

Harriet Lane

(Later Harriet Lane Johnston)

By (MRS. A. K.) IDA L. K. HOSTETTER

TO ME has been assigned the pleasure of writing about Harriet Lane, the niece of President Buchanan, and mistress of the White House during Buchanan's term.

The grandfather of Harriet Lane was James Buchanan, who emigrated to America from the north of Ireland in 1783 and settled near Mercersburg in Franklin County, Pennsylvania. In 1788 he married Elizabeth Speer, the daughter of a substantial farmer, and a woman of strong intellect and deep piety; James Buchanan, who afterwards became President, was the second child of this marriage, and always spoke very warmly of his father and mother and gave credit to his mother for all of his success.

His favorite sister was Jane who was his constant playmate and who was considered the most spritely and agreeable of a family, all of whom were gifted. In 1813 Jane married Elliot T. Lane, a merchant, who carried on his trade between the east and west,—by the great highway that passed through Franklin County, Pennsylvania.

James Buchanan, the elder, was also a merchant and had acquired wealth, and on the marriage of his daughter, Jane, with Mr. Lane much of his business passed into the hands of the latter, who was descended from an old aristocratic English family, and had settled in Virginia during the Revolution. He was well known and trusted and considered a man of "uncommon amiability of disposition."

There were four children born to this union,—James Buchanan, Elliot Eskridge, Mary Elizabeth Speer and Harriet Rebecca (the latter name was later dropped). Harriet spent the first years of her life in Mercersburg in the midst of a society distinguished for its intelligence and refinement. She was a vivacious, mischievous child of an impulsive temperament and strong will, that required much discipline and careful training, and as a little child she conceived an affection and reverence for her uncle, who frequently visited Mercersburg, and that love for him remained to the end.

Her mother died when she was only seven years old and her father died two years later. She was left well provided with money and had a large family connection, but she loved her uncle James the best, and accepted his invitation to come to his home and he became her guardian.

From then on their lives were so interwoven that it would be impossible to write of one without including the other. In fact, it is only through Buchanan's letters to his beloved niece that I can read between the lines and follow the childhood—girlhood—on into the beautiful budding young womanhood of Harriet Lane Johnston.

President Buchanan, in his letters, shows all the kindness, love and interest of a father, and with it a certain sternness tempered with mercy and justice, a sense of humor and knowledge of youth, expressing a great desire that she grow into beautiful womanhood. He was ever watchful of her manners and guarding her against indiscretions, for his letters give every evidence of his watchfulness and care.

That a man so busy with the big things in life nationally and internationally, devoted so much sincere attention to a little child and continued in the development of so beautiful a character, showed a wonderful side of Buchanan's character of unselfishness, love and fineness of that inner self, a side, perhaps not so generally known and appreciated.

While Buchanan was in the Senate at Washington, Harriet attended a private school, believed to be Miss Young's, for three years. She was a mischievous, fun-loving child, full of wild pranks which called forth daily rebukes and some severe lectures, and I suppose Buchanan fearing she would get beyond him, threatened that he would place her in the care of two maiden ladies,—ladies famous for their strict economy—just such a rule as our high spirited young girl would chafe under.

She never believed her uncle would do it, but she found herself finally installed under the "old damsels" (the Misses Crawfords') care, while her uncle was in the Senate.

She wrote letters to him, complaining about the early hours, brown sugar in the tea, restrictions in dress,—“stiff necks” and “cold hearts.” She was just about eleven years old at this time and the following letter from which I will quote shows that Harriet was not on her best behavior while with them.

Lancaster, March 20, 1843.

“My dear Harriet:—

It affords me sincere pleasure to receive your letter. It is one of the first desires of my heart that you should become an amiable and a good girl. Education and accomplishments are very important, but they sink into insignificance when compared with the proper government of the heart and temper.

How all your relatives and friends would love you,—how proud and happy I should be to acknowledge and cherish you as

an object of deep affection, could I say, she is kind in heart, amiable in temper, and behaves in such a manner as to secure the affection and esteem of all around! I now cherish the hope that ere long this may be the case. Endeavor to realize this ardent hope.

What a long list of studies you are engaged upon! The number would be too great for any common intellect; but it would seem that you manage. As mythology and history seem to be your favorites I shall expect when we meet, that you will have all the gods and heroes of Greece and Rome at your fingers ends. At a dinner table at Washington, during the last Session, a wager was made that no person at the table could name all the Muses; and the wager was won. Had you been one of the company the result doubtless would have been different. I presume that the Muses and Graces are great favorites with you. Attend dilligently to your studies; but above all govern your heart and conduct.

Your friends, the Misses Crawford, are about to move to a much more comfortable house; so that should you return to school in Lancaster, you may be better accommodated. I presume your partiality still continues for these good ladies; but to be serious, you must acknowledge that you did not treat them as they deserve. I know of no news here which would interest you. Lancaster has been very dull; and is likely so to continue. Your music mistress, Miss Bryan, was married a few evenings since to a Mr. Sterret of Pittsburg. Annie Reigart and Kate Reynolds will take their degrees in a fortnight, and enter the world as young ladies. Judge Hays has moved into town.

Had Mary (her sister) written to me that you were a good girl, and had behaved yourself entirely well I should have visited you during the Christmas holidays. Tell her, I shall expect her to write soon; and as I rely confidently that she will not deceive, I shall most heartily rejoice should her account of you be favorable. In that event, God willing, I intend to pay you a visit.

Most affectionately,

James Buchanan."

In a postscript Buchanan says "your letter is without date, and does not purport to come from any particular place." You notice the high ideals, the humor in referring to her partiality to the "maiden ladies"; his punishment by not going to visit her and in the postscript, calling her attention that her letter was not dated, or stated from where it came, and the rest full of news just such as a young girl from home would like to receive.

His letters began when she was a school girl, continued when she became the companion of his age,—the friend of his declining years and after he had given her to the husband of her choice.

The autumn following the time spent with the Misses Crawford when she was twelve years old, she was sent with her sister, a lovely girl a few years older, to a school in Charlestown, Virginia, where she remained three years.

She was not a student, but she knew her lessons, "because it was no trouble for her to learn them." The great event for Harriet of the three years at the Charlestown School was a visit with her uncle to Bedford Springs.

Going to Washington for week ends Harriet was not allowed to enter into the social life because of her youth, but she met all her uncle's friends and they were very fond of her and wished to entertain her. Mr. Buchanan wished her to continue her education after the three years at Charlestown, and following are a few excerpts from a letter written to Harriet, July 6, 1846, in regard to the change contemplated:—

"I think of all places for you, the nunnery at Georgetown would be the best. Your religious principles are doubtless so well settled that you will not become a nun."

Farther on he says, "your friends Mrs. Bancroft and the Pleasantons often inquire for you with kindness, they have given you somewhat of a name here; and Mrs. Polk and Miss Rucker, her niece, have several times urged me to permit you to come and pass some time with them. I have been 'deaf as the adder' to their request, knowing, to use a word of your grandmother, that you are too 'outsetting' already."

"There is a time for all things under the sun, as the wise man says, and your time will yet come. I intend to go to Bedford Springs this summer if possible; but as Congress may not adjourn until the tenth of August, the fashionable season will then be over. I had thought of giving Mary and yourself a polite invitation to accompany me there, but I fear it will be too late in the Season for Mary to enact the character of a belle, and you are quite too young to make the attempt. Miss Hetty requests me to send her love to you; and to say that she would be very glad to see you in Washington—I fear she might be twice glad, once on your arrival, and still more so on your departure.

I wish you to embrace the first opportunity to remember me very kindly to Mrs. Franklin. I never lived beside a better or more agreeable neighbor. Give my love to Mary though I believe this is the second time and believe me ever to be,

Yours affectionately,

James Buchanan."

The Mary referred to was Harriet's sister who received many kindnesses from her uncle.

He decided to send Harriet and her sister, Mary, to the Convent at Georgetown, a school celebrated for the elegant women who had been educated there. While there she went over every month for a week-end to visit her uncle, at Washington, who was then Secretary of State. Her popularity increased, and she was a very great favorite of her uncle's friends as well for her sake as her uncle's. She was also a great favorite of the nuns at the Convent "who always expressed the highest opinions of her talents and principles."

Before sending her to the convent, Mr. Buchanan asked her,—“Do you think you would become a Roman Catholic?” She was anxious to go, but she answered,—“I can't promise, I don't know enough about their faith.” Well, said he, “if you are a good catholic I will be satisfied.” She continued in her faith but her “intercourse with the Sisters taught her charity and sympathy for all God's people.”

Because Miss Lane was such a splendid musician the Sisters were very anxious she should learn to play the harp, not only on account of her musical talent, but because of her graceful person and exquisite hands. However, she never took lessons on the harp, and because of her many social engagements neglected her piano music.

While Miss Lane was exceedingly quick and bright she never applied her whole mind to study except the last two years at Georgetown, and as a result she won golden opinions and graduated with high honors. Mr. Buchanan was so pleased that she “acquitted herself so handsomely” that he promised he would as a reward, if possible, take her on a trip to West Point. She must have been seventeen or eighteen years old at this time,—very beautiful, blond, with golden hair arranged simply, deep violet eyes and a “peculiarly beautiful mouth” and from the letters of her uncle's you know Harriet has been giving some girlish confidences to him. Some new interests have come into her life and corresponding problems to her uncle, for in a letter written Jan. 8, 1849, he says,—“I wish now to give you a caution. Never allow your affections to become interested, or engage yourself to any person without my previous advice. You ought never to marry any man to whom you are not attached; but you ought never to marry any person who is not able to afford you a decent and immediate support.

In my experience, I have witnessed the long years of patient misery and dependence which fine women have endured from rushing precipitately into matrimonial connections. Look ahead, and consider the future, and act wisely in this particular.”

The summer of 1850 Harriet did not accompany her uncle to Bedford Springs but remained at Wheatland and in a letter to

her from there, Buchanan says,—“I will not tell you how many inquiries have been made for you, lest this might make you vainer than you are, which to say the least is unnecessary.”

Having finished her education her uncle was quite willing that she should enjoy visits to those friends who had wished to entertain her before, when he refused to give his consent, because she was too “outsetting already.”

In January, 1851, she visited the Pleasantons of Washington and in reply to a letter written from there to her uncle, he answers,—“I hope that your visit may prove agreeable; and that you may return home self satisfied with all that may transpire during your absence. Keep your eyes about you in the gay scenes through which you are destined to pass, and take care to do nothing and say nothing of which you have cause to repent. Above all be on your guard against flattery; and should you receive it “let it pass into one ear gracefully and out at the other.” Many a clever girl has been spoiled for the useful purposes of life and rendered unhappy by a winter’s gaiety in Washington. I know, however, that Mrs. Pleasanton will take care of you and prevent you from running into any extravagance. Still it is necessary that, with the blessing of Providence, you should take care of yourself.”

In April she was a guest of the White family at Baltimore. In December of the same year she left for Pittsburgh.

On March 13th her uncle wrote to her,—“It was difficult to persuade you to visit Pittsburgh, but it seems to be still more difficult for you to leave it. I am not, however, disappointed in this particular, because I know the kindness and hospitality of the people. Make out your visit, which it is evident, you propose to continue until the middle of April, but after your return I hope you will be content to remain at home during the summer. The birds are now singing around the house and we are enjoying the luxury of a fine day in the opening Spring.”

This insight obtained into the life of Harriet Lane’s girlhood has been obtained from “The Life of James Buchanan” by Ticknor Curtis,—in Two Volumes.

There are only a few of Harriet Lane’s letters quoted, but that she tried to conform to her uncle’s wishes, and that she greatly admired and loved him is shown in excerpts from a letter written from Philadelphia; that she was guided by his wishes is illustrated by the following:—“Should you have changed your mind or have any advice to give, let me know at once, for rest assured I am always happier and better satisfied with myself when my actions are fully sanctioned by your wishes.” In the same letter she says,—“The day after you left we had an elegant dinner at

Mrs. Gilpin's. Many, many were the regrets that you were not present. How I longed for you to eclipse them all, and be, as you always are, the life and soul of the dinner."

Mr. Buchanan was very indifferent about going to England as our Minister, for in a letter to Harriet he says,—“I think that a visit to Europe with me as Minister would spoil you outright, besides, it would consume your little independence. One gross objection to my acceptance of the mission, for which I have no personal inclination, would be your situation. I should dislike to leave you behind in the care of any person I know.”

Miss Lane was very much disappointed not to go with her uncle for she had looked forward to going as “the future realization of a beautiful dream,” but her uncle said,—“like all other dreams you will be disappointed in reality” and decided to go without her.

On April 29th, 1854, Harriet under the care of Captain West sailed from New York for Liverpool, under instructions of her uncle,—“put yourself under the special charge of Captain West” and also this admonition,—“you will of course have no dresses made in the United States, I am not a very close observer, or an accurate judge, but I think the ladies here of the very highest rank do not dress as expensively, with the exception of jewels, as those of the United States.”

The agreeable personal qualities of Mr. Buchanan united with the gravity of years and his many experiences gave him poise and dignity and all these qualities combined made him a great favorite.

Miss Lane with her great beauty, charming manners and fine character, became a great favorite and was specially honored by the Queen. At the time it was said that Queen Victoria honored her more than any other foreign woman.

It can readily be imagined that Miss Lane would be much intrigued with all the grandeur and beauty of her surroundings when entertained by the Queen, and in a letter to her sister Mary says,—“We have dined with the Queen since I wrote. The Queen was most gracious and talked a great deal to me. Uncle sat on her right hand, and Prince Albert was talkative, and altogether we passed a charming evening. The Princess Royal came in after dinner and is simple, unaffected, and very childlike—her perfect simplicity and sweet manner are charming. Everything of course was magnificent at the table,—gold in profusion, twelve candelabra with four candles each, but you know I never can describe things of this sort; with mirrors and candles all around the room, a band of delicious music playing all the time, it was a little like fairyland in its magnificence. We had another band after dinner while we took our tea.” Some of her gowns had been made and in this same letter to her sister describing them, she says,—“Every-

thing is worn standing out. Skirts cannot be too full and stiff, sleeves are still open and basques either open in front or closed; flounces are very much worn. I had same dresses made in Paris that I wish you could see."

The same month the Emperor and Empress of the French visited England and were the guests of the Queen at Windsor castle. Of this affair Miss Lane writes to her sister,—“There never was such a crowd seen. In the afternoon at five they received the Diplomatic Corps at the French Embassy and I had a long talk with Her Majesty, who was most gracious and affable. She is very striking, elegant and graceful. She wore a green silk, flounced to the waist with seven or eight white lace flounces, white lace mantle, white crepe bonnet and feathers. We go to the palace tonight to an evening party, and there I shall even have a better opportunity of seeing them. I was disappointed in the Emperor's appearance,—he is very short.” In the end of the letter she says,—“I have made another conquest, who comes in true American style, *every day*. He is rich and keeps a yacht, which costs him two thousand pounds a year. Beaux are pleasant, but dreadfully troublesome.”

On May third Miss Lane attended the second Drawing Room of the Season,—because of ill health she had not been able to go to the first one and she describes it as follows:—“It was a very full and brilliant one. I wore a pink silk petticoat, over-skirt of pink tulle, puffed and trimmed with wreath of apple blossoms; train of pink silk trimmed with blond and apple blossoms and so was the body. Head dress,—apple blossoms, lace lappit and feathers. Her Majesty was very gracious to me yesterday as was also the Prince. On Wednesday next there is to be a state ball at Buckingham Palace which we shall of course attend.”

On their return from that drawing room Mr. Buchanan said to his niece,—“Well, a person would have supposed you were a great beauty, to have heard the way you were talked of today. I was asked if we had many such handsome ladies in America? I answered yes and many much handsomer. She would scarcely be remarked there for her beauty.” His purpose in speaking thus was, no doubt, an effort to keep her from becoming too vain.

In July they dined in the grand Baronial hall with the Archbishop of Canterbury in Lambeth Palace, the residence of the ancient Archbishops.

An important incident of her stay abroad was the visit with Mr. Buchanan to Ostend, at the time of the celebrated conference between the American Ministers to England, France and Spain.

Another very pleasant experience for Miss Lane, while in England, was the Commemoration Day at Oxford when Mr. Buchanan and the poet, Tennyson, received the degree D. C. L.

(Doctor of Civil Law). "The students greeted Miss Lane's appearance with loud cheers and applauded for her uncle vociferously." They returned the same evening to London to attend the Queen's last concert for the season.

The following confidence in her letter to her sister follows,—
"I have now a man of high position, clever, talented and very rich and the only fault to find is his age, which is certainly great, as he will be sixty next year. He has a daughter who is a widow, and I might pass for her daughter, but I really like him very much, and know how devoted he would be. I should have everything to my heart's content and go home as often as I liked. But I will write no more about it."

This gentleman was given very serious consideration and, then as now, there was gossip, for even Queen Victoria remarked to Lord Clarendon (who in turn repeated to Mr. Buchanan) that "She had heard Miss Lane was to marry Sir ——" and expressed how much she "would have been gratified had Miss Lane been detained in England."

Another excerpt,—
"I have seen - - - - - and he ordered his gardener to send me from the country all the roses he had in bloom for the drawing room. Preceding the box came a sweet little note, which of course I answered in a tender way; Mr. - - - - - , the man of the yacht, is getting quite desperate, as he is ordered to join his regiment in a month. He is constantly sending me flowers."

Among the entertainments given by Mr. Buchanan and Miss Lane were Friday evening receptions from June fifteenth to July twentieth inclusive, and a number of large dinners.

In the early part of October Miss Lane returned to America with this parting admonition, "take care not to display any foreign airs," expecting a visit from her dearly loved sister, Mary, now Mrs. George Baker, who had moved to California for her health, but instead news came of her death in December and that was her first great sorrow for she had been too young to feel deeply the loss of her parents.

After Mr. Buchanan's return to America—in April, 1856; he became President in 1857 and Miss Lane, then twenty-six years old, became mistress of the White House. Nature and education, with her experience of presiding over her uncle's household while he was minister to England, combined with tact, made her a very popular hostess, in spite of the troublesome political times; and her reign at the White House was one of great charm, and no other first lady caused more gossip or aroused more enthusiasm than did the Juno-like and beautiful Harriet Lane. Her public advent into Washington as mistress of the White House was at

the Buchanan Inaugural Ball, attired in a white dress with artificial flowers, and a necklace of many strands of pearls. There is a very beautiful painting in one of the Museums in Washington, I forget whether it is of the Inaugural Ball or a Reception at which President Buchanan and Miss Lane are receiving, but I have not forgotten the dignity and grace of both figures and which characteristics were so much admired at the court of St. James.

Although Pennsylvania has had only one President, the small town of Mercersburg was the birthplace of two mistresses of the White House, and the mother of one President. As we already know, Harriet Lane was born there; the Irwin sisters, Jane and Elizabeth, married brothers who were the sons of President Tippecanoe Harrison. Elizabeth was the younger, and it was her son who is known to history as President Benjamin Harrison.

The elder of the Irwin sisters was the wife of William Henry Harrison, Jr., and during the brief month that her father-in-law was President, served in the capacity of First Lady of the Land. Elizabeth Irwin Harrison did not live to see her son, Benjamin, become President, but the fine old Irwin home at Mercersburg still stands with its great story of romance behind it, and through Miss Lane's generosity, Buchanan's birthplace, at "Stony Batter," near Mercersburg, was purchased and set aside for a Buchanan memorial.

Miss Lane continued being the favorite of her uncle's friends and the nation, sharing all social honors with charm and grace, ranking in honor as a wife,—a splendid example for the present controversy between two leaders for supremacy in the present administration.

Jefferson Davis in speaking to Dr. Craven at Fortress Monroe said that Buchanan's administration approached more nearly a Republican Court than the President's house had ever done before, since the days of Washington, because of his wide acquaintance, both at home and abroad.

On October 20, 1858, Miss Lane christened the battleship "Lancaster," named after our city of Lancaster and is the oldest ship in the United States Navy. It was later used as a transport ship in conveying our soldier boys to Santiago, Cuba. The Lancaster Intelligencer of October 26, 1858, quotes from the Philadelphia Press,—“Miss Harriet Lane broke a bottle of wine on her bow. The wine used was made from the native grapes of Lancaster County and it was brought to Philadelphia by his honor, Thomas H. Burrowes, Mayor of Lancaster, at the request of the venerable Commodore Stewart.”

The Evening Express of October 21, 1858, gives an account also and says,—“Just as the ship touched the water Miss Lane

broke a bottle of Conestoga water over her bow and formally named her "Lancaster." (In view of our present laws the latter bottle would have been safer to carry). Although she will only carry eighteen guns she is pierced for thirty-two." The Express suggested that a painting of Lancaster be gotten up and he placed in the new vessel. The Express also adds that Miss Lane was the "observed of all observers." She was tastefully dressed in a blue brocade dress, with white bonnet trimmed with a white feather. The general remark was that she was a "decidedly interesting looking lady."

The above has been taken from a paper "Oldest Ship in the United States" written by S. Sener, read before our Historical Society September 2, 1898, and appears in Vol. III, No. 1, of our Historical proceedings.

There was also a revenue cutter named Harriet Lane by the Secretary of the Treasury and which was used in taking the Prince of Wales to Mt. Vernon to see the tomb of Washington.

Even as late as 1859, while Mistress of the White House, Buchanan administered a rebuke, and will quote the following,— "I am sorry to find that your excursion to West Point on the Harriet Lane has been made the subject of newspaper criticism on yourself. This is most ungallant and ungentlemanly. The practice, however, of employing national vessels on pleasure excursions, to gratify any class of people, is a fair subject of public criticism. You know how much I condemned your former trip on the same vessel, and I did not expect you would fall into the same error. The thing, however, is past and gone, and let it pass. After a fair time shall have passed, it is my purpose to cause general orders to be issued by the Treasury and Navy Departments to put a stop to the practice."

A very notable experience for Miss Lane was the visit of Prince Edward in 1860, for a period of five days, and particularly so, for it was the first occasion that an heir apparent to the crown of Great Britain had stood in the Capitol of her lost colonies. One of the entertainments provided, was a visit to Mt. Vernon and was much enjoyed by Harriet, dancing with the Prince, for Buchanan did not allow dancing in the White House.

After his return, the Prince of Wales sent to Miss Lane a set of engravings of Her Majesty the Queen, and other members of the Royal Family; an oil painting of himself to the President, a very cordial letter from the Prince and a most gracious and kindly letter from Queen Victoria to Buchanan in which Miss Lane was most happily included.

May 14th, 1859, Mr. Buchanan says in his letter,— "You have been hailed as 'The Great Mother of the Indians' and it must



HARRIET LANE

As she appeared at the White House during the administration of President Buchanan.

gratify you to learn that your adopted countrymen desire to perpetuate your name by giving it to their children."

In March, 1861, Miss Lane returned with her uncle to Wheatland and it has been said that the White House had never been gayer than on the final night of Miss Lane's public career as its mistress. The band played alternately "Yankee Doodle" and "Way Down South in Dixie." More than four thousand passed in line, and all the more remarkable was this enthusiastic demonstration of the people for Buchanan and Miss Lane, because many believed that they were looking upon the last woman who would grace the White House and upon her uncle as its last President. They resumed the old life of entertaining many guests from a distance and the quiet of her life was interrupted by gay visits to other cities.

In 1863 Miss Lane was confirmed in the Episcopal Church at Oxford, Philadelphia, of which her uncle was the rector, by Bishop Stevens.

In October, 1865, Miss Lane told her uncle of her engagement to Henry Elliot Johnston, for Mr. Buchanan had repeatedly cautioned her not to become engaged "to anyone" without his knowledge.

Her uncle always expressed the wish that she marry, because of her loneliness, should he be taken away.

She had met Mr. Johnston at Bedford Springs; he was of a fine family of Baltimore,—“fresh from College honors”—manly, frank and kind, and met with the entire approval of Mr. Buchanan, and their wedding followed on January 11, 1866. In the *Intelligencer* of January 12th is the following,—

“MARRIAGE OF MISS HARRIET LANE.

Miss Harriet Lane, the niece of ex-President Buchanan, noted throughout the country as the most accomplished and elegant lady that ever presided at the White House, was married at Wheatland, the residence of ex-President Buchanan at one o'clock on yesterday to Mr. Henry Johnston. The bridegroom is a wealthy banker of Baltimore.

The ceremony was quietly performed, in the presence of a few friends, by Edward Y. Buchanan, the only brother of the ex-President. The parties started on their bridal tour the same afternoon—”

The *Intelligencer* did not state where their honeymoon trip took them, but from a letter I have learned they went to Havana, and on their return lived at No. 74 Monument Street, Baltimore, Md., spending their summers at Wheatland.

The note of invitation to a friend of which there is a record is, as follows:

"My dear Sir:—

Miss Lane requests me to invite you in her name to her wedding on Thursday, the eleventh instant. The ceremony will be between twelve and one o'clock. It is a private affair. No cards of invitation have been issued. I hope you will not fail to countenance us with your presence.

Your friend, very respectfully,

James Buchanan."

Two sons were born to this union and it has been said that in her most glorious days she was never more beautiful than as a mother.

The first born was named for her uncle, James Buchanan Johnston, of whom Buchanan was very fond; he grew to be a very fine and promising boy of fifteen of "great loveliness of character and marked intellectual powers." He died in Baltimore on the twenty-fifth of March, 1881.

It was a terrible blow to his parents of whom and of him, Judge Jeremiah S. Black, of Lancaster, wrote as follows to a friend;—"I have just returned from the funeral of James Buchanan Johnston, affected by a deeper sense of bereavement than any death outside of my own immediate family has caused me in many years. The overwhelming grief of that beloved mother and the awful break-down of the proud father's spirit cannot even be thought of without strong emotion. Besides that I had built much hope of my own upon the future of that bright and beautiful boy. He was gifted with uncommon talents, so well cultivated and developing so rapidly, that even at the age of fourteen he was intellectually a full grown man. With moral principles clearly defined and quick perceptions of the right, his sense of justice and his love of truth would have given him a dignity of character not surpassed by that of his illustrious uncle." In St. James' Episcopal Church, of Lancaster, is a beautiful stained glass window in his memory. Subject:—The Christ Child in the Temple; and tradition says, the face is a likeness of the boy. The inscription is as follows:—"Nat. November 21, 1866.—Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's House. O. B. March 25th, 1881." Underneath the stained glass window a brass plate with engraved and enameled lettering:—

"To the glory of God and in blessed memory of James Buchanan Johnston whom God took unto himself on Annunciation Day in 1881 in the fifteenth year of his age, this window was placed here by his loving parents on

[H. E. J.] — Easter Day 1881 — [H. L. J.]

He being made perfect in a short time fulfilled a long time. His soul pleased the Lord therefore hastened He to take him away."

The younger brother, Henry, was taken by his parents to Europe in the autumn of 1881. He died at Nice on the thirtieth of October, 1882, followed by the death of Mr. Johnston in 1884; and on a large brass plate on the wall of the same church is this inscription:

"Lovely in their lives and in death not divided. To the dear memory of Henry Elliott Johnston who departed out of this world May 5th, 1884, and of Henry, his second son and only surviving child, who was taken away in his thirteenth year. Grant them eternal rest, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine on them."

The life that had been so lovely and full of interest was greatly saddened and she had a lonely widowhood. Mrs. Johnston remained at Washington, but continued spending her summers at Wheatland until it, with some of her possessions, was sold to its present owner, Mr. George Willson, who is still living there.

In this city in the hospital of the Almshouse is a remaining link of that time, an old woman by the name of Mary Sherry. She will be ninety-five or six years old on Wednesday, June twelfth and had been a servant of Buchanan's.

When I inquired about her living with him at Wheatland, her face lit up wonderfully and she said,—“I liked him so, he was so good; Buchanan was very sick and I was with him when he died and when I brought some of the cold water from the spring for him at night he said,—‘Oh! Mary, that is too much for you; you have worked all day and are tired and it is lonely and dark down there’ (referring to the spring on his own ground and of which water he was very partial) and then she continued, “I will bring you water from the spring as long as you can drink it. Oh! I wish I could go back! After he died I went to his grave every week, washed the tombstone and put flowers there.” She kept repeating and rambling on “I want to see his grave again”—a wish I would have gladly granted and told her so, which made her very happy, but it was impossible for her to leave her bed. I could scarcely arrest her attention long enough to have her tell me about Harriet Lane, but by patience I succeeded and she said very warmly,—“She was awful nice,—Oh! she was so pretty” and she said, “tell me stories of old times in Germany, and I will tell you stories of America” and then she would go back to Buchanan again, and I could learn no more.

In 1903 Harriet Lane Johnston died at Narraganset Pier, and was laid to rest with her husband and two sons in Greenmount Cemetery in Baltimore, in the lot belonging to the family of Henry Johnston. The stone which marks the grave of Harriet Lane and her husband is a Celtic cross with an early Irish design intertwined, the cross is about eleven feet high, and in the center of the arms of the cross is a small trefle surmounted by the letters A—O in-

tertwined (Alpha and Omega) and on the orle of the cross,—“The souls of the righteous are in the hands of the Lord.”

Henry Elliot Johnston

June 30, 1831 — May 5, 1884

Harriet Lane Johnston

May 9, 1830 — July 3, 1903

In her will, Harriet Lane Johnston directed her executors to obtain a site and erect a statue of her uncle in Washington, and that bequest with an additional appropriation of almost \$100,000.00 by Congress for the construction of a garden at one end of Meridian Hill Park, as a setting for the monument, is nearing completion. The bronze figure of Buchanan will be nine feet high; a fitting tribute to a man who was grossly misunderstood when he lived. Although bereft of the children she loved, yet will the memory of Harriet Lane Johnston live in the hearts of many children; for she bequeathed funds for a “home to be erected by the Trustees of that fund,” for invalid children to be known as the Harriet Lane Home. It was opened in 1912. By special arrangement with the Johns Hopkins Hospital and University, the Harriet Lane Home was erected on land furnished by the Johns Hopkins Hospital within its own enclosure. The Home has its own endowment,—the University furnishes the medical staff, and the hospital furnishes nursing force, social service group and other employees.

The Harriet Lane Home is a memorial to her two sons, and the doors are never closed, day or night, where any sick child can go, regardless of his race, his color, his creed, or the ability of his parents to pay the way. It is open to children from the day of birth to the age of fourteen. There are separate wards for colored children and at the Harriet Lane Home they make up a third of all the patients cared for.

Beautiful, gracious and admired as mistress of the White House, the loveliness of her life is continued in the lives and health of the little children who are benefited by her generosity, for the sake of the ones Harriet Lane loved and lost.

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