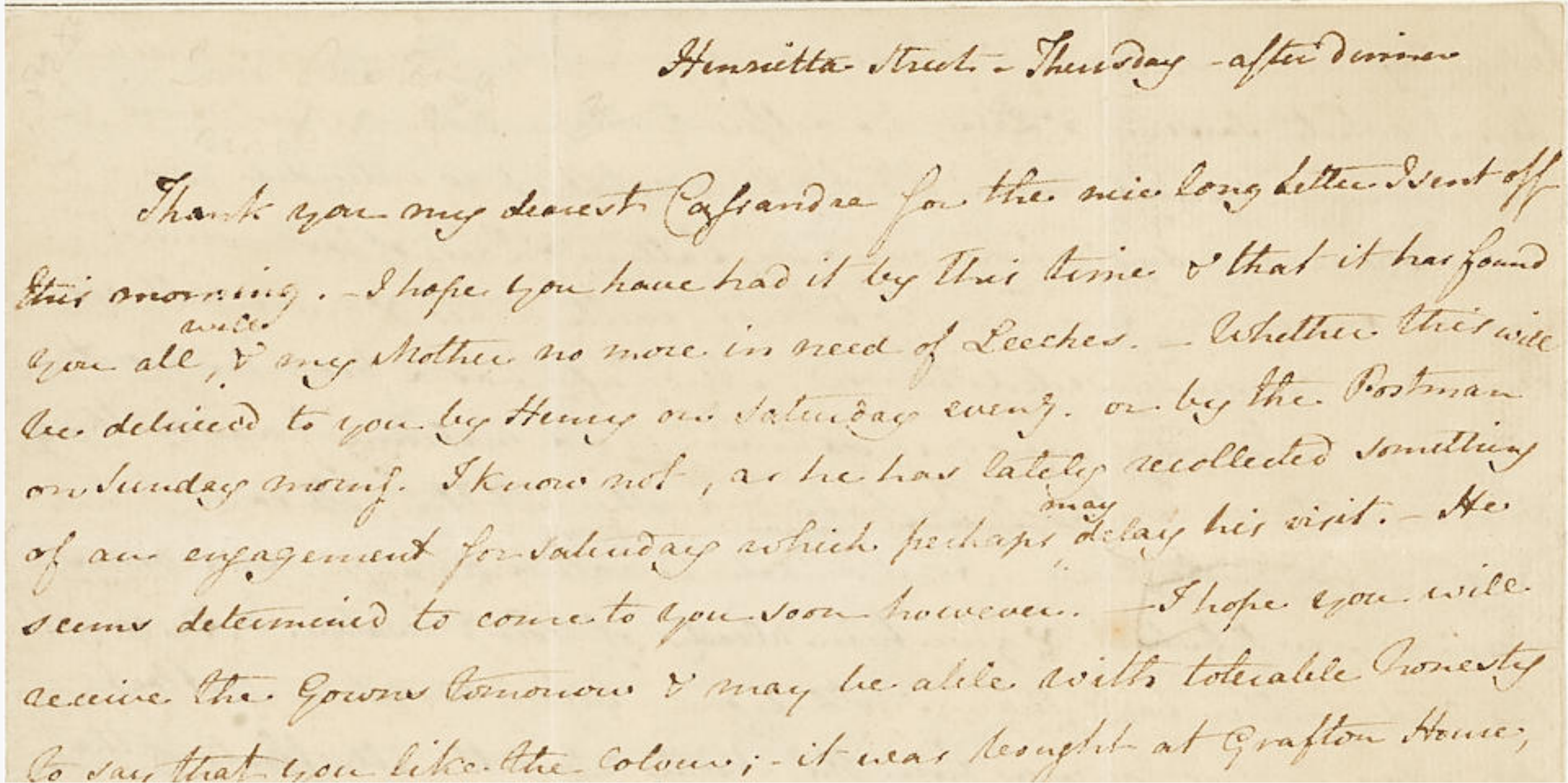


"The Poor Girls And Their Teeth!" Jane Austen
Letter At Bonhams New York Sale



Fine Books and Manuscripts, Including the Dodge Family Autograph Collection, Natural History, Travel and Americana

23 Oct 2019

New York

AUSTEN, JANE. 1775-1817.

Autograph Letter Signed ("J. Austen"), to her sister Cassandra, discussing intimate affairs,



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New York - A **rare handwritten letter** by **Jane Austen**, one of the best-loved writers in the English language, is a highlight of the famous **Dodge Family Collection** of letters and manuscripts which will be offered in the Bonhams Fine Books and Manuscripts Sale in New York on **October 23**. It has an estimate of \$80,000-120,000.

Austen (1775-1817) wrote the letter to her sister Cassandra on September 16 1813 – 'Thursday – after dinner' – and it is full of family news and characteristically acute observations on the activities of the day. Setting the scene, she writes *"We are now all four of us young Ladies sitting round the Circular Table in the inner room writing our Letters, while the two Brothers are having a comfortable coze in the room adjoining..."* Austen was the first writer to use the word coze – meaning an intimate, friendly chat – in print, when it appeared in Mansfield Park in 1814.

Earlier that day, Austen had accompanied her three nieces to Mr Spence the dentist, and she gave Cassandra a lively account of their ordeal, *"The poor Girls & their Teeth! ... we were a whole hour at Spence's, & Lizzy's were filed & lamented over again & poor Marianne had two taken out after all ... we heard each of the two sharp hasty screams."*

Austen suspected the dentist of sharp practice for treating her third (and favourite) niece Fanny, unnecessarily - *"... I think he must be a Lover of Teeth & Money & Mischief to parade about Fanny's. I would not have had him look at mine for a shilling a tooth & double it."*

The day ended with a visit to a branch of Wedgwood, the fine china company, where her brother Edward and niece Fanny bought a dinner service which can still be seen at the Jane Austen House Museum in Chawton, Hampshire.

Jane Austen moved to Chawton in 1809 with her mother and sister, into a house owned by Edward. It was there that she wrote the novels that established her reputation, including Pride and Prejudice (published 1811), *Emma* (published 1815) and *Persuasion* (published posthumously in 1818).

Bonhams Director of Books and Manuscripts in New York, Ian Ehling, said: "Jane Austen's personality in all its richness shines through this wonderful letter, which is full of lively detail, wit and charm, vividly echoing the world she deftly portrayed in her novels. Austen letters seldom appear at auction, largely because the bulk of them were destroyed by Cassandra in the 1840s. Of an estimated 3,000 letters she wrote, only 161 survive. Most of these are in institutions so this is a rare opportunity for collectors and I anticipate a good deal of interest."

Other highlights from the Dodge Family Collection in the sale include:

- A 1794 handwritten letter from John Adams – one of the Founding Father and the second President of the United States – describing the illness brought about by his inoculation for smallpox, his recovery and his faith in science. Estimate: \$30,000-50,000.
- Four typed letters signed by Albert Einstein to Cleveland E. Dodge offering early reports on the meetings of the Emergency Committee of Atomic Scientists and soliciting funds. Estimate: \$10,000-15,000

NOTES FOR EDITORS

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