

Casa Bianca Jan 12<sup>th</sup> 1856

My Dear Patton

I wish you to keep this letter so that if any misunderstanding should ever arise between us (which may God forbid) it may be referred to as evidence of what we mutually claim from each other – You may think this unnecessary – Not do I ever expect that any such necessity will arise – Still having had a larger experience than you – (and some of a very bitter character) – I deem it possible. I wish to say first that I feel myself irrevocably bound by our arrangement so long as you pay my annuity punctually. But I do not consider you bound to continue the engagement if on trial you find that it is disadvantageous to you – Should you find it so we can then rescind the contract without any hard feeling on either side – And I can probably then sell as I would have done if I could not have made this (to me) more agreeable arrangement – But I have objects in view far above any personal consideration of comfort to myself – And I would not hesitate at any time to sacrifice all my personal desires & consolation to these objects- I know with certainty from my past experience that there is no happiness for me but in the performance of my duty – I may be mistaken in what is duty – But I must be governed by my own conscience – praying for light from God's spirit - The present arrangement will enable me to effect in a great measure the objects – nearest my heart – and suits me therefore admirably – But if it should not turn out to be what you anticipate – I would be far from wishing it to continue – I have looked at it in this way – You will not for this year & perhaps next make more – or much more - that plantation expenses without my salary – It is almost certain this year at least that you will not – And even when you are here to superintend yourself – five or six thousand is all you can calculate on – Indeed I do not suppose you will at any time for some years at least make more or much more than keep yourself even – But if you do nothing more you are still rapidly acquiring property – And if you have to make sacrifices – You would have that to do in any circumstances – And there might be less certainty as to the result –

On my part I consider that my sacrifices in that respect are past – But Etta and yourself are first beginning as it were – So that you must never think hard hereafter though I should expect you to pay my annuity even at some sacrifice to yourselves –

Indeed I cast all the burden of money matters on you & desire not in any way to interfere with your plans – or to know any thing of them – Unless you may wish my advice & ask it – For I know very well that no one can properly judge for another – And my aim is to be rid of worldly care - & to feel secure that the engagements – I shall enter into will be fulfilled – without any thought on my part – I repeat – that no arrangement could possibly be so comforting to me as this one – And also I would say that I am not this careful against misapprehension from the slightest doubt of you – any more than of myself – But I am no believer in the infallibility of human nature - & a precise understanding can do no harm – If you have my other letter it is of the same tenor as this but I did not know but you might have destroyed it – I wish to live with you & Etta as mother and children – Affectionately, you aunt

E.A. Beatty

I have not mentioned any legacies in my will because there are only a few little tokens of remembrance in the house which I would wish under certain circumstances to give away – Otherwise I prefer leaving everything to you – One woman or girl I wish to give to sister Eliza & one to Nanny – That I will do in a year or so – That is all -

Transcribed by Christopher A. Baker, University of Florida, 2008.