

Jersey City Sunday 5 June 1859

My own darling Mary/

As this is the first anniversary of our engagement I cannot let it pass without putting on paper a few of my reflexions [sic] on this happy event & expressing any humble thanks on this holy day to the Giver of all Good things for what he has so fully given us.

It is just one year since that sweet & loving look told me that you were not indifferent to my tender appeal & that my Father above had smiled upon the request that I had previously offered up on bended knees that He would give me success if it should be for yours & my good to grant it! What a happy omen then is it that this our first Anniversary should come on God's holy chosen day of the week – May we not justly look upon the coincidence as a propitious sign? I am thankful that I am to day in the enjoyment of high health & with my mental & moral perceptions in a clear & unclouded state I can think seriously of serious things – which one cannot always do however much the inclination may exist. Under a sense of gratitude to our Heavenly Father for his past goodness & an earnest desire to ask His aid & propitiation & countenance in the important events of the future I feel a longing to participate in his holy & strengthening ordinance & as this was not Communion day in my own church but was in the Episcopal, I sought God[']s blessing in the holy sacrament there. It was such a sweet thought also that you were at the same time kneeling in adoration of the same holy Redeemer! While partaking of it, I earnestly besought His richest blessings spiritual & temporal on you dear head. I feel to grateful to think that God has given me one, so dear as you, who is like me trying to be good – to be one of his children – How easily might it not have been otherwise & that you or I could be living but for the world, its vanities & sinfulness – instead a higher aspiration – or worse might be abandoned by God to the folly of practical infidelity. But we have reasons in all humility to hope & believe that what our Savior has once begun he will not leave unfinished but will in His own good time bring us hand in hand into his green pastures after having accompanied us through the joys & sorrows (for we may expect both) of life. When I think how grateful I ought to feel for all this goodness & how much better I ought to have been during the past year after being the recipient of such bounty & I compare it with my many sins and neglect of God & base ingratitude I feel the full force of how corrupt & prone to do wrong we all – poor humanity it seems almost incapable of any good! – It shows how forcibly [?] the need we had of just such a Savior as we to day commemorated to help us bear our load & thank God we have the strength enough & willing enough to lift a mountain of sin & shame from our poor breast if we but implore his help in humble faith. And now dearest I must say a few words about you dearest. One year has rolled by since we entered into this sacred engagement towards each other & in the close intimacy which our relatives have permitted – I have but only, after this experience, not been disappointed in any of the most gentle & lovely qualities I ascribed to you in the order of my imagination as it pictured you in the first thrillings [sic] of love – but I find you if possible still more good & loveable & dear to me than my imagination first painted you. And in the dear & tender relation of wife I am satisfied that you are all that is necessary to make me a happy man & God grant that you can say as much of me.

I sent you the little locket with my picture yesterday & had it registered at the PO so I hope it has reached you ere this safely.

Give my best love to all & believe me,

Your loving & affectionate friend.

James Buchanan Henry.

