

Soldiers Home

Sunday 11 July 1858

My dearest Mary.

I fear me greatly that you were disappointed in not getting my regular letter on Saturday – mais voici la raison ma chère amie. The President when he is in the country for the Summer always manages to get through the business of the week, at least all he has to finish in the White House by Friday evening & so spends Saturday & Sunday in the delectable place without going into town at all & as a consequence on that day, my pet, you will be spared from me of my “epistolary inflections.”

I write to day dear, because to morrow I shall be so busy getting the party ready for an early start on Tuesday on board the “H Lane” that I shall have too little time to write a nice long letter – so by doing it to-day I can give you a long one. Our party consists of about forty including several members of the Cabinet & diplomatic corps – we may have a great deal of fun or it may prove very stupid which I don’t know yet.

We go to Old Point first & then if we have sufficient time left we will point our bows towards Annapolis – it is not therefore quite certain that we will accomplish the latter especially as it is vacation at the Naval school the Secretary who is “Commander in Chief” on board may decide not to go u p – This my darling you know would be a sore disappointment to me as I count upon seeing on Thursday. Still I think it my duty to tell you how the chances stand so that you at least may not be disappointed. If we come at all you will see us sometime on Thursday - & you may be assured that I will leave nothing undone to accomplish this. The Steamer left New York on Saturday at 2 oclock [sic] with General Ward & my dear friend Mr. Scharff on board. I look forward with great interest & anxiety to a good long talk with Mr. S – as it is the first time we meet since the great events of our lives – on our conversations & its result much of our future plans will depend. This excursion will give us a glorious opportunity of talking & planning over everything. As I told you this dear boy & myself have entertained the most devoted, almost romantic friendship through joy & sorrow for eight years & have never had an hours quarrel or misunderstanding – he has been true & firm to me & we hope to plan much of our future lives together as friends & professional partners – he was always a good boy, of noble instinct & religious impulses, & this latter had I assure you a very salutary influence upon me when during our college days at Old Princeton. I was inclined to me wild & thoughtless on all serious subjects – in the days that I thought myself good enough. He became a member of the church soon after leaving college & the effect of his example was not lost, as no example for good or evil is without its effect. I write this so that you may learn to appreciate my friend for at first sight you may be disappointed in him as he is neither handsome or brilliant & will therefore fail to strike you – I want you to like him dear Mary as a brother for he is my best friend in the world – almost the only one. He will run over with me while the rest are visiting the school, to see you & now Mary darling I want you to look as pretty as you can for know I take such a pride in you – that pretty white dress I admire you had better put on – am I not saucy dear to talk about such things! If we do not stop on the Steamer we will run over most likely together on Saturday as I am determined that you shall make each others [sic] acquaintance.

Genl. Ward comes with the hope that Miss Saunders will go with us but I fear he will be sadly disappointed as I understand she declines at the last moment to go. – I care



LancasterHistory

so little that I have not even asked her – I fear she does not like the interest I take in Ward’s success. It has been intensely hot here for the past two days not with standing that we have a very fine strong breeze.

We had such a good sermon at our little Rock Creek Church this morning, on the text “For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges” (32 Deut 31) He painted so beautifully the superiority of our rock (faith) over all others in the hour of danger or sorrow – the hollowness of Atheism, Unitarianism, universalism et al in the hour of trial & trouble when human reason & philosophy fail to sustain as they promised.

I am so glad that I shall hear from you to morrow evening. – you forgot to write what was in your friend Margie’[s] letter that you could not find when I was at Annapolis – My being out in the country has interfered sadly with my seeing your Auntie & the Ingrahams – but I shall see them to–morrow, as they go on Tuesday to Virginia – Does your Aunt Louisa know how much I was pleased with her? – I shall feel very badly if she does not like me.

Have you taken a sail in the Savanna since? I had a very pleasant chat with Miss Emily on Friday & a good laugh over what she wrote you about my naps. I intend to try to send this in town this evening so that if she goes to morrow she will do me the favor to take it to you so that you will have it before writing to me.

But I must close my darling pet & [subscribe?] myself

Your ever devoted

JBH

This is long enough is it not!!

