

Wheatland 25 December 1866

My dear niece /

I am much gratified to receive a letter in your well known hand because it is the best evidence of your recovery, and state a better that you have been able to drive out with little Buck. I am truly sorry that I cannot be present at his Christening, and if I were, that I could not be his Godfather. You may esteem this to be Presbyterian prejudice and perhaps it may be so. I have, however, just read over the form of baptism in the Prayer Book and the obligations entered into by the sponsors and am more confirmed than ever in my opinion. I know these are often undertaken lightly and as a mere form; but this is not my way. I can, therefore, neither personally nor by proxy become a sponsor. Your dear mother in the prospect of death moved me to promise to do several things for her two daughters after her decease. This I declined stating that she knew how strong my attachment was for herself and she might reasonably calculate what my conduct would be to her two little daughters. With this she appeared to be satisfied.

As I am in this vein, I would caution you not to make an idol of your child; but to think & speak soberly of him. May God Almighty preserve his life - & his health, & may he grow up to become a comfort and honor to his parents!

"Bob" & Cecil, I learn, have returned home to spend the Christmas holidays. I have not yet seen them; but doubtless they will call shortly.

I told Mr. Cooper a few days ago to stop sending you a duplicate of the Intelligencer & he promised to attend to it immediately.

Doubtless the clerk misunderstood him & sent you a triplicate copy. Mr. Cooper is absent; but I met Mr. Smith on the street yesterday & told him that three copies were quite too much of a good thing & he promised that hereafter you should have but one copy. The Intelligencer you perceive is at war with the gallant captain who now edits the Express with an extreme of bitterness almost unequalled by any other Republican Paper.

Mr. Snyder has been here for a few days & desires me to present his kindest love to you; and so does Rebekah. Jane is a wise child, and a striking mark of her wisdom is that she is but little spoiled through both father & mother are doing their best to spoil her by extreme indulgence. Becky is nice cheerful & bright and she & her intellectual and witty husband make the time pass very agreeably.

I know no local news which would much interest you. Mrs. Nevin has got a scalded foot & Pattie a sprained ankle. Both are recovering. Blanche is as bright & agreeable as usual.

Miss Hetty sends you her kindest love. She, I think, is quite attached to Mr. Johnston, and I am inclined to believe he stands next in her affections to James Henry.

I smoke but little and have had no cigars for sometime. If Mr. Johnston could procure for me & send by Express a box of cigars like those he got for me last, I should be much obliged to him. With my kindest regards to him, I remain . When he sends the cigars let him inform me the price.

Yours affectionately,
James Buchanan

Mrs. Henry E. Johnston
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