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Letter to Abby Quincy, 1891-02

Joseph Peace Hazard

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Recommended Citation

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Preserve this.

~~Miss Abby Quincy~~

Memorandum.

Miss Abby Quincy

Peabody, R. I. Feby.

1891.

My dear friends.

Your letter of ^{29th.} ~~29th.~~ of January, ~~was duly received,~~

in which you ~~thoroughly~~ state the names and address of members of the Quincy Family in Boston, ~~this~~ was duly received, and
as follows,

"Miss Abby Quincy, either at Boston, or Wollaston, Mass."

"Edmund Quincy, No. 3, Beacon Street, Boston."

"Josiah P. Quincy, 82. Charles St. Boston."

"Josiah Quincy Jr. 82, Charles St, Boston."

"Henry P. Quincy, 452, Beacon St. Boston."

The Winter here — that has been so awfully cold and stormy, has collapsed — apparently — and left us, "for good" — the Frost being out of the ground, and Blue birds are singing.

I hope your Winter is also subsiding.

I am glad to learn that you, also, enjoy a pleasing and healthful resource in feeding squinells and birds, and afford them protection.

I have ever been an ardent admirer of Walter Scott, and have enjoyed the privilege of walking in his extensive grounds, and also of his house, at "Abbotsford", and availed myself thereof during a week that I remained there. This was since his death.

How delightful to his companions — even more so than

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to Sir Walter — (possibly.) must have been the several weeks
walk he took in the Highlands of Scotland, every year, that
so abound in Historical interest, not only, but also in the
countless Legends there, that were familiar to Sir Walter.

What pleasant evenings of each of these days these parties
must have enjoyed! Sir Walter being familiar with all of
them and — no doubt — narrated them during these evenings —
“Caravans of Paradise” — as it were.

While at Abbotsford, I sent for Sir Walter's body servant,
and engaged him for a private seance in my room of the Hotel
at which I was stopping.

During the year 1856, I made a tour on foot of about 1500 miles,
besides using every mile of its Railways. On this Occasion I
followed Poet, Robert Burns, from his cradle to his grave —
as it were — and visited every spot he had ever visited, so far as I could learn.

I also visited the Residence of “The Earl of Glencairn”, whom
Burns has immortalized — as it were — in a single line — in which
he says, “I can never forget what thou hast done for me — Glencairn.”

Having completed this Tour in Scotland, I proceeded to
London, immediately, and then took private lodgings. Almost
immediately after I had retired — on the third night of my
occupation of these lodgings — and having turned the Gas
entirely down, I saw the Spirit of Robert Burns standing
in mid air, before me, with the sweetest possible smile

beaming upon me.

At that time, I had an engraving of Port Robert Burns during many years past. This engraving presents him in the usual "Scotch Bonnet." In this case - however - his spirit wore a stiff, hard, hard, black Broad brimmed Woollen Hat, I was unable to account for this, but it did not, in the least degree produce in my mind concerning his identity.

Two days thereafter, Doctor John A. Ashburner, of Hyde Park, London, who was said to be the most distinguished and able Physician in the City of London, and whom I had then never heard of, called ~~at my~~ Lodgings, and having passed about half an hour with me, asked me to dine with him on the day following, and I did so.

During this dinner, I gave Doctor Ashburner an account of my having seen Port Burns in my Chamber, and at same time, I described the strange hat Burns wore on that occasion.

In response to this, Doctor Ashburner informed me he had seen a Portrait of Port Burns, in which he is presented in the same hat that I had described, and which I had seen him in my Chamber in London.

A few days thereafter, Doctor Ashburner again invited me to dine with him. I accepted this, of course.

On this occasion, Doctor Ashburner having found the

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Portrait of Burns above mentioned, he handed it to me, and I
recognized the strange hat I had seen upon the head of the
Spirit of Robt Burns, as being exactly like the one he wore
at the time I lately saw him in my chamber, at my "Lodgings,"
in London.

I had then - as now, felt fully assured that the
Spirit of Robert Burns presented itself - himself - in my
Chamber, with the strange hat (to me) he wore on that occa-
sion, for reason that he knew that at that time, I had not
seen this portrait of Burns, and therefore I would probably
feel more thoroughly ~~def~~ assured that it was really him-
self I had seen at my Lodgings in London, than might be
the case, if he had presented himself to me in a Portrait of
himself, with which I was familiar.

When I was a young man and not abroad, I
habitually visited the City of Philadelphia and there
remained during the month of November and there re-
mained until the end of April, and sometimes, later.

During this period, friends of mine in Philadel-
phia, introduced me to the Walnut Street Club that
is a large and fine establishment of its kind and is
situated at the corner of Walnut and 13th. Streets.

Mr. Henry Seybert, a resident of the City of