

Legation of the U. S.
London 4 May 1855

My dear Sir,

I have received your favor from N. York of the 12th. 15th. & 16th ultimos. I esteem myself a fortunate man that you had not seen my remarks at the Seaman's Hospital Society dinner until the latter day, otherwise you would doubtful have been so much disgusted with my [?] to John Bull that you never could have written on the preceding days what has afforded me so much pleasure. Now you do not believe what I see feel & know every day around me that Britain's subjects enjoy perfect security in life, liberty & property, that the Press is free, quite as free as in our own Country & that all even the Mormons freely worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience.

You "do not believe that England is the mother of America". I did not say she was, because that would have been in bad taste. The phrase is too much hackneyed for my use. I cautiously avoided paying any compliment to the British Government though it was the Premier who drew me out: & spoke exclusively of the British people. I send you a true & most literal report of my remarks on the occasion extracted from the N.Y. Courier & Inquirer: & I wish to say that I stand by every word letter & syllable of this report as I do by every word, letter & syllable of the report of the Ostend Conference. How independently a man feels who is not a candidate for the Presidency!

I read to Mr Soulé himself the few sentences & the only sentences which I ever wrote to Mr. Marcy about the Ostend Conference in any letter public or private except a brief declaration afterwards that I continue to be entirely satisfied with our report. In these I certainly do not "thank" him Marcy for having extricated you [me] from "the Ostend Catastrophe", & I cannot think he ever said I did. I have seen as such statement "in the Nat. Intelligencer & other Marcy Organs". I hope such a story has had no influence upon Mr. Soulé. He promised to write me immediately after he reached Washington; but I have never heard from him since we parted in London. I entertain most friendly sentiments toward Mr. Soulé. My personal intercourse with him has been of the most agreeable character. He is a gentleman of rare abilities & accomplishments. I shall not I think write to Mr. Soulé on the subject as you suggest; because this might probably make the story of too much importance.

I forgot to say that I had been guilty of the [?] of presenting £10 to this Bull Seaman's Society because It had the imprudence to relieve 1500 American Seamen, a relief which as proud & true Yankee law they ought never to have accepted.

The London Times, the great Leviathan of the Press in this Country has warmly commended the Know Nothings, whilst publishing their addresses. But ere this, it has reached the U.S. The Democratic party purified [sic] & invigorated [sic] by the trial through which it is now passing will ere long be again triumphant. In the mean time, however, the Know Nothings may do much injury. I trust that they may not succeed in dispatching my excellent, able & eloquent friend Wise.



I agree with you that the issues of the next campaign will be Know Nothingism & the settlement of our difficulties with Spain. Another will be super added, the settlement of our serious difficulties with England.

What a pious Sabbath, Senator Bright & yourself must have passed together in New York! I am happy to learn his favorable opinion of myself indeed this gratifies me highly, though it can no longer be of service to me politically. It seems he is anxious to know “the real cause of difficulty” between General Cass & myself. I will tell you I had his son nominated Charge to Rome & had great difficulties in [?] him through the Senate, -- I rendered the same service towards his son in Law [sic] for wc [which] I received from the General a letter from Paris expressing his warm acknowledgements; -- in addition he was in league with Cameron & others to defeat me in my own state. These are injuries which he cannot forgive. I am not indebted to Senator Bright a letter. We have never been correspondents.

I intend to leave this mission on the 30th September next & shall most probably return home in October. It appears that some of my friends are afraid to trust me “out” at home. I think I could take care of myself there, even if I were a Candidate for the Presidency. I write in haste Give my love to Elisabeth & the children & remember me kindly to Miss Snyder & believe me always to be sincerely yr friend

James C Van Dyke Esq

James Buchanan

mss1996_133_1855_JB_to_James_C_VanDyke



LancasterHistory