

Down House

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(W.A. Johnson to Jas. Bovell Johnson)

"The Parsonage"
Weston 25 July 1877.

My dear Jimmy

I have your post dated from Greenwich of July 11: beside me. I suppose you are quite comfortable now: & if you had only passed I should have been quite satisfied: but we will hope for the best & hope on. You will be close to Rodes Bristow of the C.B.S. please call & thank him most sincerely for the increased number of monthly papers & the annual address. They are quite a treat to us. Of course you never see the Daily Globe now, if you did you would see how they are trying to peg into me about Confession but they have got the worst of it & have shut up again. I remember Greenwich & Lewisham well. Bromley Hays Common & a little bit further to a village called "Down" You may go & see my old home. It was then called "Down House" The House of the neighbourhood in those days. Some of the oldest crones in the Village would soon tell you all about Colⁿ Johnson & These English peasants do not move much: & that village is so situated as not to be cut up by Railways. You had better take a horse & ride over there some day. Tell me how the old Ch. is Drummond was the Priest in my time the lowest of the low. The Hendersons are at Seal too I believe. See the old Roman trenches at M^r Wards park & on Hay's Common. The ponds called "ravensboone" said to be so called because a raven was seen drinking near there wh^l led to the discovery of water for Caesars men. Those chalk hills are interesting as well as magnificent. I expect a long account one of these days. Lewisham is no longer long, lazy, lousy Lewisham as Geo. IV called it, I suppose I remember a very nice stream running through it on the left hand as you go from Bromley to London. Hundreds of times have I driven & ridden through it. Further down near Chiselhurst & Farnboro & over the hills to Seven Oaks is the beautiful country. Said to be the Garden of Eng. How I have made the horse hoofs patter over those hills as a boy. Fine hunting in those days, they used to throw off at Farnboro! & a stag has been known to run for the coast from there. O how I would like to set foot on those pleasure spots of my youth once again but cui bono? It is only the natural man & the less he has that gratifies & indulges him the better. Still methinks it would cause my heart to bound with thankfulness but there is plenty here to be thankful for. Write long descriptions like a good fellow when you get time... ~~but do not bind yourself to once a week though I shall be happy to hear as often as you can write. The Lord prosper you turn your failure to good account & strengthen & prosper you yet. Ever praying His protection & guidance for you~~

believe-me

Ever your very affec^{te} - father
W. A. Johnson