



Letter to John M. Christian of Columbus, Ohio
from Mary Johnson of Worthington, Ohio, 5/29/1845

Subject: Mary rejects his marriage proposal because her father
disapproves

[Handwritten note, script]

May 29th 1845

Mr. Christian

This morning I seated myself in my own quiet room, to reflect upon the one & all important question whether I will, or not under present circumstances say yes or no to your long ago made proposal. I look upon the decision as one of great importance, almost as choosing between life & death or at least as what will forever effect my happiness. yet I must come to some conclusion respecting it [,] my conscience demands it & my regards wishes for your peace & happiness, requires that you should be at rest, or free from suspence [*sic*]. I know I have done wrong in delaying so long. Knowing my father's feeling, I know there was but one decision to be made, that I made long ago yet, with you, I hoped there would be some way by which hard fate might be athsiated. [*sic*] But no, it has dealt its heaviest vengeance [*sic*] upon me. How? perhaps you will ask has fate, thus been unkind to me. How? In this way. By leaving me to struggle between duty & honor due to parents desires & respect & hinder regards for one who has offered me his "whole heart."

My father has made known to me (& you) his calculations & future prospects & how he wishes me to act confidentially trusting they will prove to me, a paramount law. Still he says I am free to choose & decide for myself. It is thus that hard fate has dealt unkindly with me & I would ask, how am I to decide? Would to god I had some kind & disinterested friend, with whom to council, or that the gentle spirit of my only brother might be permitted to bid me what course to pursue.

But no, neither can be granted me & I must alone, listen to the dictates of conscience. By so doing I cannot see as there is any other course than to yield implicit obedience to his wishes, trusting that it is all for the best. You may perhaps think I might decide otherwise & that it is unkind in me to give you up so unhesitatingly & selfishness in Pa to ask so great a sacrifice. Mr. Christian I hope you are sufficiently acquainted with me, to know how to judge aright.

As for my father, I hope you will not be uncharitable towards him. You have heard him express himself freely & since I have. Therefore he is free from endeavoring to influencing. Yet I must say that I



cannot, with a happy conscience of doing right to all say that I will yield myself thine. No! know that I have told you so. I hope you will not endeavor to dissuade [*sic*] me from what I consider duty.

Here allow me to give my heartfelt thanks for the assurance which you have pleased to give that although not thine, I shall not be entirely forgotten & will you be pleased to accept my assurance although not permitted to follow & hear you in your career through life, yet, should fortune place us near each other, I will watch as you ascend step by step to the highest pinnacle [*sic*] of fame, for short of that I cannot but think your restless spirit will rest.

Should it be convenient I would like you to come up on Saturday (or any other day that it is convenient) as I have in my possession what is rightly your own, & which I would wish to return to their proper owner as it would be improper under present circumstances, to retain your letters, or any gifts which you have made me, during our happy intercourse.

Mr. Christian will please accept this together my warmest wishes for your happiness & success & believe me

Your sincere & devoted friend

Mary

John M. Christian