

graphed and sent me a copy. By this kindly act, for which we are grateful, he has rendered most valuable service, for he has rescued the drawing from its obscurity, and has given to us the only outline, so far as known, of the original building of St. James's church.

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## LETTERS OF JAMES BUCHANAN

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

**I**N 1908, the J. B. Lippincott Company, of Philadelphia and London, published, in twelve volumes, "The Works of James Buchanan," the fifteenth President of the United States. The work was edited by John Bassett Moore, counsel of the Spanish American Peace Commission in 1898; and comprises Mr. Buchanan's speeches, state papers, private correspondence and a biography.

Since this excellent publication was issued, I have discovered letters from Mr. Buchanan in the files of local newspapers which do not appear in this work. As these letters throw additional light on the noble character of Pennsylvania's only President, and as they correct some false impressions about him, it seems but just that they should be given wider publicity.

The Lancaster Intelligencer of Tuesday, March 6th, 1838, contained the following editorial:

"The spirit of mendacity which is the peculiar province of the Whig press to indulge, was displayed in the publication of two letters in the Philadelphia Inquirer of the 26th ult., in its most rancorous light. They are from citizens of Lancaster: One, Mr. Anthony M'Glinn, a 'gentleman of high respectability,' as Mr. Cox has it;—the other, Mr. George Ford, now an Antimasonic representative in the State Legislature. The letters refer to one of those foul slanders which a prostitute press delights in affixing to the character of public men, a slander which we heard Mr. Cox, the members above referred to, insultingly and cowardly repeat before Mr. Buchanan, last May, during the sitting of the Reform Convention.

"That dastardly attack—that deliberately shameless conduct

—was only worthy of a man who had no regard for the feelings of his fellow. We can well remember how universal was the indignation created by the ‘gentleman from Somerset.’ ”

Mr. Buchanan wrote a letter to the editor of the Philadelphia Inquirer which was frank and conclusive. The letter was as follows:

“Washington City, February 27th, 1838.

“Sir:

“I have this moment perused the letter of J. F. Cox, published in yesterday’s Inquirer. His late official station, as a member of the Convention, induces me to notice the stale slander which he again repeats; and which I now pronounce to be utterly and absolutely false, no matter from what source it may have proceeded, or shall proceed. I never did, upon any occasion, public or private, whether at the court house in Lancaster, or elsewhere, declare that ‘if I knew I had a drop of Democratic blood in my veins, I would let it out,’ or any words to that effect. This ridiculous story is without foundation.

“The first version of the story was, that I had used the expression in an oration which I had delivered at the court house in Lancaster on the 4th of July, 1815. The oration itself disproved this assertion; and then, after Mr. Cox had made it a subject of debate before the Reform Convention, in May last, one of the papers at Harrisburg solemnly announced that the expression had been used by me, on the floor of the House of Representatives, in this city in reply to Governor Floyd, of Virginia; and that it could be proved by a gentleman who had formerly been a Democratic representative in Congress from Pennsylvania. The scene is now again shifted to the court house in Lancaster, and a certain Anthony M’Glinn, is the witness. He states, that ‘a number of years ago,’ ‘one evening,’ whilst I was addressing a political meeting there assembled, he had heard me use the expression already stated, ‘in an emphatic manner,’ ‘with my right hand elevated above my head.’ He does not state the year, nor about the year, when this expression was used, nor the name of any other person who was present at this public meeting.

“It does not seem to have occurred to Mr. Cox, that if I had uttered such a sentiment as that attributed to me, in the court

house in Lancaster, it would have been heard by hundreds of people; that it would immediately have become the subject of universal remark, and universal condemnation; and that it would have been severely and justly commented upon in the newspapers of the day. Had it been true, there would have been no occasion for him to resort to Anthony M'Glenn, to prove the charge; nor to a conversation alleged by Mr. Ford to have been held with Mr. Peter Shindle, who, although a respectable, is an aged man; and from a defect of memory, incident to that period of life, must have confounded what may have been stated to him by others, with what he had heard himself. But I again repeat, no matter who has been or shall be the witness, the tale is utterly and absolutely false.

"Shortly after the slander was made a subject of debate by Mr. Cox, in the Reform Convention, a number of the oldest and most respectable citizens of Lancaster, without distinction of party, signed a certificate disproving the charge, so far as it was possible for a negative to be proved, which was placed and still remains in the hands of one of my friends. After what had been said in reply to Mr. Cox, by Mr. Porter and Mr. Reigart, who must either have heard the expression, had it been used, or heard of it immediately after, I deemed it wholly unnecessary then to publish this certificate.

"Yours very respectfully,

"James Buchanan."

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In the autumn of 1838, David Rittenhouse Porter was elected Governor of Pennsylvania. A celebration in honor of the victory was held in Huntingdon, where Mr. Porter resided, on Thursday, October 25th. Mr. Buchanan received a special invitation to the celebration. He sent a letter to the committee which had invited him, expressing his regret at not being able to be present. This letter was published in The Lancaster Intelligencer of Tuesday, November 6th, 1838, and was as follows:

"Lancaster, Pa.,

"October 20th, 1838.

"Gentlemen:

"I have received your kind invitation to a public dinner to be

given on Thursday next [Oct. 25th], for the purpose of 'celebrating the glorious victory achieved by the Democracy of the State,' at the recent election. It would afford me sincere pleasure to be present on this joyous occasion; but circumstances, which I need not explain, forbid me the gratification.

"We have, indeed, achieved a great victory. The State is redeemed from misrule;—the principles of Democracy are re-established, and the character of General Porter, so fiercely and falsely assailed, has come out of the fiery furnace of persecution like pure gold seven times tried. But we have not yet completed our work. The price of liberty is eternal vigilance. The presidential election is rapidly approaching; and henceforth the motto of Democracy will be: Martin Van Buren and an Independent Treasury, against the Whig candidate, whoever he may be, and a National Bank. In accordance with this motto, permit me to offer you the following sentiment:

"An Independent Treasury;—whose officers, responsible to the people instead of privileged corporations, shall guard the people's money. Democracy asks in vain: what claim have the banks to use this public treasure as their own,—again to convert it into an engine of ruinous expansions and contractions of the currency, and of new political panics and pressures to enforce submission to the money power?

"With sentiments of the highest respect, I remain,

"Sincerely yours,

"James Buchanan."

"To T. P. Campbell, A. P. Wilson, James Gwin, George Taylor and William Dorris, Esquires."

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January 8th, 1839, the anniversary of Jackson's signal victory at New Orleans, was to be celebrated in Pittsburgh, Pa., in an enthusiastic manner. A committee, composed of some of the most influential men of the city, invited Mr. Buchanan to be present and participate in the celebration. He was unable to accept, and sent the committee the following letter:<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Lancaster Intelligencer, Tuesday, January 22nd, 1839.

“Washington, D. C.,

“January 4th, 1839.

“Gentlemen:

“Next to the fourth of July, there is no day in the year which better deserves to be celebrated by American freemen than the 8th of January: and there is certainly no place where I would rather celebrate it than among my democratic friends in the city of Pittsburgh. If public duties did not forbid, I should most cheerfully make the journey in order to enjoy the pleasure of being with you.

“The 8th of January, 1815, independently of the unexampled victory then achieved, brought prominently before the American people the great Captain who then commanded, and laid the foundation of that deeply-seated popularity which elevated him to the presidential chair. The crisis demanded such a fearless, frank and honest leader. A political power had arisen in the State unknown to the Constitution, whose insinuating influence threatened to paralyze and control the legitimate power of the people. It was a power much more dangerous than British troops whom you could meet and encounter in the open field. Had it remained in ambush it might have become irresistible; but the moment it took the open field of political warfare, the danger to our institutions was greatly diminished, with Andrew Jackson for our leader. It was conquered by him but not subdued.

“The great controller and director of this money power has recently proclaimed his own abdication from the general politics of the country; and if his auxiliary banks will but follow his example, and will confine themselves to their appropriate duties, then we may expect peace and prosperity. All we desire is their neutrality. Any political alliance between the Government and them, whether offensive or defensive, ought more to be dreaded than their open hostility. Let the banks be banks merely, and as such enjoy the protection of the laws; and let the public agents rely for support solely upon the will of the people. Above all, let past experience teach the Democracy of the country to be ever jealous, though never unjust, in regard to these formidable corporations; and let it at once sound the alarm whenever they step beyond their appropriate sphere to engage in political conflicts,

whether for or against the existing powers. Democracy neither seeks their aid, nor dreads their hostility.

“In conclusion, permit me to offer you the following sentiment :

“The late signal defeat, at Harrisburg, of those party leaders who owed their power to the Bank of the United States. Their boldness and desperation impelled them to make war against the first principle of Republican liberty: That the majority shall rule; and they were then deserted, both by their own followers and the money power, which had sustained them. Let this be their political epitaph.

“Yours very respectfully,

“James Buchanan.”

“To William Wilkins, Esq., and others of the committee.”