

Mrs. Harriet Lane Johnston almost worships the memory of her uncle. She says the world of today does not know him, and that history has not done credit to his ability. She describes in vivid words the troublous times of his administration, when the north and the south were being torn apart, and when one by one the President saw the friends who had promised to uphold him leaving Congress to engage in secession and in plots to destroy the government. The wear and tear of that time was such that it ultimately caused his death. Mrs. Johnston thinks her uncle was the only one of the great then public men who realized what the results of the war would be in the loss of property and life, and that he was the only one who appreciated how imminent war was. President Buchanan, she says, did all that he could to prevent secession. He strove to harmonize and to hold back the south, and he saw that his efforts were in vain. He was true to his country, and to his conscience, and the fact that he could not save his country from war killed him. He was throughout in spirit and in deed a friend of the people, never wavering for a moment in his loyalty to his trust. I asked Mrs. Johnston as to whether her uncle had much desire to be President. She replied that at an earlier point in his political career he probably had such an ambition, but that when he saw the direction towards which parties were tending, and the growing feeling between the sections, he shrank from it. The movement in his favor sprang up when he was minister to England. He wrote many letters protesting against the use of his name as a candidate, but in spite of his protests he was made the nominee.

Mrs. Johnston has in her home here many mementos of her stay in England while her uncle was minister. She attracted, you know, more attention perhaps than any other American girl who has ever been presented at the Court of St. James. She was made much of by Queen Victoria, and as the niece of Mr. Buchanan she took the place which would have been accorded to the minister's wife. She has today the pictures of the queen and the royal family which the Prince of Wales gave to her on her departure from England to America. These pictures represent the queen and the family as she knew them. Her majesty was at that time a very beautiful woman. She was most charming in her manners and was every inch a queen. During her stay Miss Lane met Louis Napoleon, emperor of the French, and the Empress Eugenie, who were then paying a visit to London. The empress impressed Miss Lane as being elegant and graceful, but as not having the dignity nor regal look of Queen Victoria. Miss Lane met at this time all of the distinguished people of England. Disraeli, who was the leader of the opposition, did not impress her so much as some others, and Gladstone seems to have made no special impression upon her mind. During her visit to Oxford College that institution conferred the degree of doctor of civil laws upon Minister Buchanan and Alfred Tennyson. She remembers Tennyson as having long hair and as looking very much like a poet. He was at this time in his prime, and had written the best of his poetical works.

The relations of President Buchanan

and his niece were more like those of a father and daughter than an uncle and niece. Miss Lane's parents had died when she was little more than a baby, and James Buchanan was both father and mother to her. He was fond of children and delighted in having his niece's friends about him. He enjoyed having young people at the White House, and although he was a bachelor, his administration was, socially, the gayest one we have ever had. Mr. Buchanan was very careful in the bringing up of Miss Lane. He directed her education, sending her first to school at Lancaster, where he lived, then to a private school at Charlestown, and finally to the Georgetown Convent. He wrote regularly to her during her school days. His letters were full of news and gossip and fun, and at the same time of much good advice to the young girl as to her conduct. Here, for instance, is an extract from one written at about the time Harriet Lane entered her teens:

"WASHINGTON, February 16, 1842.

"My Dear Harriet: Your letter afforded me very great pleasure. There is no wish nearer my heart than that you should become an amiable and intelligent woman, and I am rejoiced to learn that you still continue at the head of your class. You can render yourself very dear to me by your conduct; and I anticipate with pleasure the months which, I trust in heaven, we will pass together after the adjournment of Congress. I expect to be in Lancaster for a week or ten days about the 1st of April, when I hope to see you in good health and receive favorable reports of your behavior. \* \* \*

"Believe me to be your very affectionate uncle. May heaven bless you.

"JAMES BUCHANAN."

Here is another letter, written about a year later:

"LANCASTER, March 20, 1842.

"My Dear Harriet: It is one of the first desires of my heart that you should become an amiable and good girl. Education and accomplishments are very important, but they sink into insignificance when compared with the proper government of the heart and temper. How all your friends and relatives would love you—how proud and happy I should be to acknowledge and cherish you as an object of deep affection could I say she is kind in heart, amiable in temper and behaves in such a manner as to secure the affection and esteem of all around her. I now cherish the hope that ere long this may be the case. \* \* \*

"What a long list of studies you are engaged upon. The number would seem too great for any common intellect, but it would seem that you manage them all without difficulty. \* \* \*

"At a dinner table at Washington during the last session, a wager was made that not a person at the table could name all the muses and the wager was won. Had you been one of the company the result would doubtless have been different. I presume that the muses and graces are great favorites with you. Attend diligently to your studies, but above all govern your heart and your conduct. \* \* \*

"Most affectionately,

"JAMES BUCHANAN."

Mrs. Johnston says that President Buchanan's papers are to be given over to the Philadelphia Historical Society. This decision has been reached during the past few weeks, and within a short

time a vast amount of valuable historical material will be there accessible to the public. There was no man more careful of his papers than Mr. Buchanan. He never destroyed a letter and at his death there were boxes upon boxes of correspondence packed away in his house at Wheatlands, near Lancaster. His correspondence covered a wide range. There was hardly a character of note in this country of Europe with whom he was not at some time in communication. His letters to Miss Lane covered every variety of subject and could they have been saved and published they would have made a most interesting volume. When President Buchanan died he left instructions as to the writing of his memoirs. He chose as the author Mr. William B. Reed of Philadelphia. Mr. Reed was one of his closest friends and knew just how Mr. Buchanan wanted every matter treated. Mr. Reed, however, had financial troubles which prevented his carrying out his plan and the executors had the biography written by Mr. George Ticknor Curtis. The letters of Mr. Buchanan in form, it seems to me, the most interesting part of Mr. Curtis's book.

It was owing to a mistake that some of the most interesting papers connected with Mr. Buchanan's career were burned by his executors. These were the papers relating to his love affair. The full story of the matter was, it is believed, told in the package of papers, but when he had originally made it up he had written upon it a line stating that it should be burned without being opened.

Afterward he gave directions to his biographer that the package be opened and the truth as to this tragic episode of his career be told in the story of his life. When the executors found the package they burned it before they realized what Mr. Buchanan had said to his biographer about it. The only thing that can now be certainly known concerning the matter is that when Mr. Buchanan was a young man practicing law in Lancaster he fell in love with a beautiful girl, the daughter of Robert Coleman, one of the wealthiest citizens of the place. After a time he became engaged to her. Then there was a lover's quarrel and the young lady wrote a letter breaking off the engagement. Soon after writing it she went to Philadelphia for a short visit and during her stay there died. The lovers' quarrel had not been made up and Buchanan mourned the loss of his sweetheart until the day of his death. He wrote a beautiful obituary notice of Miss Coleman for the Lancaster newspaper and a letter to her father published in Ticknor's Life, which shows how great the loss was to him. When he was seventy years old, just before his death, he referred again to the matter, showing that he still felt deeply concerning it and stating that the truth would be told after his death.

Frank G. Carpenter

#### THE LONDON PARKS.

LONDON, May 30th, 1897.

The London season is now in full swing; everybody has come to town, the Queen and the Princess of Wales have held their drawing rooms at Buckingham Palace and aspiring society debutants have "come out" or in other