

Washington Jan^y 22^d 1853

My dear Sarah,



I arrived here safely this morning between eleven and found Mr Kennedy waiting for me at the station, where he put into my hands your nice long letter and also one from Pierre Menue.

I presumed you would be nearly snowed under in the late storm, which was deep in the city and is always deeper in the country. It is probable you will have some days of good sleighing, and I trust you will all take advantage of it. I am glad to learn that Robert was about to attack the ice; we cannot be choosers this year; but must take what we can get; solid or not. The continuance of very cold weather may enable the men to get a second cutting of ~~clear~~ clear solid ice to put on top.

~~Now~~ The geese were well sold; whoever bought them will have the worth of their money.

in chewing. Tell Robert to furnish you with more of the poultry; there must be ~~over~~ on three dozen more than we want for stock and they won't grow better by keeping. I wish him in the course of the winter to put the fence between our ground and Dr McVickers in sufficient repair to keep the cattle from breaking through. There is no need of bestowing pains upon the looks of the job as I trust to making an arrangement with the doctor to put up an entirely new fence in the course of the year.

The derangement of Mr Grounell's health does not surprise me; I have for some time expected it. I hope the counsel of his doctor has made sufficient impression on him to induce him to be more cautious in his mode of living. He is all the while pushing forward on the high pressure system at the risk of an explosion.

Jan^y. 23. I had missed the preparing for the post office when I received your letter dated the 30th but mailed the 21st, to which I send reply in post script. and first - I am glad to hear that the ice house is filled; it is the all important operation of the winter, after the accomplishment of which, the elements may act as they please. I am glad to learn also that the fences have been painted; which I gather from the circumstances of Fanny being bedaubed with coal tar, doubtless from her assisting in the job. I am glad to hear that the little dogs guard the house well, and would suggest that Robert provide a denting box with ^{lined} ~~some~~ ^{an} old buffalo skin, for them to rest in at night when on duty. It might be put under one of the iron seats in the porch.

You wish to be kept informed of all the beautiful ladies I meet with - so I will begin by the three belles of our house hold. One of them, Miss Mary Kennedy is a niece of Mr Kennedy, she is about your own size; light and graceful in her movements, of a very pleasing, prepossessing countenance, a frank, truthful demeanor; with perfect tact and self possession. She is Miss Kennedy, right hand in every thing, and has quite the gift of society, with the excellent qualifications for domestic

glimpse of her at a distance. I was in a crowd; with Mrs Steward on my arm and people shaking hands with me on right and left. The crowd closed between me and the dark and beauty and I saw no more of her. I shall doubtless meet with her again in my perambulations about Washington, and if you shall hear more about her.

In one corner of the President's saloon I was accosted by a naval officer, who had met me on board of Chauncey's sloop at anchor off Sacket's harbor, during the last week with Etherton. He was then a midshipman on board. I was up there as aid de camp of Gen. Thompson in a small with the army of naval command - and order out militia. He introduced me to his wife; who claimed a right to my acquaintance since having often heard her mother talk about me. Her mother had a copy of verses which she wrote about her! - It turned out that she was the daughter of a Virginia belle whom I had admired and besought about half a century since at Richmond. So may I call her my old acquaintance. She besought to a very pretty little girl (her daughter) who was at a distance before the latter came up the stairs to tell her of my likeness - she was deaf and dumb! -
 Wm. R. D. some of the Washington belles wear Capt.

I am most comfortably fixed at Mr Kennedy's with a Capital Room and every thing going about me for writing or reading or lounging. Mrs Kennedy received me in her own frank kind manner - she could not treat me better even if she were a niece.  I understand my friend Meyer Jack Downing ^{SHR} is in Washington with his family; also Alexander Hamilton - who is here pleading a cause before the Supreme Court. I found my darling little friend Mrs Steward on a morning visit to Mr Kennedy on my arrival, so that I see I shall meet with lots of agreeable company. I wish, however, to keep out of the wheel as long as I can; that I may get among the archives of the State Department, before I am carried off my feet by engagements. On Friday evening is the President's levee when I shall attend - and then I shall be launched. As yet I have not looked about me - merely passing from the parlour to my room where

I have been unpacking my trunk, arranging my things and scribbling this letter. I shall ~~you~~ keep it close, in case I may have any thing more to say this evening.

1/2 past 10. We had a pleasant ~~informal~~ dinner. Mr Corwin the Secretary of the Treasury, Commodore Shubrick and a Captain

Duport of the Navy dined with us. The conversation was very interesting and varied and occasionally very amusing. I felt, however, rather below par and found it difficult to bear my share in the conversation. For several nights past I have slept very little indeed ~~and~~ it was the case before I left home, but has been still worse of late; ~~though~~ though I have taken no sleep in the day time. It has an exhausting effect ~~upon~~ upon my mind and spirits. I attribute it to derangement of the stomach causing acidity or heart burn, and have put myself on regimen as well as I can, not having you at hand to advise and take care of me. I hope to sleep well to night. With love to all the family

Your affectionate uncle
Washington Irving