

New York, May 22nd 1883

Henry E. Johnston, Esq.,

Dear Sir: --

I received your letter of May 3rd a few days since; but until now I have had no time at which I could answer it. Every moment is occupied with closing up the last pages of my second volume.

You do not seem to appreciate the embarrassment and delay which your unavoidable absence from the country has caused me.

Your letter of October 16th 1882 was answered on the day following that on which I received it. I took 24 hours to reply on order that I might do it deliberately, and after proper consideration; but I consulted no one upon any of the requested or suggestions which your letter of October 16th contained. It seems that my answer miscarried; but as I heard nothing further from you for six months I concluded that you were either coming home in the Spring or that you acquiesced in my decision. At all events, I informed you in that lost letter, of which I kept a copy, that your wishes could not be complied with, and I gave what I thought were solid reasons for declining them. At the same time I said explicitly, that a portrait of Mrs. Johnston as Miss Lane would be most appropriate, to be placed in the first volume where she is first mentioned, or where in the second volume she is referred to as the mistress of the White House, or where her marriage is mentioned. I had previously written to you that the work must be finished during the Winter of 1882-3, and that it would be published in the Spring. I had no suitable means for engraving a likeness of Mrs. Johnston; for the style of wearing the hair, in the photography which you gave me, would look awkwardly [sic] now, and in her and your absence I could not undertake to obtain the miniature from Baltimore and direct an engraver how to modify the head-dress if at all. I supposed that you would understand that no fit steel plate engraving can be made in less than ~~five~~ two months; and as the first edition of the book will be published about the middle of June, it is impossible that it should contain any illustrations, other than those which have been ~~proposed~~ prepared for it. The work has been announced by the publishers, and the book-selling trade are already making their preparations to secure buyers of it, and the news-paper press are on the qui-vivre about it. If hereafter, you choose to add a head of Mrs. Johnston, in the second or any other future edition it can be done and done properly.

There has been engraved by ~~Sauton~~ Sartain of Philadelphia a copy of the Eicholtz [sic] portrait, reduced from one that he made some years ago, as the frontispiece of the first volume by Buttré of this City, a full-length of Mr. Buchanan as President; from a large engraving made by Buttré some years since. Mr. Schell, Mr. Barlow and others, who knew Mr. Buchanan at that period, are well pleased with it, and I myself am entirely satisfied with it.

There has been a wood-cut of Wheatland made as a vignette for the first chapter where the purchase of that estate is mentioned. You speak, in your letter of May 3rd, of "subjects now under discussion about Wheatland," which "when disclosed" you think will meet my "approval." I do not know what I can have to do with any plans about the



future disposal of Wheatland, and I know of no reason why they should be disclosed to me, or why I should approve or disapprove of them I thought, as a matter of course, suitable that there should be a cut of Wheatland in the book, and I took the best steps I could to obtain what I considered a proper one for the purpose. The cut is now permanently incorporated in the electrotpe of the first page of the second volume, and will always be printed as it stands, as long as the book shall last.

Yours very truly,
Geo. Tickner Curtis

[Letter is typed. Handwritten additions follow.]

May 23rd. Since the foregoing was written, I have had a visit from Miss Speer. I explained to her fully all that has occurred. I was very much surprised to learn from her that Mrs. Johnston has been under the impression that portraits of Dr. Buchanan & Mr. James Henry, are included in the book. I know not what can [have] given rise to such an idea, or why I should be supposed to have done a thing so entirely out of place. Both of these gentlemen have been most considerate, and have entirely refrained from asking anything in their own individual interest. G. T. C.

