

New York March 13th (1853)

Dear Jack,

Tho' I find I cannot get this letter off by today's mail I must write you an account of our journey & my reception by dearest Mother. If you had only been with us I should have been perfectly satisfied. So many things crowd themselves into this slow little pen's point that I scarcely know where to begin or how to take time to write intelligibly, but to start from where I left you yesterday I must tell you that your Father & I talked over all sorts of things; & I hope you by this time feel better satisfied with his views of the state of affairs than you did. I am sure dear Jack, if you were well enough to think calmly, which by the time I hope you are, you would feel that he is anxious to do all in his power to promote your happiness & mine, but that it requires time to think & decide upon what is best. He spoke of your resigning in almost the same words in which you spoke of it some days ago; that it would not do for you to resign at once without some sure prospect of independence before you, but that he hopes before long to devise some way of placing you in a position which will enable you to resign with a prospect of doing better than you can possibly do in the Navy. As he is thinking & contriving to this end do try to wait patiently till he comes to you with his plans matured. He was so kind & so pleasant during our journey. I could not help feeling that it would really be ungrateful in us not to be willing to acquiesce in his wishes & plans. As to your coming on here, Mother is, as I knew she would be, anxious to see you, but as your Father thinks better you should remain in W- till his return. It is not much of a sacrifice to do so, & he & Mother will settle about it, so pray "keep cool". You will think I am writing you a regular lecture, which I am sure I don't intend to do. I wish you could feel as well contented as I do, instead of worrying yourself as you have done lately. I am too happy to feel dissatisfied with anything of anybody. Your Father tells me he has written to you today so I presume he told you of our travels. I really enjoyed the journey, your Father took such care of me, & petted & spoiled me more than usual which is saying something for he always is so kind. I do believe he loves me almost as much as his own daughters. Mother was alone & not expecting us, but very glad to see us. Tomorrow morning she & Uncle Charles are to have their talk. I wish I might hide behind the door to hear it all. However nothing but good can come from their talking, so they may keep their conversation as private as they choose. I wished that you could have heard Mother speaking of you. I told you she loved you dearly, & that you need not be afraid of her opinion. If your Father favors her with as dark a picture as he drew for our benefit at first. She will surely make it bright; besides he is not so disposed to look on the dark side now, as he was at first when he was taken by surprise, so between them I don't fear at all. She may call us imprudent or foolish or something of the kind, & I rather think we shall have to acknowledge that much, but she loves us both too well to say more, or think worse. Dear Mother - but our opinions about her agree so well that I need not say much about them. I have twice had to lay aside my letter which gives it rather a

disjointed style; I hope you will find it more intelligible than I do. I am hoping a little for a letter from you tomorrow, for I want so much to hear how you are. Leaving you so unwell was the principal source of my regret in coming away on Saturday; & be sure you take care of yourself now. One thing has made me really rejoice that I reached home last evening. I had quite forgotten that today was our Communion Sunday (a piece of forgetfulness for which I ought to be ashamed) and I should have very much regretted not being here to join dear Mother. Precious as the privilege has always appeared to me of joining in this most solemn yet most delightful rite. It seems doubly so now when I have received such great blessings to be thankful for. I have been thinking so much of you this evening, & of our quiet Sunday evenings in W- I wonder if you miss my singing & reading to you. I miss it, and hope you do! I have

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been writing to Eliza this evening. I came away without having told her the important secret, & tho I suppose she has been told. I preferred writing to her, besides I wanted to repeat a conversation I had with her the other day, I have told her not to show the note to anyone unless she wishes to do so, so don't ask her about it. As I have taken the liberty of giving her a lecture & advice she ought not to be required to tell what I said. With so much to say to you as I have, I can't write more tonight. My head & heart both seem too full to allow me to write. Will you be satisfied with this most unsatisfactory (to me) epistle? I shall keep this as late as I can tomorrow in hope of having one from you to answer. Meanwhile good night. May our Father in Heaven guard & guide you always is the prayer of

Yours ever

Jeanie

Monday, Now when I thought I would Have at least an hour to write, I have not been able to be alone one minute, & Anna G. is now waiting to talk to me.\* Your Father & dear Mother have had a long talk this morning, which appears quite satisfactory to both of them, & I do hope you will feel equally satisfied when you can hear all their conversation. I was in hopes of having a letter from you to answer, but it has not yet come. Your Father will be home on Wednesday or Thursday, & desired me to tell you that then he hopes to be able to satisfy you as to your prospects & his plans. Do not hurry on here before then dear Jack. It is far better to wait quietly & we can look forward to the pleasures of meeting in a few days. I am going to the Opera tonight with your Father. I tell you he will spoil me. Most reluctantly I must say adieu. I have tried Anna's patience long enough. My thoughts & prayers are constantly with you

Your own

## Jeanie

- On February 14, 1853, Jack asked Jeanie to marry him. What followed was truly a family debate between Jeanie's mother, Isabella Renwick Smedberg, and Jack's father, Captain Charles Wilkes. Jeanie refers to him as Uncle Charles because his first wife was her maternal aunt and namesake, Jane Renwick. (Genealogy notebook)
  
- Eliza Wilkes is the sister of Jack Wilkes as well as Jeanie's first cousin. She and her sister Janey were very close to Jeanie. (Genealogy notebook)
  
- Anna Greenleaf was one of Jeanie's closest friends. Her father Joseph Greenleaf resided at 218 West 22nd Street. (James Edward Greenleaf, compiler. Genealogy of the Greenleaf Family, (Boston, Frank Wood Printer, 1897), pg. 197 and 1851-1852 New York City Directory, pg. 197. (Hereafter cited as Greenleaf Genealogy.)