

U. S. S. Jamestown
Buenos Ayres 1st Sept/ 52

My dear Sir,

You may imagine, but I would be unable to describe, my extreme shagrin [sic] & mortification on learning the result of the Baltimore Convention. You know how fully I had set my heart upon it, and how sanguine I was in relation to the results. This I have been sadly disappointed – but I am not an “optimist” and hope, and still believe, that I will live to see you the President of the United States. In this, for the future, I trust you will never move by word nor deed – neither to effect it – nor to prevent it.

Your letter to Butler Co as well as the one in favor of the nomination to the Tammany Committee, I read with much pleasure & for the future I hope you will never again address a purely political meeting. Leave the case to “Tate” [?] I am still sanguine of the final result – It is only a matter of time.

In politics you have struggled long enough to avoid the crowd and the conflict, and in the dark hour, which I see approaching by the freesail movement; you will be brought it “to calm the troubled waters & allay the storm.” I fear “the worst is not yet,” and that much evil will grow out of the Pittsburg Convention, and four years hence, you will be wanted. Of Franklin Pierce’s election I am sanguine and I hope for the sake of our institutions and our Government, that we will come under Democratic rule once more.

This news from home made me ill for days on first receiving it, and to avoid a relapse I must cease to write & think about it, so I will change the subject to our ship and the affairs of the river Plate which may interest you.

Since the battle of the 3rd of Feb[‘]y and the defeat of Rosas; Urquiza has been the Supreme Chief & Director of the Argentine States. His simple Decree, becomes the Law of the Land. A convention of the states assembled two months ago, and authorized a convention, to be represented by two delegates from each state, to meet at Santa Fe □□ on the 10th inst. to frame a Constitution for a Confederation of all the Provinces, 13 in number, and to elect a President. The members of this convention are about to meet, & a number for the interior provinces are from this city. They were simply named by Urquiza, & of course elected. Two of them are young men whom we had on board this ship as refugees at the time of the revolution, viz Dr. Alvear & M. Hurergo. They were named members from provinces in the interior, where they have never been & where they are unknown. I am intimate with them both. They inform me that the constitution will be submitted to them by Urquiza, and as a matter of course; unanimously adopted In framing it here in Buenos Ayres they have been much in my room, and I believe in some degree by my warm recommendation, that there will be Two Legislative bodies instead of one, and the members of the cabinet will have seats in them.

In those affairs my conversations with you was my guide & if adopted I think I may trace those measure to yourself. An effort was also made, particularly by Alvar, to adopt our currency but so far without effect. A Treaty has been formed between Paraguay & the Argentine States by which the Independence of the former has been acknowledged, and the navigation of these rivers made Free.

Now I must call your attention to the bungling of Mr. Webster at Washington, which here has been even worse than his treating with the British Minister in relation to Niceragua [sic] thereby all owing the British claim.



Mr Pendleton, the wild madman you will know; will on his arrival here be declared war to the knife against Rosas – Rosas fell & Pendleton was received with open arms by Urquiza. There [sic] age is nearly the same, their tastes & temperaments are congenial. Pendleton speaks some Spanish which he learned when in Chile and they ate together – drank together – and Urquiza having never been married – yet the acknowledged Father of 35 children they _____d together.

In the midst of their carouses and dissipations, Mr. Schenck the minister at Rio, was ordered down, and came passenger in our ship, with full authority to form a Treaty. Being the American minister to Rio, he was received with coldness and suspicion, as the Spaniards here have an inveterate disgust to all Brazillians [sic] & Mr. S. was looked upon as enlisted in the Brazillian [sic] interests. And again it piqued Pendleton himself, and betrayed to Urquiza himself a want of confidence in his intimate friend & charm.

Mr. Schenck was received with more than coldness & finally left in disgust for Rio – whereas, had P- been left to himself, it is probable something might have been accomplished. Thus, by a blind & stupid policy at W – has the quarrelling of P- with Rosas, his intimacy with Urquiza, and the shooting of the robbers by our sailors & marines in the streets of Buenos Ayres, all been thrown away, at the very moment when they were about to yeald [sic] the most beautiful results –

To Pendleton he has shown his personal good feelings by presenting him with horses, dogs, and a fine house free of rent for his women!!! Such is the country I now live in!!

The British Minister Sir Chas: Hotham & the French Minister M. St: George, coming direct as ministers to these countries, have been better received, and have made such progress in their business, that they will sail on the day after tomorrow for Paraguay [sic], in the British Steamer Locust, now anchored alongside of our ship, and the L will be the first ship of war which has ever ascended those rivers to Assumption the Capitol of P- a distance of 1200 from the sea.

Had Mr. Schenck not arrived, Mr. Pendleton would doubtless have gone up the river with them.

Urquiza is about to send his eldest son (a bastard of course) to Washington as minister. Genl Alvear now there is to go to France with his son as Secretary of Legation. Since U. has assumed the reins of the Gov't he has been arbitrary & dictatorial, but not sanguinary that has yet to come, as come it will, He is much opposed to the seaboard and in favor of the interior provinces. He boasts of never having read a book & is much inferior to Rosas in the courtesies of Life.

With my cruise I am heartily disgusted, and daily pray for its termination. Our Captain is a consummate Blackguard and a disgrace to the service to which he belongs. He confines himself to the ship, as no respectable man will associate with him on the shore. I hope and pray that the first act of General Pierce[']s administration will be to order this ship home. We will probably remain in this river for several months- So soon as the proceedings of the Convention at Santa Fe□□ is known I will inform you of it. We are much in want of a full minister to all these states of the La Plata – but Pendleton should not be the man.

Should you see my friends “promise” please let them know you have heard from me & that I am well, and most anxious to return home, where I hope to find you all well.



With my best respects to Miss Harriet Lane & Miss Hetty I am with undiminished respect
& Esteem your obliged friend &

most obedient servant

J. M. Foltz

Hon: James Buchanan

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