John Kean to Susan Kean, December 22, 1787

John Kean

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.kean.edu/lhc_1780s
I wrote my love immediately on the receipt of her dear letter by Wilcox & sent the letter by the way of Savannah. I have again just returned from Hilton Head where I have been detained several days by bad weather. I lamented this very much as it deprived me of the only solace I have in absence. The writing to my dear Susan—how mistaken are those who say that absence is the grave of love—how little must they know of that sublime passion—every moment increases my affection for you. It seems our separation as a most painful exile—but it is necessary and we must bear it with fortitude—fortitude, resignation. Perseverance mark the noble from the plebeian soul—my health continues much as when I left you—no spitting of blood—now when a little bleeding & a small cough & expectoration in the morning, this I think is very well, considering we are in the very depth of winter—in my case I suppose it impossible to be perfectly stationary—therefore when I am not growing worse I must be getting better.
Who like the movement of the celestial orb, it is not to be perceived such is the weakness of our vision until some progress is made—

Our dear Eliza, I hope is safely over our approaching danger. I long most anxiously to hear the dear little bantling for me. I wish them all the blessings that a profusious deity can bestow. Tell me every thing about it, what it is, what name it is to bear—my soul is full of anxiety, indeed, my love, it is very hard to be so far from you.

I have got a little song for my love to sing to her naughty boy—It is part of an old Scotch ballad written more than two hundred years ago which I have Americanized—here it is.

Hush, hush my babe, lie still and sleep,
It grieves me sore to see thee weep,
If thou'lt be silent I'll be glad,
Thy mourning makes my heart full sad.
Hush, hush my boy, thy mother's joy;
Thy father breeds me great annoy.
Be still my sad one: spare those tears,
To weep when thou hast wait'd years,
Thy griefs are gathering to a sum,
God grant the patience when they come,
So still my darling, sleep awhile,
And when thou waketh sweetly smile.

You see I am determined to have it a boy—but,
If it is not the change of one word suit it to
either sex—let it be what it will—I will love
it dearly for it is my Susan—

Neptune too is become a persecutor
Of mine or a lover of green gales—he has seized
to himself my box of trees that you sent me
by Wilcoy—now was I of a poetical turn, I
might like any Ovid or other ancient genius,
Personify my two trees into beautiful damsels
With grecian names, make the three peach stones
Put in by thy fair hands—three valiant, and
courtseous knights—the sloop a gilded car—
fill up the scroll lines with xerocks, tituns, sea
horses &c. &c. I have a rape committed by the
Watersy god, equal to that of proserpine—but
To ravish two nymphs would be too much even.
for a god & Neptune is among the least lascivious of the heathen deities— for he is only charged with one absolute rape which was poor Amphitrite— enough of this in all conscience—

All the young women here are much in the same situation of all the young married women with you, mind I mean the married ones— Mrs. Stuart, Mrs. Grumke &c &c &c are all pretty well I thank you—

Tell you my dearest Susan to take great care of yourself & your little one— remember Bards advice & give all children strict charge to send for him the instant you are taken unwell.

My love to Father, Mother, Sisters, Brothers, Uncles, aunts & nieces & Cousins—

Tell me who are in Congress & what they are about— then my love—

To be removed from thee the cup of anguish, affliction and grief— prays thy lover, thy friend & all in one word thy husband.

John Xean

December 22, 1787.