

Saratoga Springs July 25<sup>th</sup> 1852

My dear Kate



I have just received your letter of yesterday which gives me intimation of the great event at Saratoga - the departure of Sarah and Mary for the sea side. I am rejoiced to hear it, and feel very much obliged to Henry Van Hook for inviting and persuading them to make the visit which, certainly, I am convinced the change of scene, with sea air and sea bathing will have a most beneficial effect on the health of both, and would advise them to remain there as long as possible. The absence of us all must make your situation rather lonely; but you shall hear from me very soon, by and by.

In my letter of yesterday I told you that I was going to a children's party at a gentleman's country

- seat in the neighborhood. It was at the house of a Mr  
Finlay, son of an old friend who married into the  
Buckman family of New York, but who is now dead. The  
present Mr Finlay inherits much of the property of that  
family: especially of his uncle John K Buckman lately  
deceased, an old bachelor and once an intimate of  
your uncle Peter & myself. The house was of stone  
shavings and solid; built in the style of what had  
once been a forest; but which was now thinned  
out into ~~small~~ groves and clumps, and green lawns  
until it had the air of a British park leaving  
a plantation had been laid beneath some spreading  
trees and here the little fair people danced while  
the grown up people sat around in groups. It was  
one of the most charming little sites of the kind that I have  
ever seen. There were beautiful children very beautifully  
dressed; from the age of two and three years upwards.

I felt like a patriarch among them; for among  
the spectators was Mrs James, an aunt of Mr Finlay,  
whom I had danced with in my younger days when  
she was a Miss Buckman, but who was now a vener-  
able grand mother - and there was a maiden lady  
Miss Betty Lawrence, whom I had likewise danced with  
~~before~~ nearly fifty years since, who now looked near  
eighty. I sat by them and talked of old times and  
looked on the dancing groups, in which we recognized  
the descendants (some two or three generations off) of some of  
our early contemporaries. ✨ To strike a balance, however,  
I paid but small attentions to two or three little  
bells, from six to ten years of age, and was received  
with smiles that might have made me vain had  
I been fifty or sixty years younger.

Among the leading persons at the Springs of New Reth  
of Philadelphia, a great notability, with whom I became  
highly acquainted in Europe; where she made quite

a distinguished figure; being very tall, very rich,  
very clever, and speaking several languages fluently,  
we have now become extremely intimate and I find  
her enormously agreeable from her <sup>originality</sup> ~~greatness~~ of  
mind; her independent frankness and her great conver-  
sational powers. Tomorrow Mr. Mitchell (He knows  
and myself are to accompany her in her carriage on  
a drive into the country in search of the picturesque;  
as she is acquainted with all the fine points of view in  
the neighbourhood.

I think it is the excitement of this cheerful society  
in which I am mingling, even more than the water;  
which has had an effect of lifting me into a more  
elating buoyancy of frame and spirits than I have  
experienced for a long time; and I am concerned that if I  
had come up here for a few days, when I felt so heavy  
and bilious, I should have swept all  
the clouds out of my system immediately.

Give my love to your Father and to each of the family  
as you have with you. Your affectionate son  
W. J.