

U.S.S. Jamestown  
Monte Video 25<sup>th</sup> Dec./53  
Christmas Day

My dear Sir,

On this day last year you honored me with a long and most agreeable letter from Wheatland and I wish it were in my power to give you some agreeable or interesting news today. Since I last wrote to you, I have delayed writing from time to time, waiting for some important political intelligence; or the still more agreeable news, to me, that we are homeward bound, but all to no purpose. The political state of these semi-savage countries remains in statu [sic] quo—and our monster of a Captain, after three years of malicious abuse of the Democratic party, in all its ramifications [sic], and his astonishing proceedings in relation to the Sale of the Squadron of Urquiza [Urquiza] by Col [?]; still remains in Command of one of the best ships in the naval service!! And that too, after the Government have been officially informed of his proceedings by both Mr. Pendleton & Mr. Schenck.

Four separate and independent Governments now exist among these Spanish provinces on the river Plate- 1<sup>st</sup> Uruguay [sic] or the Banda Oriental. 2<sup>nd</sup> Buenos Ayres- 3<sup>rd</sup> The Argentine Confederation of 13 Provinces, with Urquiza [Urquiza] at their head. 4<sup>th</sup> Paraguay.

This Province (Uruguay [sic]) is at present in a state of civil war. In the city of Monte Video a government is established; but in the camp, there is no acknowledged law or government; as neither party is sufficiently strong to enforce its authority; therefore, anarchy and misrule prevail. All who are able are leaving the province, and the whole population is but little over 100,000.

Buenos Ayres is arming, for another rising of the Camp against the city, which many occur any day. The new Confederation is just organizing under their new President; and Hopkins is playing the D-I [?] in Paraguay. As American consul, and President of the New York company for the navigation of those rivers by steam, he is at assumption the greatest of the “swells,” throws all the Foreign ministers & Consuls in the background, and is about to be married to a daughter of Governor Lopez, and swears eternal enmity to the British.

The Savannah Frigate Com: Salter has arrived here in the river, but has anchored so far off, that she is just visible; the old Com: being much affraid [sic] of the shore, and his officers say that the river Plate is not large enough for his ship! I have long hoped upon a “reform in the Navy” but that I now believe improbable. Would it not be better to break it up all together, and organize a “Marine Militia” by granting a liberal bounty, to all large merchantship, steamers and Clipperships, and in the event of a war to convert them all in the instant, into ships of war? The American Navy as now organized does not belong to the country, but to the senior officers on the Navy List; and will an enlightened & intelligent people permit its abuses to continue much longer?

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of Jany. [January] I shall have been three years attached to this ship and three dreadful dismal years they have been, and could I see my way clear, I would resign on my return home but that is quite impossible, after having passed 23 years in the service, and been more at sea than two thirds of the Surgeons in the service. The Govt.



having had the best of my days and my youth, must now retain me, when I am growing old; but I will live in the hope of seeing the Navy changed and its abuses corrected.

From Lancaster, I head regularly, but my letters are long on the way, and your names is invariable mentioned, and my friends are all anxious to see me; but yet not half so much so, as I am to get out of this arduous ship, and see them. I shall find many changes on my return and I hope some few improvements, for which is there is so much room. Dr. Whelan as brother-in-law of Chas: Gillespie, I hear had been appointed to the Medical Bureau at Washington. He married the daughter of Albert Smith to whom & Com: Smith, he owes the appointment. He is a man of a good head, but a bad heart; yet, he may fill his place better than his prediccursors [sic]. Mr. Pendleton is still at Buenos Ayres, but daily expecting his relief; only for which, I presume he would have had his passport sent him by the present Government, to which he is bitterly opposed; & about which he talks as wild and boisterous as usual. I am kept alive with the daily hopes of order for home, and when I reach there, you will hear from me. I hope you are happily located in London in Peace, in health, in tranquility; and believing that you will yet occupy the White House. I am with great respect Your old & obt servt [obedient servant].

J. M. Foltz

Hon: James Buchanan. American Minister



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