

Annapolis 2 Dec 1896

My dear brother,

I have been intending for a long time to write you but petty cares & usual things demanding attention have put it off again & again, but you must not think that I do not feel the same regard & interest in your welfare & peace – far from it.

The boys are all well. Willy who we hope to see at xmas for a few days here – is still doing satisfactorily & is I think happy. I have not seen him since June when he came down to see Jamie graduate at the N Academy. He is fine looking – a good size about 5 ft 9, fairly robust, with a fine open countenance & handsome coloring pink & white with the hair of Frank at his age. His features are not so regular as the others. His habits ways & conversation are refined & gentlemanly notwithstanding the rough surroundings he had at Altoona. He now earns \$70 a month or near that & supports himself genteelly. Jamie as you know is an Engineer Cadet on the Flag ship “New York” admiral Bauer & is very pleasantly situated among a number of his classmates. He is very athletic & a member of the White Squadron foot ball team. He is very handsome & about 5 ft 9 ½ - dark eyes & hair but fair & ruddy complexion. He is very popular among all the officers & classmates. Rob is about 5 ft 9 – 19 ½ years old & the handsomest of the boys athletic & blue eyes rather light hair & beautiful complexion & ought to be a girl for looks. He is hardly as bright mentally as Jamie, Sid – but has a fair & logical mind if a bit slow. He is getting on fairly well only at West Point & if he passes safely the semi-annual Examination in January, I will believe that he will by diligence & hard work go through the course. As it is very severe, to do so even if low in his class, it will be a success not to be despised. Willy, Jamie & lately- Reggie have been confirmed & so become professing Christians which I am deeply grateful to God. They are all remarkably free from vices & bad habits; their only fault being a tendency to indolence regrettable of course but not sinful.

Sidney is a fine boy & mentally very bright. Physically not very strong, tall, 5 ft 10 ½, - dark eyes & hair & rather sallow complexion, has a very fine disposition & if he has continued good health will make a successful man I think. Not confirmed & I fear no disposition yet towards piety, but no vicious habits or tendency. He has left Georgetown Coll & is studying here with Prof Wilmer review work generally with a view of trying in a competition next Spring, in our Congressional District in NY, for an appointment to the Naval Academy or failing in that to enter Union College Schenectady NY in Fall '97 to study the profession of Electrical Engineer. Reggie is a lively boy of 15, blonde, fair & a most amiable & attractive fellow, loved by every body, he is now at the Episcopal

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College of St Stephen at Annandale near Poughkeepsie NY, & will I am glad to believe eventually study for the sacred ministry. His whole character will seem in keeping with it. Last of all little Frank 13 years old, is dark hair eyes & complexion seems intelligent & getting on well at St Austen School at Staten Island. You will remember that he is nearly blind in one eye – but the other continues good & he may by an operation some day recover the sight in the bad eye. I leave his management entirely to his good friend Miss Irving merely supplying all financial aid for his support & education. She wants him eventually to become a Dr. like his grandfather but as yet all her plans are uncertain as he is so young.

I have given you dear brother this long account for the first time of the personal appearance & of your nephews, so that you may be able to form some idea what they look like & are with some aid from your imagination.

I am distressed to have to say that my dear eldest son Dody is not only not doing well but in the continuing form bad habits & drink is I fear fast approaching a low level in mind body & I fear soul as for years neither he nor his wife have ever entered a church. I can do nothing to save him & can only pray God to stop his downward careen & yet make him a good & useful Christian citizen. I fear nothing short of divine power & help can effectively rescue him. Of course it is all very sad to me, but I did my best for him & cannot fairly reproach him myself.

I hope you are well & enjoying a peaceful & contented life. I have written Belle several times but have not heard from her since her trip to Toronto – I wish I could have made it possible to have seen her somewhere on her route, but I could not & I fear she thought I could have done so & is displeased. Do not mention this to her – of course.

It is very cold here – unusually for this early season – then goes down to 25° at night & looks & feels very wintry for so far south 1<sup>st</sup> of Dec.

I saw Frank Lena & your sweet little nieces a week or two ago at Wash. all well.

But I must close. Wishing you a Merry Christmas & happy New Year, I am ever affectionately your brother

J Buchanan Henry

PS. The lower part of Reggies [sic] face is very like dear Loulies [sic] – the only great resemblance in any of her boys to her.

