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[COPY of a letter from Henry Bruce, Sr. to Lucy Bruce Porter, Sept. 1821]

Fleming County, Ky. [Kentucky]
September 24, 1821.

Mrs. Lucy L. Bruce Porter,
Fleming County, Kentucky

My dear Lucy:

As you have lately formed a union with a young man, (Mr. Thomas Porter), who has my approbation, I feel it an incumbent duty to suggest to you my views of the course ought to pursue to insure your present and future happiness and prosperity.

In the first place, you should make it your constant aim to please your husband, carefully avoiding to do anything that you think may have any tendency to wound his feelings, lest thereby you weaken the bands of his affection, and should he at any time be refractory, be sure you do not give him an angry word nor a frown, (for remember, that the dutiful wife is always submissive to her husband). But do everything in your power to promote his happiness and interest for thereby you promote your own.

As you will embark into the cares of life with a family in but limited circumstances, you should be industrious, and careful, using economy in the management of your domestic affairs, and by your united efforts with the blessing of heaven, you will acquire an abundance of the good things of this world, whereby you will be able to contribute in some measure to the necessities of the poor, which never send empty away, for we are but stewards and "God loves the cheerful giver", and again, "It is better to give than to receive", as stated in Holy Writ. Always suffer wrong rather than do it to any one [anyone], and never say nor do anything to wound the feelings of your neighbors, but be always ready to do them a favor when required, if consistent [consistent] with duty. Cultivate friendship with all, bear malice with none, and never deviate from the paths of morality and virtue.

Should you be a mother instruct and admonish your children

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to pursue virtue and abstain from vice, that they may become respectable members of society. Should you have slaves, treat them with humanity. Try to ameliorate the condition of these poor degraded human beings. Give them plenty of necessary food and clothing, and exact only reasonable service and should you be under the necessity of chastising them at any time, let it be in moderation. Let your commands to them or your children, be positive, teaching them promptly to obey. This will supersede the necessity of scolding, which is too frequent in families, and a practice I abhor, and one I hope you will never pursue [pursue].

I commenced housekeeping in low circumstances and have labored hard to accumulate property for the benefit of my children, and am desirous to see you well settled in life, holding respectable stations. I have often when toiling with sweat trickling down my face, thought of an expression of Saint Paul, who said with his own hands had he labored night and day that he might not become chargeable, (which is applicable to me). I hope my children will all have too much ambition to be entirely dependent on their parents or anybody else, for support.

I shall take delight in assisting you all if I see you use laudable exertions to help yourselves. I wish you to preserve this letter and frequently read and ponder those things in your mind. You may show it to your husband if you choose, as the purport prosper your way, and when your earthly career shall terminate, may you be received to the mansions of eternal felicity, is the prayer of your affectionate father,

Henry Bruce.