John Kean to Susan Kean, April 23-26, 1788

John Kean

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Baufort Apr. 23° 88

We have had the strangest weather for these two days ever known in this country—the winds have been exceedingly high & we have had our grounds whitened over with the hoar frost—this bodes no good to us Indigo planters—I have 60 acres Indigo planted & come up very pretty, they tell me & about 35 acres of Corn but I prognosticate its ruin from the wind & frost—

I shall go to Hilton Head tomorrow to see the extent of the mischief.

26th

I am just returned from Hilton Head misfortune is not yet tired of persecuting us what the frost spared the wind has uprooted or buried & from a fair prospect I have now the most ragged fields in the neighborhood and to
add to our ill luck we cannot get rain to plant
the remainder of our crop - April which is
showery to a proverb has entirely changed its
nature - the thirsty earth has not had but
one cooling shower for these thirty days and
our prospects do not speak rain -

I have a [crossed out] Peach orchard with one
or two Nectarine trees at Hilton Head - this is
the first year of their bearing clearly, the last
year being the first of their blossoming - they
are now so loaded with fruit that I much
fear they will break down - and this dry
weather will ruin the fruit - but this we need
not refine at, for my love will not be here
to eat them fruit this year -
The manufacture of children on this island is the only thing that goes on very successfully not less than 10 or 12 young gentlemen & ladies have been introduced into society since I have been here. Mr. Cuthbert a son. Mr. Gen. Barnwell a daughter. Mr. Stuart a son. & Mr. W. Elliott a son. This latter lady is in her seventeenth year. All these are the children, wives of the children, the grandchildren or wives of the grandchildren of the lady at whose house I stay & another of her granddaughters expects to stay in every day. This good old lady is sixty five years of age has had 22 children of which there are now remaining 4 sons & 3 daughters. She has twenty one grandchildren & four great grandchildren so that when the whole of her immediate descendants with their wives husbands & assembled the counts about forty souls in her family.
this is not the only instance of longevity we have, we can reckon five other women in this small place who are above 60 years of age, all of whom are natives — as to gentlemen we cannot boast so much we have a few exotics who are past their grand climacteric — but of natives few are the number that have counted more than half a century —

I am waiting with anxious expectation to hear from my Susan — not one word of her health & her young gentleman’s welfare since he was a day old.

My love to the family.

Adieu

Take care of yourself for the sake of your affectionate husband

John Kean