

Baltimore Jany 31st 1870

Mr. H. B. Swarr

Dear Sir

I have yours of 26th with enclosures.

I have no P./Atty or other authority from T. L. Carter to sign the release, but send you an acknowledgment of the receipt of the money, which his instructions are to remit. Mrs. Johnston will sign and send the document in a day or two – meantime, will you send me a statement of your a/c as Admr de bonis non, from date of our last settlement. I file away all these matters for future reference. Is the Bridge stock sold, and does this a/c close up finally, the Lane Estate?

In referring to the Trustee a/c with Mrs. Johnston, I find it correct and satisfactory with the exception of some trifling charges, which can be avoided in the future. If you will address a letter to the Register U. S. Treas^y, Washington D.C. requesting that interest be made payable in Baltimore, in lieu of Phila, it will save trouble and expense.

In collecting the interest on the Phil^a & Penn. Stock, your Trustee's orders on the state and city are alone required. I do not know why the charge of \$1⁵⁰ is made for collecting interest -- who makes it?

Our correspondents collect and credit without charge, and such is the custom among Banks and Bankers so far as our knowledge extends.

The most natural and easy plan would be to give to Mrs. Johnston a simple P./Atty to draw the interest on her investments.

What is the nature of the P./Atty for which \$3⁷⁵ is charged? Is this charge to be expected each time the investment matures? These amounts are of course trifling but may as well be saved in the future.

I have read Judge Black's letter, and have received an expression of the views of other friends of the Ex-President that seem to accord with your own.

Mrs. Johnston is anxious to hear what steps are contemplated regarding the Reed papers. You are aware that your co-executor is not a disinterested and impartial custodian of these documents.

Mrs. Johnston regrets, and is surprised, that after all that has occurred, you feel justified in leaving them at Oxford, subject to the control of Mr. E. Y. Buchanan and his children -- when you have been distinctly notified that Mrs. Johnston does not deem her interests safe in the hands of this gentleman, and when you are yourself familiar with the history of the Prince of Wales picture and other matters directly connected with his extraordinary conduct, it does seem a little unreasonable that you should consent to leave in the exclusive control documents so valuable, and of which a large portion could be readily abstracted without your knowledge. They are allowed to remain too, in an ordinary frame house in the country, neither fire-proof, nor burglar proof. Judge Black himself has told me within a few weeks that these papers would bring \$50.000~, and mentioned the name of a party who would probably give that sum.

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I mention this to impress upon you that even in a pecuniary light, much less a moral point of view, the responsibility of the custody of these papers is a serious one. The Safe Deposit Company is their proper custodian, until a legal and definite solution of this matter is determined upon. Reed's unfortunate position cancels the possibility of his carrying out Mr. Buchanan's wishes. Whom do you think the best person to complete this work? Upon whom do you think this decision legally depends? Do you deem that you as executors can decide the question as to the further disposition of the papers, and the 5000 fund under existing circumstances?

I write to inquire your views, for unless all unite in a kind and conciliatory spirit, to carry out Mr. Buchanan's sacred wishes, I fear most disagreeable legal complications are likely to arise in the future – besides a total defeat of his intentions.

with my kind remembrances to your family & thanks for your prompt attention

I am yours most truly

H. E. Johnston

H. B. Swarr
Lancaster

