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John Kean to Susan Kean, December 25, 1787

John Kean

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Decem^r 25th 1787-

This my love is the season of great festivity in our part of the ~~low~~ world - Religion first set it aside as a time of devotion & thanksgiving for the birth of a redeemer & the love of dissipation has perverted it to riot & drunkenness - The

Romans had a feast which they termed Saturnalia at which time they granted the liberty of doing as they pleased for one day to their slaves - we more indulgent grant three to ours & from the 25th to the 28th of Decem^r is a continued scene of every species of debauchery among the lower class of whites and all the blacks in this country - many of whom pay their lives as the price of their intemperance - there are among them some more rational, who enjoy the moments allotted to them by their masters with more propriety - dancing - singing & plays of various kinds, after the African manner fill up the time. & then they sink again into their wretched state of servitude - from which God preserve us and ours - Jan^r 3^d 88.

I have written to our Eliza & her Lewis

I long amazingly to hear from them - I dread any accident - self interest is at the bottom of all this - for it is from them I am to learn my misery or happiness - indeed my Susan it is a dreadful alternative & anxiety for your situation preys upon my spirits - but laying self on one side - I feel a most sincere friendship for Eliza & Lewis - and hope the changes which have taken place are for their advantage -

I am now busily employed in setting out fruit trees of various kinds - that should my love come this way she may not want those comforts of life -

Mr. Caesar. I have turned into a painter and he is daubing over the exterior of all my out buildings. the interior I shall let stand as it is until our final determination is taken -

I feel myself at a loss how to determine, should the appointment take place that we hoped - for by accepting it perhaps I might throw myself out of the representation & thereby lose a permanency & on the other hand I doubt whether the allowance to the representatives will be such as to make it worth acceptance & it cannot possibly take place allowing that nine States accede to the New government in a shorter time than twelve months, which will ill accord with the present state of our finances - Let me know whether you have any prospect of getting a payment on J. R.'s bond - because if you do it may enable me

to apply the money I thought of bringing with me towards paying some of my debts - I have already been able to pay about £300 on account of the land in Georgia and £100 on acc^t of interest due my sister & also the balance due on my purchase on Hilton Head which amounted to about £300 more - I have promises to the amount of near £1000 to be paid me & have in hand about £150 to bring with me for my love & I to live upon - I hope my next crop and the monies that are due me will discharge all my debts, except what I owe my sister & the people in England - for this I intend creating a fund by selling, as soon as I see my way clear about £6000 worth of property if I can get its value & this with my crop for three or four years & such economy as my Susan & I have used since we have been one, added to my own exertions will relieve us from our present embarrassments - but it would have been better had I not have had my rice burnt -

You see I have closed the old & begun the new year - altho you are not observers of the festival of Christs birth - yet you celebrate the new year - it is a general day of visiting & congratulation and God knows my heart wishes and hopes to enjoy a return of many with its dear counterpart & their little blessings -

Jan^r 4th

We have had some very cold weather for this last fortnight - which I have stood very well - that is without any increase of bad symptoms - so that I flatter myself as the spring comes on I shall get quite well - one month more & we shall have mild weather & the grass a springing -

I have heard of but not from Houston or Mary Betsy they were well about 10 days ago - I mean to make them a visit as soon as the house of assembly adjourn -

Adieu my love -

Remember me to all our friends & acquaintances -

I shall begin a collection for the Lady of the manor shortly -

God bless you my Dear Susan

Your affectionate

John Kean