

The Passing of a Great Lady:

Mrs. Harriet Lane Johnston

Homer T. Rosenberger

The span of Harriet Lane Johnston's life embraced an unusually fascinating spectrum of the world's history. In the seventy-three years during which she lived the world changed from a swaddling child of science and crawled to the threshold of an era in which a mechanical giant was developing rapidly. During Mrs. Johnston's life the United States and much of the world moved from a rather simple agrarian civilization to a somewhat sophisticated manufacturing age. During her last few years she was afflicted with cancer but probably never knew of what malady she was suffering. In life she was gracious and as the years progressed she became stately. In death, because of her remarkable will, she became a great example of how to use personal wealth in the public interest.

Illness, Death, and Funeral

Several years before she died in 1903 Mrs. Harriet Lane Johnston knew she was not well. She went to Europe for baths, hoping they would help, but they probably did not. She was suffering from cancer during her last year but no doubt never knew that she had a malignancy. She seemed to have great faith in physicians in Germany and in the mineral baths in that country. After being in Germany in mid summer 1902 she wrote from the Dolder Grand Hotel

in Zurich, Switzerland, on September 29, 1902, to her next door neighbor in Washington, Mrs. Ralph Cross Johnson, who was then in London but would soon be in Washington. Harriet wrote:

. . . I am feeling so miserable today that I ought not to have undertaken a letter to you—but things may be worse tomorrow. May [Miss Kennedy] is a splendid little nurse & makes me all sorts of good things to drink etc—to make me strong. How I wish we were through everything & —at home! —

Even in illness, Harriet was mindful of the comfort of others. In the letter she wished Mrs. Johnson "bon voyage & freedom from all ills!" in crossing the Atlantic, and closed the letter with "A speedy & safe trip & all good wishes."

A month later Harriet Lane Johnston was in New York City and would never again take a long journey. Her illness would soon confine her to her home at 1739 Eye Street, NW, Washington, D.C. Under date of October 30, 1902, she wrote from Hotel Manhattan at Madison Avenue and Forty-second Street, to Mrs. Ralph Cross Johnson, at her home, 1735 Eye Street, NW, Washington, D.C. In the letter she said:

. . . We [Harriet and Miss Kennedy] expect to leave here on Saturday & hope to find enough of the house in order to make us comfortable. We had a rough & stormy voyage but the Kaiser was so steady & our cabin so well situated that we really did not feel much—except the hurricane of Saturday night & Sunday. I stood it well but dear May was miserable all the way. She is so happy to be at home. Forgive my scratchy writing—but I am too nervous to hold a pen. Hoping to see you soon & with love to all from us both—Affectly

H L Johnston

Harriet's handwriting was still clear and bold, even though she might have thought it was not. It is the last letter in her hand that this writer has found. The letters of September 29 and October 30, 1902, are preserved by the Virginia Historical Society.

During the winter of 1902-1903 Mrs. Johnson had the assistance of a nurse. In her last few months the grand lady endured a considerable amount of physical suffering. In the late spring or early summer of 1903, probably about June 1, her cousin, Mr. Edward Speer, president of the First National Bank of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and also perhaps Mrs. Alexander J. Cassatt, arranged that she be taken to Narragansett Pier, Rhode Island, in a private car of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Mrs. Johnston's condition seems to have been nearly critical when she left Washington to go to Rhode Island, but the change may have been good for her.

Narragansett Pier was directly across the bay from Newport. From the mid 1800's until the beginning of World War I Narragansett Pier was among the greatest summer resorts in Eastern United States. In addition to the Pier there were private cottages. The Pier was destroyed by the hurricane of 1938.

Mrs. Johnston stayed in a beautiful cottage and was attended

by her intimate friends, Miss May S. Kennedy and Miss Mary Speer.

On July 2, at Narragansett Pier, Mrs. Johnston made the fifth codicil to her will. It was a simple addition. She bequeathed \$3,000 to Mrs. Julia C. Kennedy.

The next night Mrs. Johnston died at Narragansett Pier. Certainly she was of clear mind up to the end, having made a codicil to her will the day before her death.

Mrs. Johnston's body was sent to Baltimore. The funeral was held in the double parlor of the residence of her brother-in-law, Josiah Lee Johnston, at 113 West Franklin Street, Baltimore, on Monday morning July 6 at 10 o'clock. The Reverend Henry Y. Satterlee, Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of Washington, conducted the service and was assisted by the Reverend William L. Devries of Washington. They had been friends of Mrs. Johnston. Her former pastor, Dr. J. S. B. Hodges, attended the service. Relatives and a few friends attended. Among the honorary pallbearers were General Lawrason Riggs and D. K. Este Fisher, both of whom later served so effectively in carrying out the terms of her will.

A few details concerning the funeral are found in the *Baltimore Sun* for Tuesday morning, July 7, 1903, in a lengthy article "Mrs. Johnston Buried." The article also quoted the editorial on Mrs. Johnston in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* of July 6, 1903, which is reproduced in this chapter.

Mrs. Johnston was buried in Greenmount Cemetery, Baltimore, with her husband and two sons. Greenmount is the resting place of the great men and women of Baltimore—Johns Hopkins, Rinehart the sculptor, the Riggs family, Elizabeth Patterson, wife of Prince Jerome Bonaparte, Enoch Pratt, William T. and Henry Walters, Ferdinand C. Latrobe who was Mayor of Baltimore seven times, Sidney Lanier, the poet, the Winans family, railroad builders, engineers, and inventors, the Brown family, bankers, Robert Garrett, president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and Thomas Swann, Edwin Warfield and Albert C. Ritchie, governors of Maryland. The cemetery was created by an act of the Maryland legislature in 1838, and is located in the north part of downtown Baltimore. The cemetery is bounded by Greenmount and North Avenues and by Ensor and Hoffman Streets. The centennial history, *Green Mount Cemetery, One Hundredth Anniversary 1838-1938*, has a full page picture of the Johnston monument and lot, opposite page 49.

Obituaries and Editorials in Leading Metropolitan Dailies and in other Newspapers

Mrs. Johnston's death was widely noted in newspapers across the United States. It was reported on the front page of the *New York Times* on July 4, 1903, in competition with news about a re-

ported British-Japanese ultimatum that Russia evacuate Manchuria, arbitration with labor unions in the United States, the heat wave in New York, Washington, and Chicago, speculation as to President Theodore Roosevelt's "chances" of reelection, and an account of the Roosevelt family going on a picnic. The *Times* for July 4 carried the following.

HARRIET LANE JOHNSTON
DIES AT NARRAGANSETT.

Mistress of the White House in Administration of Her Uncle, President Buchanan.

PITTSBURG, Penn., July 3.—Word was received here to-night by relatives of the family that Mrs. Harriet Lane Johnston, niece of President Buchanan, died at Narragansett Pier late this evening. Her remains will be taken to Baltimore and buried beside her husband and children on Monday, July 8 [July 6].

Harriet Lane's was a famous name in Washington just before the civil war, and she is one of the best remembered mistresses of the White House. She was born in Mercersburg, Penn., in 1833 [1830], and was the daughter of Elliott T. Lane and his wife, June [Jane] Buchanan. The death of Mrs. Lane in 1839, and of her husband two years later, gave the care of their four children to Mr. Buchanan, and Miss Lane became an inmate of his household. With her cousin, James Buchanan Henry, the son of another of the President's sisters she was brought up by him with affectionate care.

Mr. Buchanan's letters to his niece, when she was a school girl, and after Miss Lane had grown up, written almost daily during her absences from him, give a charming picture of the Buchanans' family life. Miss Lane was educated at the Roman Catholic convent in Georgetown, now a part of the City of Washington. In 1853 Mr. Buchanan was appointed Minister to Great Britain, and in 1854 his niece joined him and dispensed the hospitalities of the legation until the Fall of 1855.

When Mr. Buchanan became President Miss Lane presided over the White House with grace and dignity, receiving, among other distinguished guests, the Prince of Wales, now King Edward VIII. In 1866 she married Henry Elliott Johnston of Maryland. She survived him and their two sons.

On July 4, 1903, the *New York Herald*, in New York City, gave one of its most prominent spots on its main page (page 3) to the former First Lady. Four headlines, and a bold face heading in the article, were as follows:

MRS JOHNSON [JOHNSTON] DIES
AT NARRAGANSETT

Niece of President Buchanan
Who Entertained Prince of
Wales at White House.



GRAVES OF MR. AND MRS. JOHNSTON

This monument in Greenmount Cemetery, Baltimore, Maryland, marks the

Friendship Begun When She Was
Harriet Lane Lasted Through
Many Years.

Mrs. Johnson [Johnston] as Mistress of White
House Entertained Prince of Wales.

The *Star*, Washington, D.C., for July 4, 1903, carried this headline:

Harriet L. Johnston

Former Mistress of the
White House is Dead.

A Noble Career

Thrown In Society of Many
Capitals.

A Serene Old Age Passed Amid
Scenes of Youthful
Triumph.

Her Beauty and Grace.

Mrs. Johnston represented the grande dame of the old school. As a girl, when she was presiding mistress of the White House, her portraits gave evidence of her beauty and grace. These comely attributes seemed to increase with her years and Washington society for the past ten years whenever she appeared in public has continuously expressed its admiration and respect. Robed in black velvet, a favorite costume, with her splendid diamonds and pearls, there were not often seen on gala occasions at the White House, a more distinguished face and figure.

The *Post*, Washington, D.C., for July 5, 1903, commented as follows:

Mrs. Harriet Lane Johnston, the niece of President James Buchanan and lady of the White House during his Presidency, was a person in whom the people of our nation took a kindly interest for half a century. This regard is due not alone to the fact that she graced the social functions of the White House with a dignity, charm, and beautiful personality, but also to the fact that after she yielded those duties to others she never ceased to be, as a friend said of her a few years ago, "the first lady of the land."

Last Appearance in Society.

Mrs. Roosevelt and Dolly Madison are the only two women of the White House who have ever equaled Harriet Lane in lavishness and beauty of hospitality.

Mrs. Johnston, despite her failing health, assisted Mrs. Roosevelt at one or two receptions last winter. Mrs. Johnston, ex-officio, was one of the few women upon whom the President's wife calls. The two ladies were great admirers of each other.

All spring Mrs. Johnston was quite ill at her Washington home. As soon as she was able to travel, accompanied by her two nieces and her faithful Eliza, she went as a guest of A. J. Cassatt, president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, in his private car, to the Cassatt cottage at Narragansett Pier, where she died Friday evening. Mrs. Cassatt is another niece of President Buchanan, and first cousin to Mrs. Johnston.

The *Baltimore Sun* for Sunday, July 5, 1903, carried a long article:

MOURN MRS. JOHNSTON

Many Recall Her Brilliant Social Career

Gift From King Edward VII.

The article stated that hundreds of persons in Washington were then mourning the death of Mrs. Johnston. The article spoke of her Eye Street house as "the scene of many brilliant gatherings," and said that in her Washington home on Eye Street she "demonstrated" in her later life "that she was an American queen by nature and social position, if not by birth, and one of the kindest and sweetest in the nation's capital."

One of the longest editorials in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Monday morning, July 6, 1903, was entitled "Death of Harriet Lane Johnston." It recited:

Few American women have been so noted for beauty, grace and tact as Harriet Lane, mistress of the White House under Buchanan and later destined to a life full of tragedy and sorrow. Dolly Madison, Miss Lane and Mrs. Cleveland will be remembered in this country as long as the annals of brilliant and good women are read. Mrs. Johnston, who was Miss Lane, has just passed away at the age of seventy [seventy-three] and in her day was a notable figure in the social life of Washington. President Buchanan, a bachelor, brought his niece to preside over the White House, and for four years the social gayeties were conducted with complete satisfaction. The present King Edward VII, when he visited this country over forty-two years ago, was charmed with Miss Lane and has frequently spoken of the delight of his visit at the Executive Mansion.

The death of Mrs. Johnston will be greatly regretted and at the same time recollections of her accomplishments will be attended with pleasing reflections.

In her native county the *Franklin Repository*, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, July 6, 1903, reported:

Harriet Lane Johnston.

Death of Famous Mercersburg Lady of the White House.

Harriet Lane Johnston, whose death at Narragansett was reported July 4th enjoyed a wide popularity here and in England during the career of her uncle President James Buchanan. She was born

at Mercersburg, Pa., in 1833 [1830], the daughter of Elliott T. Lane and Jane Buchanan. Her parents dying in her girlhood, she was taken in charge by her uncle, who sent her to the Roman Catholic convent at Georgetown for her education.

She was just out of school, a handsome girl of twenty, clever, of winning manners and an engaging talker, when Buchanan was made a Minister to England in 1853. There she made a wide acquaintance and achieved great popularity in diplomatic circles. On Buchanan's election to the Presidency she became mistress of the White House, and there her charm, good taste and diplomacy won much renown. It was while she was mistress of the White House that the Prince of Wales, now King Edward, visited America.

In the town of Mrs. Johnston's birth, the *Mercersburg Journal*, for July 10, 1903, carried the following on the front page.

HARRIET LANE JOHNSTON DEAD

Native of Mercersburg and Famous
As White House Mistress.

Mrs. Harriet Lane Johnston died at Naragansett Pier late last Friday night.

Mrs. Johnston was born in Mercersburg in 1831 [1830], being the daughter of Elliott T. Lane and Jane Buchanan, the latter a sister of President James Buchanan. Her parents occupied the house on North Main street now occupied by John Waidlich, and she received her early education here. When twelve years of age she was sent to Charlestown, Va., and afterwards completed her education in the Georgetown convent. Her parents dying during her girlhood, she was taken in charge by her uncle.

She was just out of school, a handsome girl of twenty, clever, of winning manners and an engaging talker, when Buchanan was made Minister to England in 1853. There she made a wide acquaintance and achieved great popularity in diplomatic circles. On Buchanan's election to the Presidency she became mistress of the White House, and there her charm, good taste and diplomacy won much renown. It was while she was mistress of the White House that the Prince of Wales, now King Edward, visited America.

In January, 1866, Miss Lane became the wife of Henry Elliott Johnston, a wealthy banker of Baltimore, and her married life was happiness itself but for the shadow of death which lingered cruelly over it. Of her two sons James Buchanan Johnston, died when 14 years of age. Death entered the home twice since then, taking the husband, Henry Elliott Johnston and the only remaining child.

Last of the notable events in which Harriet Lane Johnston figured, next to the unveiling of the Buchanan portrait in Keil Hall, at Mercersburg, was the coronation of King Edward VII. In London she was the personal guest of the sovereign of the British Empire when he was formally invested with the crown.

The funeral took place from the residence of her brother-in-law, Josiah Lee Johnston, in Baltimore on Monday morning at 10 o'clock. The services were conducted by Bishop Henry Y. Satterlee, of Washington, assisted by Rev. William Devries of St. John's Episcopal church, Washington. Interment was in Greenmount Cemetery where the bodies of her husband and sons repose.

In Lancaster, Pennsylvania, the *Daily Intelligencer* and the *New Era* for July 6, 1903, each carried a long article on the accomplishments of Mrs. Harriet Lane Johnston.

An Overall View of Her Will and Codicils

Mrs. Harriet Lane Johnston's will of June 1, 1895, with its five codicils, made between June 10, 1899 and July 2, 1903, was a document with many implications and is worth a great deal of study. It is on file in the Office of the Register of Wills and Clerk of the Pro-



A VIEW OF THE HARRIET LANE HOME FOR INVALID CHILDREN

This five-story building, designed by Professor von Pirquet, was erected 1909-1913 to provide quarters for the Harriet Lane Home for Invalid Children of Baltimore City. For more than fifty years this sturdy, fire-resistant building has provided ideal quarters for research in pediatrics, and for the care of children with chronic diseases.—Photograph courtesy The Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions.

bate Court, United States District Court for the District of Columbia, and in the Court House, Charles Town, Jefferson County, West Virginia. The will and the five codicils were printed in the *Baltimore Sun* for July 10, 1903, and were printed in the form of a thirty-four-page pamphlet by the Law Reporter Company, Washington, D. C. The pamphlet is undated. The will of June 1, 1895, is the only will by Mrs. Johnston that this writer has found.

The will of Harriet Lane Johnston and the will of her uncle, James Buchanan, stand in sharp contrast to each other when com-

pared. The uncle and the niece each left a considerable fortune for their day. Both, in death as well as in life, remembered their relatives. Buchanan left a large bequest for his able and diligent housekeeper, Miss Hetty Parker, and Mrs. Johnston left a large bequest for the companion of her last eighteen years, Miss May S. Kennedy. And there ended the similarity in the two wills and their codicils. Buchanan made almost no bequests beyond a small handful of his relatives. He may have felt that he had given his life to his country and that now he owed his earthly possessions to a few individuals. His will and codicils were fairly short and were stated simply. Conversely, Mrs. Johnston's estate was used mainly to establish significant projects in the public interest. Her will and five codicils were long and somewhat involved, but were stated precisely. In a sense they were not very complicated, even though far-reaching.

No doubt Mrs. Johnston wrote the will herself. A letter of February 2, 1905, from the Attorney General of the United States to Morgan H. Beach, United States Attorney in Washington, D.C., states that William G. Johnson wrote Mrs. Johnston's will. It is possible that Calderon Carlisle, as a lawyer, put her will of June 1, 1895, in to its final wording and that after his death in 1901 his law partner, William G. Johnson, may have done the final wording of third, fourth, and fifth codicils.

Some of the provisions of Mrs. Johnston's will are similar to parts of her husband's will. As in his will a chief feature in hers was the instruction that the residuum of the estate should go to the Harriet Lane Home for Invalid Children of Baltimore City, that certain bequests should revert to the Harriet Lane Home upon the death of the recipients, and that bequests that might fail should go to the Harriet Lane Home. Also, in her will as in his, there were bequests for relatives and income, per stirpes and not per capita (second codicil of her will) for children that might yet be born, and a small bequest for her servant. As may then have been common, the following were included in his will and in hers: lawful taxes on any of the legacies were to be paid from the estate rather than by the recipients; the executors were given wide latitude to change investments when they considered change to be desirable; their commission was to be the lowest allowed by the law; all previous wills and codicils were revoked and this one was declared to be the last will and testament.

Mrs. Johnston's will distributed an estate valued at approximately a million dollars. She had given away comparatively little of her wealth before her death. She had the income from the bulk of her husband's estate but did not have the principal. The largest portions of her estate went to the Harriet Lane Home for Invalid Children of Baltimore City; to the National Cathedral Foundation of the District of Columbia to establish a school for boys; to the James Buchanan Monument Fund to establish two memorials to her uncle; to her close companion, Miss May S. Kennedy; to the Johns Hopkins University to establish scholarships for needy youths; and to the



**THE BUCHANAN MEMORIAL
IN WASHINGTON, D. C.
GIFT OF MRS. HARRIET LANE JOHNSTON**

This bronze statue of James Buchanan, President of the United States 1857-1861, is nine and a half feet high. It is flanked by two figures of heroic size, carved in stone, representing, respectively, the law and diplomacy. The statue itself looks out on a mall. The plaster model for this bronze statue is exhibited at Wheatland. The model is approximately thirty inches high.—Photograph courtesy of Cornelius W. Heine, Special Assistant to the Director, National Park Service.

Trustees of the Corcoran Gallery of Art—her art treasures, until such time as the Government of the United States "shall establish in the City of Washington a National Art Gallery."

Mrs. Johnston's will and codicils accomplished exactly what a will is meant to do. They indicated how she wanted her real and personal property to be distributed. The will and codicils indicated very specifically who should receive what. In a number of instances where she had a special desire as to how the recipient should use the objects or money she stated the desire closely.

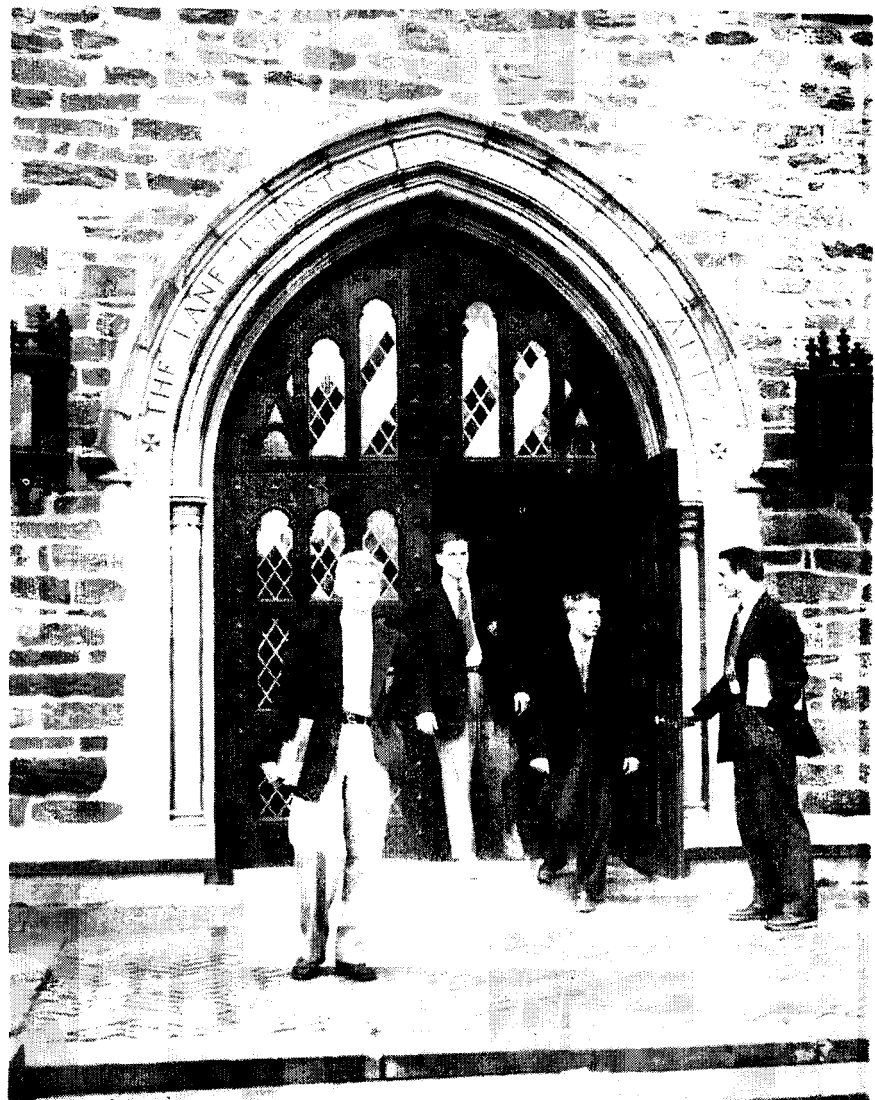
Some people will more than they have. This deplorable situation is caused by the testator or the testatrix being careless when drawing the will or by a decrease in his or her property between the time of making the will and time of decease. A will that purports to distribute more than is at hand causes individuals and organizations to become distraught and increases the expense of settling the estate. Mrs. Johnston reserved a substantial portion of her estate as a "general residue" and designated the Harriet Lane Home for Invalid Children of Baltimore City as residuary legatee. She had a very protective attitude toward the Harriet Lane Home, as did her husband. She saw to it that many of her bequests would finally revert to the Home, and that some bequests that might fail would in such event automatically be turned over to that institution. Consequently, her executors were not embarrassed by shortages. She did not will more than she had.

Her estate was distributed to many institutions and individuals. Some of the bequests were worded in such a way as to almost certainly assure the establishment of a project that would plough a new furrow in the public interest. Vacuous words, phrases, and sentences were avoided. Consequently there seems to have been no serious controversy about her will. The one court case that resulted was a friendly suit in the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia. Actually, the case was merely a request by the executors to the court for a clarification of parts of the will so that the executors could feel that they would be moving in the right direction. Various technical points that arose in the administration and settlement of the estate were summarized in a document, the "Original Bill", presented to the court. One purpose of the suit was to resolve whether or not the Government of the United States had established a "National Art Gallery." To obtain a decision on this point was an objective that Mrs. Johnston had in mind when making the third and fourth codicils.

Early parts of the will disposed of many personal items—linen, pieces of china, silver, jewelry, furniture, and wearing apparel—to her relatives and friends.

In the will and in the codicils Mrs. Johnston repeatedly referred to Miss May S. Kennedy as "my said cousin." In the will Mrs. Johnston referred to Miss Mary C. Speer, Julia Kennedy, Margaret Kennedy, and Ethel Kennedy as "cousins", at least once. This use of

the term "cousin" indicated her strong sense of kinship, loyalty, or obligation to Miss Speer and the four Kennedy sisters. Miss Speer was Mrs. Johnston's second cousin, on her mother's side of the fam-



**ST. ALBANS' STUDENTS AT ENTRANCE TO THE MAIN BUILDING OF
THE SCHOOL FOUNDED THROUGH THE BEQUEST OF
MRS. HARRIET LANE JOHNSTON**

St. Albans School in Washington, D. C., is one of the best college preparatory schools in the United States. In accord with Mrs. Johnston's wish, it emphasizes top-quality training in the singing of church music.—Photograph courtesy St. Albans School.

ily. The four Kennedy sisters were daughters of Mrs. Johnston's first cousin, Mrs. Mary Ann Lane Riddle Kennedy, on her father's side.

After disposing of personal items to relatives and friends, Mrs. Johnston's will distributed a few pieces of art to the Mount Vernon Association, to the Trustees of Corcoran Gallery of Art; to the United States of America, and to the Peabody Institute of Baltimore, and various pieces of personal property to the Harriet Lane Home. Small bequests were made to several churches and church institutions and to the Women's Hospital of Baltimore. A large bequest, \$60,000, was made to the Johns Hopkins University to provide scholarships for "poor youths." Money was provided for proper maintenance of the graves of her relatives in three cemeteries. Three nephews were each given \$20,000. Sums ranging from \$5,000 down to \$250 were given to each of nine distant relatives and friends. An undetermined amount, in excess of \$12,000, was provided for a college education for three young male relatives, and "the education" of a niece who was less than twenty-one years of age. For the establishment of two monuments to James Buchanan the sum of \$100,000 was bequeathed. The last part of her will gave instructions and expressed some of her wishes concerning the Harriet Lane Home.

In the five codicils to Mrs. Johnston's will of June 1, 1895, she revoked some minor provisions of that will and made some relatively minor bequests. As the codicils came along, from June 10, 1899, to July 2, 1903, Mrs. Johnston was becoming even more philanthropic. Her estate was probably growing rapidly in a period of national prosperity. She was becoming too liberal with friends, but was also expressing wider interests. She increased by fifty percent the scholarship bequest to the Johns Hopkins University, provided for the establishment of the choir school for boys, for the publication of the Buchanan Papers, and for the disposition of her art treasures to the public.

Mrs. Johnston's will went into the kind of detail that was of extreme value to the executors and to the individuals and organizations to whom its bequests were made.

A carefully drawn will is almost completely free from inaccuracies and inconsistencies. Perhaps the only inaccuracies in Mrs. Johnston's will were the spelling of the name of the sculptor, William Henry Rinehart, which, in that document, was consistently spelled "Rhinehart."

At one place in the will Mrs. Johnston spoke of the Harriet Lane Home for Invalid Children of the City of Baltimore but in all other places in the will and in the codicils, when referring to that institution she used its chartered name, the Harriet Lane Home for Invalid Children of Baltimore City. In the third codicil she bequeathed the miniature of herself by John Henry Brown to Miss May S. Kennedy for life, and then to Mary C. Speer for life, after which it



**THE JAMES BUCHANAN BIRTHPLACE MONUMENT AT STONY BATTER
AS IT LOOKED IN 1908**

This picture shows the monument, surrounded by snow, as it looked at about time of completion, probably in the winter of 1907-1908. The iron fence specified by Mrs. Johnston in her will had not yet been placed around the monument. The picture was photographed by Mrs. J. C. Etter, (never before published) Lemasters, Pennsylvania.—Photograph courtesy of Mr. Eugene Etter, son of Mrs. J. C. Etter.

was to become a part of the collection which she bequeathed to the Trustees of the Corcoran Gallery of Art. In the fourth codicil she referred back to the will of June 1, 1895, seemed to overlook the third codicil, which she might have at least mentioned, as a matter of clarity, and bequeathed the miniature to May S. Kennedy, "absolutely." The miniature is of great importance, as it is a beautiful piece of art. Fortunately it was presented to the Smithsonian Institution by Miss Kennedy. It is preserved in The National Collection of Fine Arts.

The inaccuracies and inconsistencies in Mrs. Johnston's will and its five codicils are trivial, indeed. The will and its codicils are the product of a visionary. In the sixty-nine years since Mrs. Harriet Lane Johnston's death the will and the codicils have produced remarkable results in the public interest. The one regret that might well be expressed is that she was too generous with some of her relatives and friends and she became much too generous with her companion, May S. Kennedy. From the time of making her will of

June 1, 1895, until making the fourth codicil to it, on March 18, 1903, Mrs. Johnston increased the bequest to Miss Kennedy from \$15,000, a large sum in 1895 and in 1903, to \$100,000, "absolutely." One can rationalize about this generosity, but can scarcely fathom Mrs. Johnston's reason for showering such an enormous gift on one person in private life when parceling out most of her estate very carefully between projects of vast importance to the public.

Mrs. Johnston named three persons to be executors of her will and virtually gave them a free hand to sell any of her real estate and to change her investments from time to time when they would consider such actions desirable. Her brother-in-law, Josiah Lee Johnston, William A. Fisher, a prominent lawyer and judge in Baltimore, and Calderon Carlisle, a prominent lawyer in the District of Columbia, were the three whom she designated as executors. They were to receive the lowest commissions "now or hereafter fixed by law." In the third codicil, dated April 21, 1902, Mrs. Johnston named two additional executors and an executrix, William A. Fisher and Calderon Carlisle had died by that time. The new designees were Mr. D. K. Este Fisher, son of William A. Fisher, William G. Johnson of Washington and former partner of Mr. Carlisle, and Miss May S. Kennedy. Each of the four—Johnston, Fisher, Johnson, and Kennedy—participated in the settling of the estate.

The will and the five codicils were offered for probate in the Probate Court of the District of Columbia.

The World of 1903

During the seventy-three years from Mrs. Johnston's birth to her death the world changed markedly. The industrial revolution had converted the United States from a nation that was almost completely agrarian to one that was beginning to be primarily a place of manufacturing. In those seventy-three years the geographical area of the nation more than doubled, growing from 1,788,006 square miles in 1830 to 3,618,934 square miles in 1903. In 1830 there were twenty-four States in the Union, in 1903 there were forty-five. Texas had been annexed in 1845, the Oregon country had been acquired in 1846, the area now comprising California, Nevada, Utah, most of Arizona and parts of Wyoming and New Mexico were ceded by Mexico in 1848, and the southern parts of Arizona and New Mexico were purchased in 1853. Alaska was purchased from Russia in 1867. Puerto Rico and Hawaii were acquired in 1898 and 1899, respectively.

The population of the nation in 1830 was 12,866,020. By 1903 it had increased more than 650 percent above the 1830 figure, having risen to 80,632,000. Meanwhile urbanization and concentration of population were proceeding fairly rapidly. In the year of Mrs. Johnston's birth there had been 7.4 inhabitants per square mile of land area in the United States. In 1903 there were 26.6 per square mile.



**ONE OF MRS. JOHNSTON'S ART TREASURES: MISS KIRKPATRICK,
BY GEORGE ROMNEY**

This oil portrait on canvas, thirty inches high and twenty-five inches wide, is one of the finest paintings in Mrs. Harriet Lane Johnston's art collection. Her bequest of pieces of art to the Federal Government brought into being the National Gallery of Art. Today this painting, by the British artist, Romney, 1734-1802, is in the National Collection of Fine Arts.—Photograph courtesy the National Collection of Fine Arts.

News was carried by stagecoach and wind-driven ships in 1830, but Mrs. Johnston's death was heralded across the United States by telegraph and across the ocean by the trans-Atlantic cable.

In 1830 there was a great amount of individual freedom in the

United States. By 1903 the average person was already a pawn in the hands of unscrupulous captains of industry, but was not yet reduced to a social security number and a tiny spot on a computer tape. "Trusts" (sugar, meat, steel, etc.) were being formed and expanded at a frightening rate.

The lottery case, *Champion vs Ames* (188 U.S. 321) was upheld by the Supreme Court in 1903, thus opening federal police power. The decision in this case led to a tremendous enlargement of the jurisdiction of the federal government.

Medical research and mechanical development were beginning to unfold at a rapid rate. When Harriet Lane Johnston died of cancer in 1903 very little was known about the nature and control of the disease. In that year radium treatment for cancer was used experimentally by Robert Abbe, an American surgeon. In another health area, the electrocardiograph was invented in 1903 by William Einthoven, a Dutch physiologist.

Orville and Wilbur Wright made the first heavier-than-air flight, at Kittyhawk, North Carolina, on December 17, 1903, while both the airplane and the automobile were in their infancy.

In the same year the "best sellers" in the United States were *The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come*, by John Fox, Jr., *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, by Kate Douglas Wiggin, and *The Call of the Wild*, by Jack London. There were few motion pictures prior to the passing of Mrs. Johnston. However, the film "The Great Train Robbery," produced in 1903 by Edwin S. Porter, brought fame to him as "father of the story film."

On the political front President Theodore Roosevelt was brandishing the "big stick" in Latin America and was advocating an open door policy in the Far East. He was laying plans to acquire control of a zone across the Isthmus of Panama and to build an inter-ocean canal. Russia was on the brink of war with Japan.

In short, the tempo of life had quickened and the facilities available to imaginative persons had enlarged greatly during Mrs. Johnston's lifetime.