

(Confidential)

U. S. Ship Jamestown
Norfolk 29 May 1851

My dear Sir,

Some time ago I requested an old friend of mine, now in the Mediterranean, (Dr. Blacknall) to purchase paintings for me to the amount of \$100, should he meet with any favorable opportunity during their revolutions in Italy. I have heard nothing from him since his departure, but the ship to which he is attached (The Mississippi) will return some time this fall. Should he bring the paintings, I have requested Dr. Mallory to take charge of them, send them to L[ancaster], and to draw upon you for whatever they have cost. Should such a draft reach you, will you please honor it and place to my account.

In your last letter you pay me a very great compliment on my choice of my "companion de voyage" for life, and you could not please me better than to say "I have acted wisely" for when you say so, I know you think so; and, it is not only in affairs of state that I have confidence in your good judgement [sic]. The engagement is now fully settled, and if we are both spared to meet attain, we will be married. That is settled, but there is another subject upon which I would desire to consult you in confidence, and which I could not mention to any other individual living.

Since my determination to settle in life new ideas and new trains of reflection have occupied my mind. After marrying I would wish to take up my permanent abode in some city, where I would at times be employed on Naval Duty, and in my turn take my cruise at sea. For this purpose no city would suit me so well as Washington or Philadelphia. Nothing could add so much more to my comfort and that of my wife, as to have a house of my own comfortably furnished in one of those cities. Washington I would prefer from my long residence there, and giving a large circle of agreeable acquaintances, but in this I must be governed entirely by circumstances. Of W.S.'s [?] circumstances, I am entirely ignorant, excepting that he is comfortable with a large family. Now I would ask of you in confidence; What would think him to be worth! I have been treated with marked kindness by himself and all the family, and not quite half way, in all my advances & I know I shall ever be so treated by them.

A little information on the subject would enable me better to arrange my plans for the future with more prudence and confidence than I otherwise would be able to do. Lancaster will not suit for a residence, at least, not before I should be illfitted [?] by age or [?] for active service.

If you will be so good and drop me a line on these points, I would be much obliged. I enclose a slip with my address, and if prepaid from L. to New York, I will be sure to get it.

We have been detained here for weeks all ready for sea, and why, no one knows, excepting it is some caprice or whim of our Captain. I am most unfortunate to sail with him, he is placed in Coventry [sic] by all the Navy, & no one will associate with him. The ship is comfortable but I am disgusted with my duty. With an abiding confidence and increased conviction as respects the future; and my compliments to Miss Harriet, I am with great respect & esteem, Your obliged friend & obt. servant

J.M. Foltz

Hon: James Buchanan.

