

Washington City, Dec. 28, 1863

His Excellency

James Buchanan,

My dear Sir,

The absence of Mr. Riggs from the city has prevented an earlier reply to your letter of the 5th inst. I saw him today and conversed with him about the Leonard business. He has been corresponding with Mr. Bowie, the trustee, urging a speedy settlement of the matter. Mr. Bowie replied that Leonard promised fairly and that at present it would be useless to attempt a sale of the farm as no one would buy. Mr. Riggs and myself place no reliance in Leonard's promises and think the property ought to be sold, even it is should be purchased in for you. He has accordingly written today to Mr. Bowie that unless Leonard should make some satisfactory arrangement for a speedy settlement, the farm must be sold and he would have a bidder present to prevent it's [sic] being sacrificed. You are not known in the business at all and if Leonard or any of his friends should write to you about it, you can refer them to Mr. Riggs as the matter rests with him. Mr. Riggs considers you perfectly secure, for notwithstanding the property may not sell now owing to the predatory incursions that are made in the neighborhood, he is satisfied that as soon as peace is restored it will be eagerly sought after and command a good price. Mr. Riggs will duly advise me of the answer he will receive from Mr. Bowie and I will keep you informed of the progress of the case. If you desire me to do anything further about it than what I have done, you have only to say so and I will carry out your wishes. I think Mr. Riggs would prefer closing the matter himself, and unless you direct otherwise, I will simply confine my action to conferring with him from time to time in relation to it.

I will not trouble you with any of my comments upon the President's message. I never expected to live to see the day when any many occupying his position would have the hardihood to issue to the country such a document as that is. He spurned the constitution and laws, and substituted for them sic volo, sic Jubeo. The camel's back is almost broken & I hardly think it can bear much more. But should it still continue to totter under the enormities that are daily being heaped upon it, I shall conclude that all true patriotism and manly fortitude have forsaken our people.

Gen'l McClellan's superserviceable friends seem to me to be doing a great injury by bringing his name before the country ^{for the Presidency} in such a formal manner, without a previous consultation with the great mass of the opposition to the despotic Lincoln administration. If they address him upon the subject, I hope he will decline any nomination unless it comes from the



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democratic party and the other conservative interests of the country. Such an answer would likely secure for him the support of the entire opposition.

I am glad to hear that Miss Lane is likely to pass a part of the winter with Madame Bergmens. Please say to her that I have not forgotten the requests she made of me. James Henry was here about a week since and argued a case in the Supreme Court of the United States.

Very truly yours,

Jno. B. Blake

[on back of letter] Dec: 28, '63 John B. Blake

Dec: 31. Answd

