

Fort Myers, Florida
December 13th, '56

My dear Miss Harriet,

It was only by the last mail we rec'd the intelligence of the election of Mr. Buchanan to the Presidency for the next four years; & altho' from the moment of his nomination to that of the election I was sanguine of his success. Still I cannot refrain from expressing to you how much I feel relieved at the result.

Accept my warmest congratulations at your elevation to the high & honorable position which has been assigned you, with my best wishes for your perfect success throughout.

I desire this the more, knowing as I do, how extremely difficult is the part required of you – Heretofore, your station has been such, that the truth in its proper light might reach you, but from this time for the next four years, it will require all your tact discernment & prudence to catch even occasional glimpses; to satisfy you that it still exists – at the bottom of a well.

Remember you will be a constant target for every jealousy, scandal, calamity as well as admiration & adulation; each in turn & at all times will be brought to bear upon you, for the purpose of detecting the strength of your armor –

The flattering attentions paid to power are the most seductive of all influences –

You will excuse these few words from me dictated as they are by an earnest desire for your happy achievement of the task before you.

You are one of those who should not play a common part – you have too many estimable qualities for that - & distinction calls for a terrible amount of self denial & forbearance –

You are already paying the penalty, as I am now discussing you as public character.

In the few moments of leisure left to you – let me tell you of this beauty of this country – Just as soon as the Indians are driven out – this will be as much resorted to, in winter as Saratoga & Newport in summer – the climate is delightful & very healthy at this season -- & the abundance of all kinds of fruits, flowers, vegetables, etc. will cause it to be much sought after for those purposes.

This is the only tropical country that belongs to the United States – There are places here that realize some of Byron's beautiful descriptions of islands in the sea – In our yard the pineapples & bananas are ripening, & at Fort Dallas, on the other side of Florida, coconuts, oranges, lemons, limes, grow wild in the greatest profusion –

The secret of the Indians not wishing to leave is easily explained – They well know there's nothing in our western country to equal this – However our prospects of removing them are very encouraging – I think that by spring it will be effected – General Harvey understands the Indian character admirably, & with his energy & physique, he has made a decided impression upon them – but we are constantly on the move in boats, on horseback & sometimes on foot – we have been seven days at one time without taking off our clothes – such is the life of a soldier!

My interesting sisters must be so very busy paying up those preposterous bets – that they have no time for their debts of correspondence – I have heard nothing from them since I left.

Present my congratulations & kind regards to Mr. Buchanan, in which I am sure the General would join me did he know to whom I am writing – he has frequently mentioned to me the high estimation with which his father-in-law Mr. Mullauphy always spoke of him – at one time I think he wished Mr. B. to go out to Saint Louis, & offered him some property there as an inducement – possibly your uncle may recollect the circumstances –

Wishing you a merry Christmas & new year – I remain

Very truly yours,

A. Pleasonton

