

Washington, 21 December 1844

My dear Harriett,

I was much pleased with your letter and shall even rejoice to learn that you are prosperous & happy. [Eleven lines blacked out]

I intend to go home on Monday & expect to pass my Christmas with brother Edward. I received a letter from your brother James yesterday. He says that Mary is contented & happy with Mrs. Hopkins & is enjoying herself very much. Buck Yates will sail for the Mediterranean about the first of March. In the mean time the Secretary of the Navy has promised me that he will relieve him of duty at Norfolk about the middle of January & thus give him six weeks to himself. He may to see you for aught I know. I am sure he could not [?] a cleverer girl, if she would but determine to become as intelligent & as good as cultivation would make her. I would give almost any thing in the world for a niece whom all would love for her amiability and all respect for her intelligence nor would I be severe in my requisitions. Under Providence, [it] depends upon yourself whether you will become such a lady.

There is a report in Lancaster that your brother James is very attentive to Martha Jenkins & that they might probably make a match. This may end as you say the report about Miss Huston has done.

I received from 20 to 30 letters per day & my time is incessantly occupied. Indeed, the labor which am compelled to undergo is almost too much for me.

I please to remember me, in the kindest terms, to Mrs. Hunter, Mrs. Kennedy, Miss Huston & all my friends in [?] & believe me to be your very affectionately

James Buchanan

Miss Harriet R. Lane

