

Answered

Washington 12 December 1840

Dear Eskridge,

I had intended to write to you immediately after your father's lamented death; but was prevented from doing so by causes which I need not explain. He was a benevolent & excellent man, a kind father & a sincere friend. His death has made you an orphan & has left you to depend upon your own exertions for your well being in life. You ought now seriously to reflect upon & to realize your true condition & you ought to resolve, with the help of God, to act in such a manner as to secure the approbation of your own conscience & of all good men. Your Heavenly father has promised to be the Orphan's God & he will never abandon you, if you put your trust in him.

[Beginning of new paragraph has been lined out] When I see around me the numerous clerks in the public offices here, poor & proud, who are altogether dependent upon the will of their superiors for their bread, I reflect how much better it would have been for them [Wording lined out] to have rendered themselves useful & independent members of society. [Wording lined out] Be cheerful, contented, & obedient. [Wording lined out]

I fear that your father's estate will not be large. He was too kind hearted to press his debtors for payment & will lose a great deal of money. From your mother's estate you now have upwards of \$2000, which is in the hands of Dr. Speer of Pittsburg & is rendered perfectly secure by a judgement. In any event, you will have enough to start you in life; and should your conduct merit my approbation, I shall always be a kind friend to you, whilst it may please Providence to spare my life.

Elisabeth Huston, in company with Sarah Maxwell, spent five or six weeks with me before I came on to Washington. Her health is delicate & I fear she is threatened with the complaint which has been fatal to so many members of our family. Harriet's son, little Buck, was also with me for a week. He has greatly improved in every respect. He has grown considerably, is very healthy & is but little, if any, deaf. Tell Jane that he often talks of her with much affection; and remember me to her.

Please to remember me very kindly to Dr. Postlethwaite & his family, to Mr. McLaughlin & my other friends in Greensburg. Let me hear from you soon; and ever remember that a steady & industrious line of conduct flowing from a heart which lives God supremely & is activated by benevolence towards your fellow men is the only road which will lead you to happiness & respectability in this world & to the enjoyment of a happy immortality.

Yours affectionately
James Buchanan

Mr. Elliott E. Lane.

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