Washington Feb 21' 1853

My dear Kate

It is time that I should write a letter to you all at home; though I am in the very worst mood in the world for letter writing. For two or three days past I have been utterly good for nothing. Incapable of work and in no mood for play. Thank fortune I have nearly eaten through all my dinners; being only engaged to one more, (Tuesday) tomorrow, at the Secretary of Treasurs, which I accepted to complete my set of Cabinet dinners. On Wednesday I hope to be able to make my visit to Mount Vernon; on my return from which I shall endeavor to wind up affairs at Washington and prepare to shape my course homewards.

Sarah Baldwin and her husband are again

here and will remain here until after the inauguration. I met Sarah at a very brilliant Soiree last week, looking as usual, fresh, fair and happy; one of the greatest or at least largest belles of the evening She certainly enjoys life

Your news of the engagement of Caroline Schermerhorn to William Astor is very satisfactory to me. As executor to the will of the late Mr Astor I am anxious to see all his descendants well provided for, and Caroline will bring the youth a very snug fortune - besides being a very nice girl.

I am pleased to hear that the wedding of Sarah Clark and the young Chancellor comes off in April. It is upon the whole one of the best matched matches of the year

Helen writes me that the engagement of Mr Curtis (the Howard's) and Miss Smithers is off - How is this. Are not his last writings to the young ladies taste. Young Mr Howard is engaged to a very amiable & lovely girl at the South; whom I saw at Saratoga last summer and with whom I was very much pleased. Indeed I pronounced her out to Mitchell as one of the most estimable of all the young belles who were sojourning there. She is a Miss Pringle of Charleston. One of twelve children, and her mother, who much resembles her, might pass for an elder sister.

Helen writes that Mr Sheldon has sold his house and eighteen acres for twenty six thousand Dollars - a round sum - I am sorry the purchaser is in the West and lost him - but take it is on the ground scale. I presume Sheldon will now fulfil the wish of his heart and build a stone mansion on the South lot. I don't think he has ever been perfectly happy on his wooden horse

Mrs Kennedy has been in Baltimore for a week past; with her father who has been dangerously ill. Mr Kennedy too has been down there occasionally; so that much money and I have been left to keep house together, which we do very coxily. She begins to seem very much like a niece to me, and I wish she was one. She would add very much to my assortment.

I am glad to learn that Mr Emmett and Julia have sailed for Charleston, and hope they will not return until he has completely recovered from those vertigoes which are so alarming. Helen tells me that the physicians give no confirmation to the assertion that his malady is out of the heart. I trust therefore he may recover from it completely.

Give my love to all the house circle. I hope to be with you soon, but cannot fix the time. Your affectionate friend

Washington Irving

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