

Washington May 21st 1853

My dearest Jeanie

The day cannot go by without my having a chat with you so I have lighted a cigar with the intention of writing until I get sleepy, or have to stop for fear of disturbing tomorrows pleasures by want of rest tonight. In my letter of yesterday I said nothing about Father's & my affairs – how happy it makes me to feel once more that his (illegible) of confidence & consultation is restored. This alone was wanting to fill my cup to the brim, things may worry & trouble me but no lasting effect can be produced on my heart while you love me & Father retains his affection for one who so often has caused him anxiety & so lately has spoken as sons should never speak, but it is past – forgotten I know it never will be – still affairs now run as smoothly as before & I trust from this that he sees & acknowledges that my motives were pure & not (as he hinted at the time & since) interested what a weight is removed you know & none but you will for it was a matter in which I felt that not a single item could be withdrawn not so much on my account as for the dear girls. Speaking of the Carolina property today he told me if I still thought it would be for my benefit he would annul "the sale" of the St. Catherine's Mills & Charlotte both mine – my answer was this – "I felt great disappointed when I heard of the sale, & if my own benefit was the only thing to be considered, should at once say stop because in no direction would I see the certainty these offered, but when others interests were to be consulted would advise you to sell by all means," so the sales will go on provided some difficulty does not arise about the title which I think may be when he spoke to me I felt more tempted to say at once "turn the property over to me" but am very glad that my course of action was different. I should have always thought hereafter that I was in the wrong, & hardly know whether it would be right to take my dear little Jeanie to a place against which your dear Mother has so many objections, with the great debt I owe her for my making my Jeanie what she is & giving her to me as she (that delightful letter) it certainly seems wrong to take a step so much against her opinions though I feel that in a year or two she would see & acknowledge that it was for the best – but fate or rather the Almighty has ordered otherwise, and if that plan has been overthrown It was for some good purpose, some other will turn up soon, this continued disappointment harasses me however & each failure makes me aware more & more of the strength of the chains that bind me to the Navy – still dear Jeanie do not suppose that I am desponding [sic] – no, I know your love and feel if necessary that we will be able to stand the separation bravely sad as it will be to both of us.

Yesterday morning I passed with the Tayloes next door not very pleasantly, for they began laughing & joking me about a certain young lady who I do not like to hear spoken of in that manner and just as I was getting up to come away \_\_\_ forced me to sit down to a game of whist & then proposed as Mrs. T was very anxious to secure you for Thornton that I should play my chances for you against Addy Cates, whew! Did I not bridle up – quality against quantity, but I had better stop else you will think they do not like you, whereas you are a great favorite of

Mrs. T's & Estelle's & as they both said the only they whom Thornton might have taken unsighted unseen – a great compliment by the way as he is perfection in their eyes at least – finakin [sic] for others however, though a perfect gentleman in thought & action which makes me like him much, as few young men can now be found of that sort. Young Americanism takes them away from home too soon & what can be expected of men deprive of a Mother's love – forgot my latchkey so woke the neighborhood up ringing – no doubt I am set down as a dissatisfied fellow, quite time that I place myself under the charge of someone. This afternoon the music of the Marine Band collected a crowd at the President's Grounds – how changed the people of Washington are – a few years ago I could have told the names of nearly everyone, man, woman and child – this afternoon a familiar face was a rarity – the turn out of office holders has been general & the change as far as appearance goes has been for the worse even Father is pretty well disgusted with his Democratic friends – he dined with Mr. Holmes today, a dinner given to Mr. Buchanan & had quite enough of the party I think, the cabinet being among the guests. There go the fire bells again. It really appears as if they would always break up my ideas – on this occasion must thank them however as it is nearly one o'clock & time for me to be in bed though I am not one bit sleepy. May the blessing of God rest upon you, my dear Jeanie, guard & guide you is my earnest constant prayer.

May 22nd – Yours of yesterday has just been brought from the Post Office by George & notwithstanding the saucy winding up was welcome, very welcome. I was somewhat disappointed yesterday in not hearing something from you but concluded there was some good reason & therefore did not allow it to worry me – thank you for the permission to flirt but not have the slightest intention even if the ladies would let me now, I do not by any means return the compliment – knowing what a dear little witch you are and how everybody you meet falls in love with you at once, a feeling which from your letters is intended in nine cases out of ten, but to become serious I am really worried about dear Mother, why will she not take more care herself and let you take care of the family upon your shoulders till she grows stronger, the continued exertion keeps her weak though I am inclined to think much of her sickness arises from the mind – anxious, very anxious she is about the boys though she has little now to trouble her I think. James is among safe companions & as his only fault is being too easily led away, none should be felt under present circumstances as far as his morals are concerned. The change of life has also had an excellent effect upon his physical powers & we may hope that the terrible disease is at a standstill if not broken – the other boys are all ones she & we may be well be proud of they are well educated & general favorites, what better promise can be given that they will succeed in the battle of life. I only wish I was at the same point, but dearest Jeanie the happiness now enjoyed would not be mine, so after all everything is for the best & from the bottom heart do I thank God for all His mercies – I wish your Mother was not going into the country, much of the pleasure is now taken away by the smallness of the family – but what is the use of wishing, if the decision does not come from her own mind she would worry all the summer & perhaps the change of air does her good. You are right in supposing that no promise

had been given Aunt Jeffrey. It is too far to look forward in this uncertain world, even if my liking for was sufficient inducement at Canandaigua. I enjoyed myself much last summer, but query whether the pleasure of a visit will ever equal the first. Why do you not move downstairs at once – it will give you pleasure & Mother too. The next time I come I trust no old lady will be in the way to prevent us talking all together – she knows but little of me dear Jeanie & I flatter myself thought there is a great deal of bad on the inside, the courage (?) is better than the face I show to the world – any trip to Europe is postponed for some time altogether till Mr. S. is willing to listen to reason if he will ever so that, so that I shall have an opportunity of going to Devasego this summer perhaps in my next I will tell you about Simms on Levelling. I think it can be bought here. Are you curious to know what Anna & I talked about “nothing particularly” I still say – how could it be when she supposed you occupying the place of a tyrant “vi et armis” which I for one moment could not imagine you undertaking, when your rule can be so easily sustained by acts more womanlike – more like my little Jeanie Smed – as for catching me dear Jeanie you may do so every day, the talk was so small until we got upon Niagara that it escaped my memory at once & would have flown altogether had it not been for the mystery she has thrown about it – get her to tell you by all means. The Church bell is tolling so I will stop for the present & finish after church for I want this to go by today’s mail. Trinity Sunday and for the occasion Mr. Pyne gave us a sermon which has impressed me much but which I did not like why & wherefore it would be hard to say unless it has set my mind to work & made search for reasons for a thing which God in his great mercy has give men & all of an intuitive knowledge – to this search Mr. Pyne says the heathens owe the vast number of their deities – oh! That I could be born again & take in that Holy Spirit as I took in all those teachings of my dear Mother, why is a weak mortal exposed to the temptations of this world – but I must stop – it is carrying me away & throwing aside all these doubts look to Him who came upon the world to save – in His example what a lesson we have – a blessed immortality awaits us beyond the grave – truly as Mr. Pyne says “take away the Trinity incomprehensible, unexplainable as it is what remains nothing but heresy – or believe that throws aside all the revelations of His word & commandment sent us in the teachings of the Holy Apostles” – the theme is one I dwell upon because it occupies my thoughts so often so much, but thoughts such as my pen cannot convey, now is one of the times dear Jeanie I miss you much, very, very much – a single word or sentence spoken would give you the idea that pages of writing would not convey. You laugh at our weather & well you may: such a day as Thursday was is seldom seen anywhere & though the weather is now beautiful we still feel its effects in every thing out doors & in being covered with dust. I wish you could see the Garden, it is beautiful – the roses are magnificent & already do the bushes show the same rapid growth as last year; it really appears as if fairies had them in charge. Paine Todd’s manure of bottles is certainly an excellent one. The house is in full summer costume curtains & mats down, cornices in paper but as yet the chandeliers have not put on their gowns. My time is up & though I have much more to say, I stop so that you may not be disappointed & with a great deal of love to all & lots for your dear, dear Mother, I am always your own Jack.

The family sends love.

- Jack was referring to Edward Thornton Tayloe (1803 – 1876), the eighth child of Colonel John Tayloe III and his wife Ann Ogle Tayloe.

- Charles Wilkes described his experience at the party in his Autobiography in this manner, “I have never dined with a more hum drum set. However, he gave exception to Secretary of State, William L. Marcy (1786-1857) and Wilkes’ good friend, Judge Isaac E. Holmes (1796-1867) of Charleston, South Carolina who hosted the farewell dinner for James Buchanan who would soon leave for England to take up his appointment as Ambassador to the United Kingdom. Franklin Pierce (1804-1869) was President at the time, but Wilkes makes no mention of his presence. Besides Marcy other members of President Pierce’s cabinet who may have been present include Secretary of Treasury, James Guthrie (1792-1867); Secretary of War, Jefferson Davis (1808-1889), Attorney General, Caleb Cushing (1800-1879); Postmaster General, James Campbell (1812-1893); Secretary of the Navy, James C. Dobbin (1814-1857); and Secretary of the Interior, Robert McClelland (1807-1880). (Wilkes Autobiography, pgs. 388-389)

- Canandaigua is a resort town in northwestern New York. It is the county seat of Ontario County. It was the home of Isabella’s maternal uncle John Jeffrey and his family. His widow raised her nine children here. John Jeffrey died in Scotland in 1822. In the 1850 census, you can find her living with her daughter Agnes who never married. Two or three houses away, you see her son William Jaffrey and his family. Wilkes Genealogy Notebook and 1850: Census Place: Canandaigua, Ontario, New York; Roll M432\_571; Page: 164A; Image: 331. Ancestry.com. 1850 United States Federal Census [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2009. www.ancestry.com (Hereafter cited as 1850 Census, New York, City) (Accessed 20 August 2010)

- Frederick Walter Simms (1803-1864) was a British Civil Engineer whose 1837 publication off A Treatise on the Principles and Practice of Levelling went through numerous editions.

- Vi et armis is Latin for by force and by arms and is mainly used in relationship to legal cases involving trespassing.