

Wheatland 31 January 1866

My dear niece,

I have, this morning, received yours of the 29<sup>th</sup> & am sorry to learn that Mr. Johnston and yourself have contracted bad colds from your perambulations at this inclement season of the year. I heartily wish you were quietly settled in your house & am sorry to observe that you appear to be somewhat dissatisfied because it is not a double house, which appears to me to be unreasonable. A disposition to find fault is a sure source of unhappiness; and if indulged will convert the greatest blessings, of which you enjoy a very large share, into imaginary & self inflicted disappointments. "Be content with your lot" is a wise maxim & you have abundant reason to be so.

It is well ~~that~~ Mr. Johnston has suggested that Mr. Schell's likeness be put into the locket; but I am clearly of the opinion it would be better not.

Ellen is not well & her mind is seriously affected. This has rendered Thomas miserable & disconsolate. George will leave tomorrow & another colored man will take his place.

My own health has not been quite as good as usual especially in the beginning of the last week; and I shall not think of going to New York for a brief period. Besides, the girls have not indicated any time for their return & I cannot leave whilst they remain. Their visit has been quite agreeable & I do not wish to hasten its conclusion. They tell me that they will write you all the gossip, which they can do much better than myself. They are now out sleighing with Octavius & Miss Griffith, with whom I was quite pleased the other day at Mrs. Brinton's dinner. By the bye, Mrs. James Norris is very anxious to remain in the house and from conversation with her on that occasion I have no doubt that at the word she would be willing to give \$15000 for ~~the house~~ it. This is \$2000 more than I would have let Mrs. Lane have it for, though very reluctantly. I have neither seen nor heard of Mrs. Lane or Mrs. Jenkins since you left us. The former is certainly a gay widow & I think might be prevailed upon to try a second marriage!

I dare to say that Miss Annie will renew the discussion of the Apostolic succession when Dr. Spark's book shall arrive.

I have heard from Mr. Capen that you paid him a visit & that his wife was too unwell to see you. His letters are frequent beyond ~~all~~ reason; but I respect him so much that I must occasionally answer them, though letter writing begins to fatigue me.

Tell Elliott Johnston that I wish I could comply with his terms ~~which~~ though I consider them evasive, ~~although because~~ but if I were fifty years younger I would gladly accept his offer; but let him go ahead upon his own book. Please to remember me most kindly to him.

Give my love to Emily & Bessy of whom I cherish most agreeable memories.

With my affectionate regards to Mr. Johnston

I remain yours affectionately,  
James Buchanan

Mrs. ~~Harriet~~ Henry E. Johnston

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