

Hagerstown Md. Friday Night  
June 7 1901

My Dear Mrs. Johnston

When I saw that you were to be at Mercersburg for the presentation of a picture of President Buchanan, I made up my mind to slip over to that town that day to witness the proceedings which I knew would be very interesting to me and to get a chance to speak to you once again.

Unfortunately I was engaged in the trial of cases in Court for some days previous and every day since that day and all of that day and could not do so. My friend Mr. Charles Lane told me he had seen you.

I cannot imagine anything that would have been so tender with pleasant memories of long ago as what I would have witnessed there. To recall that I knew you, if only very slightly, at Wheatland before Mr. Buchanan's Inauguration. That I was [once] the youngest one of the "Students Escort" of ten, a self-appointed set of runaways to the Inauguration from the college. That on the way I was kindly permitted to go into Mr. Buchanan's car for a little while where your kindness to me for those few moments sprouted a blossom that has never died & never will except with me. That it was the first Inauguration I ever saw, the only one I ever enjoyed: can you not understand how all this would have come back to me had I met you the other day, in connection with the portrait of Mr. Buchanan. And then I recall that he signed my College Diploma, as President of the Board of Trustees when he was President of the United [States]. I did not go to the Inauguration Ball. I recall how I was teased when it was reported that I got scared & ran away to Baltimore because Mrs. Senator Douglas had sent me word by McGrath or McGraw that if I came to the Ball she would dance with me; [thus] her social grandeur overawed me! Well I went into the war & never saw you in the White House struggled along, from private up & got sundry bullets in me for my rebellion. Odd isn't it that one of the kindest men to me during the war was Henry Johnston: what a lot of things he did send me when in prison! And when I saw you again you were Mrs. Johnston. You may have known he asked me to go to his wedding but you did not know why I declined neither did he. I can smile now but I didn't then. Just out of the war, I had hardly a dollar. My old antebellum dress coat had been stolen. I could not buy another & could not go on such a nuptial spree. Of course, I did not tell him the real reason. Then came the years of our acquaintance afterwards – Yes I wish I had been at Mercersburg.

Most faithfully,

Henry Kyd Douglas

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