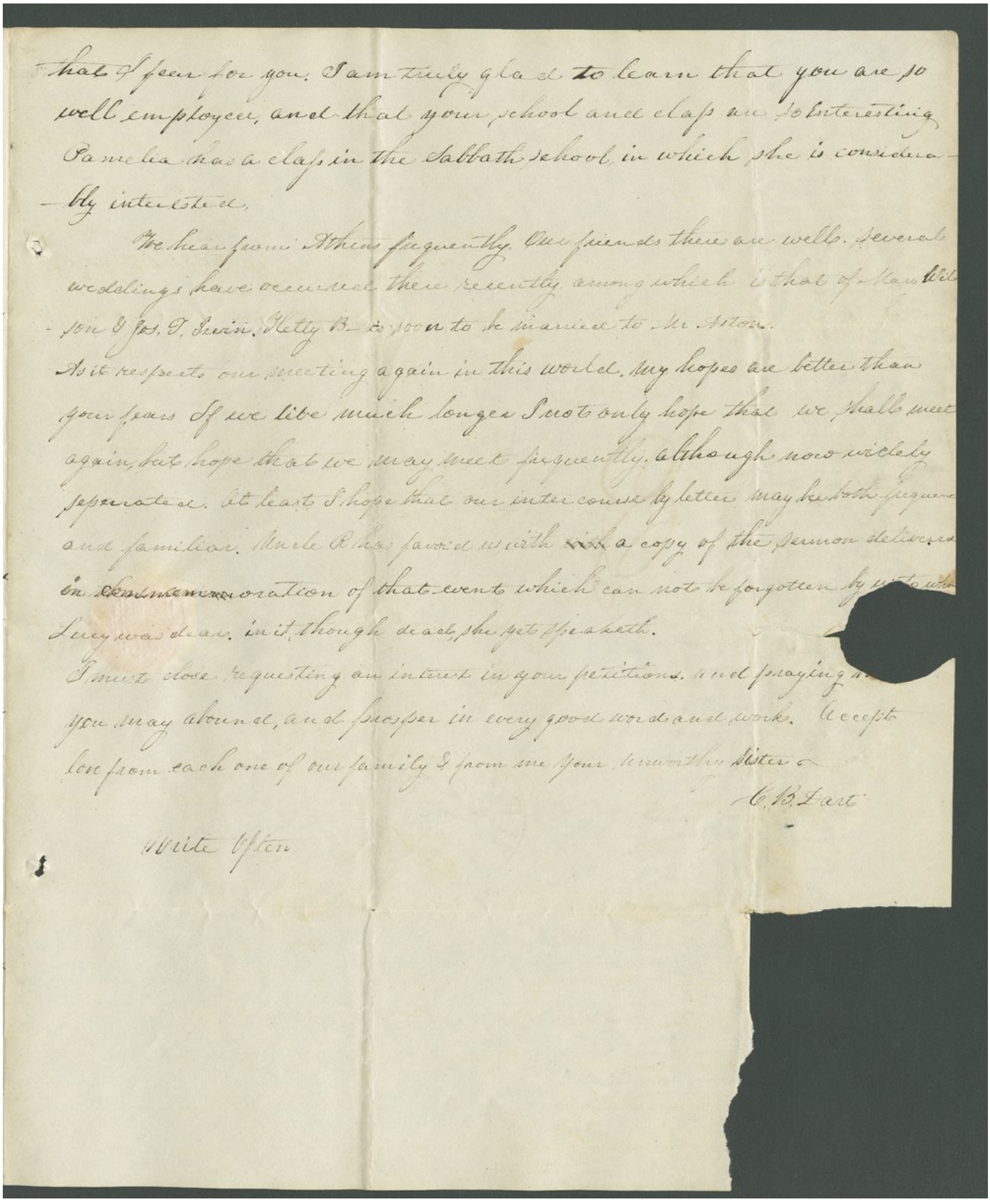
We received your kind letter addressed to me from Williamsburg in due season with very great pleasure as you will have learned before you recieve this, by a letter from husband as he answered yours before he brought it home to me. I do not know but I was indebted to you, if so you must never make it a matter of consideration for I am always delighted to hear from you. & nothing of the same kind could give us more pleasure than to see you. I hope you will not suffer yourself to despond altho you are afflicted. they. Afflictions for the present are not joyous. but if properly improved the promise that they shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, is exceedingly consoling. Believing if you are a child of God that all that occurs is ordered for the best. claim His promises & rejoice to run the race that is set before you.

I am glad to hear that you are absent from the place where our dear Lucy died & where she is buried, change of scene will help time to blunt the edge of keen sorrow. You do not mourn as one without hope you need not, for we have evidence on which we can rely, that her peace was made with God. this hope with regard to her is the greatest comfort she could have left us. If she had been living. you say, you should not have chosen the profession you now have. I know of no way in which you can be more useful to your fellow creatures, or more honor God, than by endeavouring to promote a knowledge of Christ in the world. But above all get your own heart to imbued with his spirit. then all will be right. I have to mourn that I do no live more to God & that there is so much indwelling sin remaining, but thanks be to God these days of mourning and temptation are not to last forever, if we our trust in him who is able to save. I fear that professing christians living

Catherine B. Dart to Lewis Allen Alderson

in this day will have much to answer for. There is such an opportunity of doing good and it is comparatively so little improved. We are now in a place more noted for its privileges religious and moral than any other in the South. You were not aware when you wrote that we were in Natchez. This city numbers about 8.000 inhabitants. The respectable part of it is delightfully situated on a high bluff of the Mississippi. We have not been in N. O. since my return from Ohio last spring. on our arrival here we found Mr Dart (who has a house here as well as in New Orleans under the firm of "Dart & Co," and here we have been, and probably shall be for an indefinite length of time. Natchez by the most of people is far preferred to N. O. as a place of residence but we both like N. O. best. We have purchased a little spot just in the precincts of the city, as pleasant as you can imagine, still we object to it because it is so far from husbands office. and shall perhaps exchange it for one nearer. So you see be any thing ever so good, we must yet find fault with it. Sister Jamaica is with us, and I think considers this as much a home as our fathers house. Belinda at our solicitation has told us that she will come and spend a few months with us and we are expecting her in a very short time. More than two years have passed since I have seen her. It was with exceeding regret, that we left Athens before your arrival there. Had we known it we might have staied a few days longer, and then have reached Cincinnati in time for the Boat. Sister P.'s health has improved very much since we left N. she is the picture of health. I would warn you dear Brother to be careful of your health. Do not neglect to take exercise. Students are so prone to indulge in sedentary habits

Catherine B. Dart to Lewis Allen Alderson



that I feel for you. I am truly glad to learn that you are so well employed, and that your school and class are so interesting. Pamelia has a class in the Sabbath school in which she is considerably interested.

We hear from Athens frequently. Our friends there are well. Several weddings have occurred there recently, among which is that of Nancy Wilson & Jos. D. Irwin. Betty B. is soon to be married to Mr Alston.

As it respects our meeting again in this world, my hopes are better than your fears. If we live much longer I not only hope that we shall meet again, but hope that we may meet frequently, although now widely separated. At least I hope that our intercourse by letter may be both frequent and familiar. Uncle R has favored us with a copy of the sermon delivered on the commemoration of that event which can not be forgotten by us who Lucy was dear. in it though dead, she yet speaketh.

I must close requesting an interest in your petitions. And praying that you may abound, and prosper in every good word and work. Accept love from each one of our family & from me your affectionate Sister

C. B. Dart

Write often

Catherine B. Dart to Lewis Allen Alderson

