



Draft of Letter to Leander Holmes from Mary Johnson of  
Worthington, Ohio, 12/6/1846, [See Letters from  
11/30/1846 & 1/6/1847]

Subject: Their future relationship as friends based upon his letters and  
his calling upon her

[Handwritten, script]

"Quiet Home"

Worthington, Dec. 6th, '46

My Friend

Trusting you are such & ere may be & thus address you. for let the case in question be decided as it may I see no cause why we may not be friends.

It seems the Fates decided we should meet & let the consequences be what they may as to our personal interests. I think I am not mistaken when I conclude that it produces a new theme for "Madame Gossip" -- a most renowned personage, as well as, no little anxiety on the part of your more immediate friends. I have been questioned, yet I trust to but little satisfaction. Still I must confess I was taken by surprise & an unguarded moment by the interrogations of Miss M. & not a little abashed when she said you told her you had been here. Being a little incredulous I said but little & introduced another topic, determining to be cautious & endeavoring to answer her questions evasively. It seemed like meddling [*sic*] with that which was sacred to my honor. Wherefore my mentioning it, being under the impression you desired your call to remain as little known as circumstances would admit.

In answer to this last of yours I will endeavor to be more explicit than in my former note perhaps you did not consider the circumstances under which I was placed by the reception of your first. You were a stranger & as such had addressed me although an air of sincerity prevailed [*sic*] its lines, how could I know with sufficient certainty that truth was the actually untrue? how could have done differently? had I said otherwise, or as you request been more explicit, I might have laid myself liable to your light remarks Secretly tho' they probably would have been. Consider these things Mr. Holmes, before you sensure, [*sic*] or set me down as a dissembler. none can desire more earnestly to acquit themselves in such a manner as should undergo the strictest ordeal, yet to my sorrow I confess & many times, am far from my design.

You mentioned circumstances prevented you speaking upon a subject which you had not the courage to mention in the presence of others. Your note often rose to my thoughts during the evening, & if delicacy had not obstacle the impropriety of my mentioning it, I should have paved the way. neither did I think of my parents being an abstract as I have always been so frank & [familiar? sic] with them, I did not think of you being otherwise. You requested—in your first—if my engagements were such as to preclude me from your address I would return your epistle &c. Now you may be under a delusion from my returning your epistle that I am [bounded?] by a promise. Such is not the case. No one is more free my heart beats lightly & as free as courses the \_\_\_\_\_? will. My real motive in returning it was that all should rest on yourself. The presumption was yours & the result should be attributed to you as far as possible. I was willing to become acquainted, further I could not decide, tho I may seem to and now once for all let me say tho I may encourage in continuing your acquaintance I do nothing more, for as I before said Ladies cannot decide untill they know how to do so, or untill circumstances prove favorable You see I adhere to my assertion. Tho, were I to write it again I presume I could render it more concise. My note was written hastily & no doubt many corrections needed, but in the main is approved by my Judgment. Now I say again Ladies cannot decide these matters unbiased by circumstances arising from the nonacquaintance & other causes. This I perceive [sic] by your last page you understand, although throughout the first pages you have been endeavoring to misconstrue & mistake my meaning. Pardoning this I merely add you were unknown, even your person, your mental endowments & consequent capabilities of steering the tides of life, your standing in society, dispirit & a thousand other nameless graces which are requisite. All of these were & are unknown, wherefore my considering circumstances appearing against, that fear now Sir Confessor think you I have been sufficiently explicit? I think I have if not too much so, but relying upon your word that whatever I mention shall be safe, I have no misgivings.

Trusting you will read & digest as right, I commit this—such as it is—to your keeping with the assurance thus far I have not been afforded or as I consider had cause to be as to a correspondence, I think it had not better be continued as it may produce difficulty. I am as you will discover a very careless writer consequently for me it would be selfish to discontinue it.

Permit me to call your attention to your envelopes as I think some of them prove treacherous in not defining their office.