John Kean to Susan Kean, December 25, 1787

John Kean

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This my love is the reason of great festivity in our part of the 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 December is a continued scene of every species of debauchery among the lower clays 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. When they sink again into their wretched state of servitude — from which God preserve us and sure — Jan. 3d 88.

I have written to our Eliza then 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 prey 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 busy 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 yet 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 I in 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 I. R. 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 £200 on account of interest due my sister & also the balance due on my purchase at Hilton Head which amounted to about £300 more— I have promises to the amount of near £1000 to be paid me which in hand about £300 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 £2000 worth of property if I can get its value at this with my crops 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 nice burnt—

You see I have closed the old & begun the new year— at the you are not observers of the festival of Christ's birth— yet you celebrate the new year— it is a general day of visiting & congratulation & God knows my heart wishes and hopes to enjoy a return of many with its dear counterpart I their little blessings—
We have had some very cold weather for the 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 grape a springing.

I have heard of but not from Houstoun or Mary Batty they were well about 10 days ago— I mean to make them a visit as soon as the house of assembly adjourns.

Give my love.

Remember me to all our friends & acquaintances.

I shall begin a collection for the lady of the manor shortly.

God help you my dear Susan.

Your affectionate,

John Kean.