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2. *Some Papers of Franklin Pierce, 1852-1862.**(First Installment.)*

The following letters were found among the private papers and correspondence of President Franklin Pierce. For access to these papers and permission to publish such as are here presented grateful acknowledgments are due to the custodian of the originals, Hon. Kirk D. Pierce, nephew of President Pierce, an able and well-known lawyer residing in Hillsboro, N. H., the early home of the President. The letters were copied, edited, and contributed to the REVIEW by P. O. Ray, Instructor in History and Political Science of the Pennsylvania State College.

I. EDMUND BURKE¹ TO FRANKLIN PIERCE (UNSIGNED COPY).

Confidential.

WASHINGTON, April 9, 1852.

My dear Sir:

I came to this city about one fortnight ago on business connected with patents, now pending in Congress. And since I have been here I have had very considerable opportunity to learn the sentiments of politicians in relation to the next Democratic nomination for the Presidency. The three most prominent candidates for the nomination are Cass, Buchanan, and Douglass. Gen. Cass I think now has most friends although it seems to be the general impression that he can not get two-thirds of the Convention. Next to him Douglass is the most prominent. He has a good share of the Northwest to back him. After the Indiana delegation has given one vote for Gen. Lane they will go in for Douglass. So Wm. R. Brown tells me who is one of the Delegates at large. Tennessee and a portion of the Kentucky Delegation I understand will early come in to the support of Douglass. On the other hand, Mr. Buchanan seems to have but very little support out of Pennsylvania. Therefore, the struggle will be between Cass and Douglass. The old experienced politicians here are of the opinion that it will result in the defeat of both. Then of course the Convention will have to look about for a candidate among those who are not candidates directly for the nomination. Among these are Marcy, Dickinson, Butler, and Lynn Boyd, who are talked of. The two first will not unite the vote of N. Y., although the latter is very popular at the South. Gen. Butler a high-toned chivalrous and sound man seems to be under a cloud here in consequence of the fact that Benton

¹ See Appleton's *Cyclopedia of American Biography*. Burke had served several terms in the House as a representative from New Hampshire, and had been Commissioner of Patents from 1846 to 1850. Shortly after Pierce's inauguration Burke became a bitter enemy of the administration, often attacking its policy in the columns of the *New Hampshire State Capitol Reporter*. So bitter was his assault upon Douglas and the administration at the time when the Nebraska Bill was pending in Congress, that Douglas replied in a long letter, which appeared in the columns of the *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette* (Concord), the organ of the administration in that state.

Blair, and that class of politicians put him forward. I do not think it possible for him to survive this prejudice, and therefore I think that the N. H. *Patriot* has been too fast in putting him forward. Out of Ky. he seems to be the choice of nobody except the freesoilers of N. Y., and perhaps of Judge Bright of Indiana. And Lynn Boyd is not now a formidable candidate.

Now in my judgment if at the proper time at the Convention you will allow your name to be used as a compromise candidate, you stand as good a chance of the nomination as any man I can now think of.

In casual conversation I have asked southern gentlemen how you would suit the South and they have invariably responded most favorably. I am boarding with Col. Barbour, President of the late Virginia Democratic Convention, and he says the South would cordially unite on you. He tells me that a majority of the Convention was for Buchanan in preference to Cass or Douglass. There is another very intelligent gentleman boarding with me from Florida, by the name of Blunt. Mr. Atherton¹ knows him. I believe he is a Whig. But he says that no Northern man would be more generally acceptable than yourself to the South. I have also talked with Floyd, M. C., from New York and he says both of the Democratic factions in that State would unite upon you. Hence I believe that you are among the very probable candidates for the Presidency, if you will allow your name to be used at the right time.

But I must say frankly that you have not been quite free enough with your friends in relation to this subject. I can not learn as anyone knows what you would do or consent to have others do in reference to the nomination. You hold out the idea that there is no office you will again accept. Unless your determination never to accept of *any office* is irrevocable, I think you should say that you place your destinies so far as the Presidency is concerned in the hands of your friends.

I do not of course think it prudent to put you forward as a candidate for the Presidency until the three prominent candidates are first disposed of. If they shall all be defeated in the Convention, then your name should be put forward as a compromise candidate.

You will see by the proceedings in the House (which will be followed up in the Baltimore Convention) that our ticket has got to be *entirely clear of freesoilism*. The very general idea that the N. Y. freesoilers, Rantoul, Cleaveland, and others, hope to regain position in the Democratic party by the election of Butler, kills off all his prospects. Therefore, in my firm belief the *Patriot* has started off in a wrong track.

I shall be here until the 1st of May I think. I see our client Brown has run away.

Yours truly,

[EDMUND BURKE.]

Gen. F. Pierce.

¹ Charles G. Atherton, of New Hampshire, author of the "Gag Resolution". See V, Burke to Pierce, June 6, 1852, p. 114.

II. FRANKLIN PIERCE TO EDMUND BURKE (UNSIGNED COPY).

CONCORD, Apl. 13, 1852.

My dear Sir :

I received your letter of the 9th inst. last night and desire without delay to acknowledge it with my thanks. I am quite surprised that you should speak of my not having been free enough with my friends upon the subject of your letter. I wrote to Atherton as I thought and felt.¹ What more had I apparently to say? Judging from what you say and what others have written within the last fortnight, the aspect of things has materially changed. The writing of that letter was a source of much dissatisfaction to my personal friends. But I deemed it a matter [of duty?] as things then presented themselves one of which I alone could judge. My heart was full of gratitude to my State as it had been many times before, to overflowing but it was at the same time more full of devotion to the party and I did not believe that N. H. or the National party had anything to gain by having my name in the list of aspirants. If you and my other discreet friends think (without reference to me personally) that the pride of our State, the success of the cause can be subserved by the use of my name then you must judge for me in view of all the circumstances. I wrote yesterday to my old friend French,² but hope he will confer with you and Norris³ and Hibbard⁴ and Peaslee⁵. I said to him in a hurry but more and more fully than I can say here. I must leave the matter to my friends at W. looking, as I am sure they will, to what is my duty and what may be the best interests of the party.

It is now 1 o'clock at night and I am in the midst of an important trial. Our client Brown ran discreetly. Write me as soon as you receive this.

Your friend

Hon. Edmund Burke,
Washington, D. C.

[FRANKLIN PIERCE.]

P. S. I keep no copy and wish you would forward me one for I may need it in coming time. While I leave myself to my friends, they would desire me to keep my record clear, even if I had no such desire myself.

Tuesday night, 2 o'clock.

¹ At a ratification meeting held at Concord, June 10, 1852, Colonel John H. George of Concord is reported to have said: "On the 8th of January last the Democratic State Convention of New Hampshire unanimously presented the name of General Franklin Pierce to the people of the nation as a candidate for the highest office in its gift. . . . Immediately after the action of the last State Convention, General Pierce wrote his letter to Mr. Atherton declining to be a candidate for the Presidency and declaring that the use of his name in any event before the Democratic National Convention would be utterly repugnant to his tastes and wishes. . ." See the *Patriot and Gazette* (Concord), June 16, 1852.

² Probably William H. French, aide de-camp on General Pierce's staff during the Mexican War.

³ Moses Norris, Jr., U. S. senator from New Hampshire.

⁴ Harry Hibbard, a representative from New Hampshire.

⁵ Charles H. Peaslee, representative from New Hampshire, 1847-1853.

III. EDMUND BURKE TO FRANKLIN PIERCE.

BALTIMORE, June 5, 1852.

Dear General.

We are in great hopes of nominating you this morning. The thing is about ripe. We have intimations from the delegations from Pennsylvania and Virginia that they will soon lead off for you. The South will come in, so will Maine, Conn, and I think all N. E. Michigan will also. The prospects are more encouraging than ever.

But you know the whole thing is contingent. So do not be too much elated. If God and the people give you the nomination and election, bear your honors calmly, meekly and with dignity. I have no doubt you will. You know I do not express opinions without a careful survey of the facts of the case. But in the opinion I now express I may be mistaken. We are all excited here and probably I may be more than usual.

The convention is about to work. Adieu. In haste,

Yours truly,

EDMUND BURKE.

IV. EDMUND BURKE TO FRANKLIN PIERCE.

BALTIMORE, June 5, 1852.

Afternoon.

Dear General.

I wrote you this morning that in all probability you would be nominated, and I said, if God and the people nominated and elected you, you must wear the transcendent honor with calmness, meekness and dignity, as becoming a true man and a Christian. I have no doubt you will. We have all done the best we could for you. We have pledged you to nothing except that you would be honest, faithful, true, discreet and just. We have no doubt you will fulfill all these pledges we have made for you.

The scene in the convention was grand — sublime. The cannon has already heralded your success. Mighty destiny, be true to it.

Gov. Dickinson tells me that New York will give you her vote by 30,000. The enthusiasm is tremendous. You unite all cliques.

Now your biography must be written. Send me the materials at Washington and I will prepare it for you. I have made arrangements already with Dr. Hebbé, the author of the *Universal History*, a man of great talent and distinction and great influence with the German population, to undertake and publish it at once in that language. [Name illegible] another German, will take the stump for you. I know these men well. They can do more for you with the foreign population than all others.

I think I can serve you best by remaining at Washington a few days. I know men from every state in the Union. *You will be elected.*

Yours truly,

EDMUND BURKE.

F. Pierce.

V. EDMUND BURKE TO FRANKLIN PIERCE.

BALTIMORE, June 6, 1852.

Dear General.

I suppose by this time you have heard of the result of the deliberations of the National Democratic Convention and have become "calm as a cucumber's morning". I think we did right in putting King on the ticket. You know he is Buchanan's bosom friend and thus a great and powerful interest is conciliated. Our nominations also please both wings of the Democratic party in New York. They were content with slaying each other and both will cordially unite on you. If Scott is nominated the great battle-ground will be in New York and Pennsylvania. The slave states will fall into our laps like ripe apples. I think your election is certain but I remember while I express my opinion, that all things pertaining to humanity are uncertain and therefore you upon whom the great honor has fallen must not be too elated or sanguine. You must prepare yourself for the result, whatever it may be. I think you will be elected because all cliques of the democracy are united on you as they were on Mr. Polk.

I wrote you to send your minutes for a biography. It is wanted immediately. Perhaps I may not be able to stay at Washington long enough to prepare it and perhaps you may not desire that I should do it. If not, Gen. Peaslee will do it well and I will see Dr. Hebbé and tell him to translate it at once into German. I am anxious to get home to Concord on account of a certain event. May it not be best to postpone the election of Senator until fall? If you are elected will you not then desire the election of your own first choice among the candidates? In that event would not Mr. Atherton¹ be the best man for you in that body, through whom the administration can speak? In the event of your election I, or one of the candidates, shall be glad to defer to your wishes. I have no doubt the Democratic members of the Legislature will now so far consult your wishes as to postpone the election, if you desire it.

I shall remain a few days at Washington on business at the Patent and Pension offices, and while I am here I will do all I can to arrange things for the coming campaign.

I am in correspondence with Kossuth and through Dr. Hebbé can do something with the foreign population. Kossuth has great influence with them and will naturally suppose *without any assurance* that a northern administration will sympathize more with the popular movement in Europe than a southern or Whig administration. Kossuth should be invited to New Hampshire, but should receive nothing from you but courtesies and civilities. I am also acquainted with the editor of the leading German paper in the United States and have promised to see

¹ Charles G. Atherton, reelected to the Senate in November, 1852. Died November, 1853.

him on my return home through New York. We can do much through these channels. I expect to see you soon.

In haste yours truly,

EDMUND BURKE.

Gen. F. Pierce.

VI. EDMUND BURKE TO FRANKLIN PIERCE.

Confidential.

Hon. Franklin Pierce,

WASHINGTON, June 8, 1852.

My dear Sir.

I write to-day in relation to a matter personal to ourselves. Mr. Houston, Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means told me yesterday that he had been informed on good authority, that you were hostile to me, in fact, my enemy. When I was here in April last, I had a letter from a gentleman in New Hampshire informing me of the same fact and that the cause of it was some article in the *Argus and Spectator*; and in consequence you were opposed to my election to the Senate. Before receiving this letter, I had written to you my first letter in relation to your prospects for the Presidential nomination and received your reply; and the frankness and confidence expressed in the latter, led me at once to treat the intimation I had received as an idle rumor. Immediately after an intimate friend and relation of the gentleman who first wrote me, addressed a letter to me informing me that it was a mistake, and that you were not unfriendly to me. But the intimation from the Chairman of the *Committee of Ways and Means*, upon which I had supposed there was one of my personal friends from N. H. leads me to suspect that some one has not understood your relations with me and has given a wrong impression in regard to them; or that I have myself misunderstood the true spirit which has dictated your letters to me, as well as our personal interview at Newport. I believe that you have been misrepresented to Mr. Houston. But however it may be, I have no doubt you will have the frankness to say honestly and truly what your sentiments toward me are. If they be even as Mr. Houston has been informed, it will make no difference in the humble support I shall give to your nomination. I shall do all in my humble power to secure your election. That I owe to the great cause to which I have always been attached. But it may make some difference in the course I ought to pursue to accomplish that very object. It is more than probable that I shall be fixed upon to assume the editorial work of the *Union*¹ newspaper during the canvass. I seem to be the almost unanimous choice of our party in Congress for that position. But the consciousness that we are not friends, and that I was aiding to elevate my personal enemy to the White House, might dampen my ardor in the conflict, although I should do my best to prevent it. These considerations, if they are founded in fact, would render it very improper for

¹ *The Washington Union* (daily). See VIII, Pierce to Burke, June 14, 1852, p. 117. Burke was campaign editor of the *Union* during the late summer and autumn of 1852.

me to take charge of the *Union*. The heart of the editor of that paper should go into the conflict with no secret sadness nor grief.— But for the good of our cause, which *must* triumph in this contest, I should not be the editor of the *Union* if our relations are really such as have been intimated to me since I have been in this city.

From the first moment I saw the prospect dawning for you, I have done my utmost to accomplish the great result. Your nomination was effected precisely as I supposed it must be if at all. I never had but one opinion about it. But I claim no credit to myself in bringing about this result. All your friends from N. H. did all in their power to accomplish it. My extensive acquaintance with the politicians of the *Union* gave me, perhaps, some advantage over other of your friends. There was not a delegation in the Convention in which there were not more or less members with whom I was acquainted. I have a pretty extensive acquaintance with leading German politicians, and editors, both native and naturalized. These were of some benefit to us, and I shall avail myself of this acquaintance to bring the foreign vote so far as possible to the support of our cause.

And finally whatever may be said and done by jealous and rival politicians in N. H. their calumnies cannot shake my standing with the Democracy of the *Union*. Most of them will have to work hard as I have done before they attain to the same position before the country at large. I have been free and full in this letter. For your good and that of our cause we ought to know how we stand in relation to each other, in order that I may not get into any position which will in the remotest degree affect unfavorably our great cause, which *must* now triumph, or it will fall not to rise again for a quarter of a century.

Your nomination is received with great enthusiasm. It unites all factions of our party and seems to inspire every one with confidence in our success.

I am, very truly your friend etc,

EDMUND BURKE.

Gen. F. Pierce.

VII. EDMUND BURKE TO FRANKLIN PIERCE.

WASHINGTON, JUNE 10, 1852.

My dear Sir:

Yesterday Mr. Ritchie¹ placed in my hands a letter from Robert G. Scott, Esq., of Richmond in relation to your answer to his letter addressed to the different Presidential candidates. I handed the letter to Gen. Peaslee to be communicated to you in the belief that it might be of some use to you in framing your reply to the letter of the committee appointed to inform you of your nomination.²

¹ Thomas Ritchie, editor of *The Washington Union*.

² This committee consisted of J. S. Barbour, J. Thompson, Alpheus Field, and Pierre Soulé. The letter of notification referred to is still in existence.

The western men are also a little alarmed in consequence of your votes upon the River and Harbor appropriations while in Congress, which the *Republic* newspaper has collected and published. Perhaps this is a matter which it would be expedient for you to consider in your reply. The western men think the Whigs will argue to the people that you will veto *all* bills whatever for the improvement of Harbors and Rivers, which would make your election an uphill business in the West. On the other hand some western members, including Douglass and Richardson of Illinois and Dunham of Indiana, think it will not hurt you at all.

But those who think it will injure you in the West, say that if in your reply to the Committee you could in some general phraseology say that you entered public life during the eventful administration of Gen. Jackson whose principles you have ever maintained, referring to his course upon Internal Improvements, but finally coming down upon the Baltimore platform, as your true position, it would be well. They say they can stand up to a man to the principles of Gen. Jackson on that subject, but they cannot fully to the doctrine of Mr. Polk's veto message. You can and will weigh these matters carefully and deliberately and make such reference to them as you deem expedient or none at all.

The ratification meeting in this city last night was the largest I ever saw here. Messrs. Cass, Houston, Lane, Davis and others spoke. Father Ritchie¹ made a few remarks. These facts show that our party are thoroughly united and determined to win.

By judicious management all the foreign populations can be brought to your support. Dr. Hebbé the distinguished Swedish scholar, left for N. York yesterday to address the German societies in that city. He has also written to many of the leading German editors in Pennsylvania and elsewhere. And this morning I received a prospectus for a new paper in the Welsh language to be published in Pottsville, Pa. It will be the first one in the United States. It is endorsed by Hon. F. W. Hughes, Secretary of State for Pennsylvania.

Yours truly,

EDMUND BURKE

Hon. Franklin Pierce.

VIII. FRANKLIN PIERCE TO EDMUND BURKE (COPY).

CONCORD N H

June 14, 1852²

My dear sir :

I returned from my journey to-day and hasten to answer your letter of June 8th wh I found an hour since among a large package awaiting my arrival.

In the first place I should like to know M^r Houston's authority. But without that, I will proceed to set matters right so far as we are con-

¹ Thomas Ritchie of the *Union*.

² Either this letter, or the reply of Burke (IX), perhaps each, is misdated. The error, however, is one of only a few days.

cerned. I can state distinctly, that the charge that I am yr. enemy has, so far as I know, no foundation in any act or word of mine. I had heard prior to the receipt of your letter in April that you were evidently unfriendly to me, and that if I desired to be brought before the National Convention, my first object should be to conciliate you. I uniformly replied, 1st, That I did not seek to be a candidate; 2d. That if it were otherwise, I would not turn on my heel to conciliate any man; and 3d. That I could not conceive that you were hostile, because I had always understood our relations to be of a friendly character. Your letter of April assured me that I had not misjudged and I supposed that we understood each other.

When I was informed of the controversy between yourself and Mr. Butterfield,¹ I expressed my deep regret, but was determined not to be in any way involved in it. I have not read the articles on either side, but I heard your first article freely commented on, and stated that if you had made a general assault upon the politicians of Concord, charging them with being under the influence of corporations and desiring to dictate to other parts of the State, such charges were groundless and unjustifiable, and in this I think few true men would differ with me. You have never been assailed by me. No act or word of mine justifies the charge. Now for the authority! What is charged and by whom?

I have received several letters from different gentlemen in relation to the "*Union*"² and matters connected therewith. As I understand the matter, it is a subject about which it would be neither politic nor just for me to speak. The democratic party have nominated me. They have presented a platform upon which I am willing to stand. I would not presume to enlarge or narrow it. The manner in wh., and the instrumentality through which, the nomination is to be sustained, must be left entirely to others. I shall not attempt to control, nor shall I, as at present advised, permit myself even to suggest.

I thank you for your frankness. It is the only way to maintain proper relations between friends personal or political.

Your friend,
FRANK PIERCE.

IX. EDMUND BURKE TO FRANKLIN PIERCE.

WASHINGTON, June 14, 1852.

Hon. Franklin Pierce

My dear Sir,

I have deferred answering your letter of the 14th inst. until I could see Mr. Houston and learn from him the author of the intimation which he made to me and to which I referred in my letter of the 8th inst. I have not been able to see him until to-day, and I made enquiry of him in relation to the matter. He says he can not now recall to mind the per-

¹ Editor of the *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, published at Concord.

² See VI, Burke to Pierce, June 8, 1852, p. 115.

son from whom he derived the impression that we were not on friendly terms. He says he and several other gentlemen were discussing the propriety of my taking the editorial charge of the Union newspaper when some one remarked that it might not be agreeable to you for we were opposed to each other in our State politics. Mr. Houston says it was from this remark that he got the impression which he stated to me. But it is now of no account. Your letter leaves no ground for me to doubt that our personal relations are now, as they have always been, friendly. I am aware that it was unnecessary for you to court the favor of any man — a more fortunate position than that in which most men are placed — but I have never acted in bad faith with regard to your nomination. I wrote you fully and frankly from this city in April last, what I thought the condition of things was here. I expressed then, as I did after my return to New Hampshire by letter, and orally in our personal interview at Newport, my belief in the great probability of your nomination, and how it was to be brought about. And I steadily acted with that end in view. I knew it was not policy to bring you out as a candidate for the nomination at the outset, and that you could only be nominated as a compromise candidate, and in this our whole delegation, I believe, agreed and we acted accordingly. And, of course, you owe your nomination to no one of us, nor to any particular man, but to your own position and a fortunate combination of circumstances, the noble character of the Granite State having some little weight in the matter.

I am aware that the Concord people, and I count Mr. Butterfield among the foremost of them, circulated the story during the late session of the Legislature that I was opposed to your nomination to the last, and that it was made against my wishes and active opposition. This is a base calumny for which there is not one particle of foundation, and I have no doubt your sense of justice will induce you to correct it. At any rate, I intend that it shall be taken back by those who put it afloat. If I had been opposed to you in the critical period when a slight circumstance might have defeated you, humble as I am, if I had been so disposed, perhaps I might have accomplished it. I knew more men in that Convention than any other man from our State, and without vanity I think I may say that my standing with the Democracy of this nation is as good as that of any other delegate from N. H. If I had used the advantages which these circumstances gave me, at one time, possibly I might have had some influence on the result. They were all however used to promote your success, and not to prevent it. But enough on this point.

As to the quarrel between the *Argus* and *Patriot*, I understood from Mr. Baldwin, and now understand from yourself that you do not take part in it. I was glad to be thus assured of what I before believed was the truth about the matter.

As to the statements made in the first article in the *Argus*, I am not aware that they are untrue. The two leading statements are that Col. George did not carry the late election in N. H. as claimed by the *Patriot*; and that a portion of the Democrats of Concord were too much connected

with corporations, and gave their countenance to corporate influence. Those statements were not published in the *Argus* until they had first been shown to leading democrats out of Sullivan Co. who concurred in them. I believe them to be true, and I stand by the truth without fear or favor from any man. If the records of various corporations at Concord and the history of our past legislature does not bear out what I say, then I will retract, but there is no power on earth that will make me retract what I believe to be true. I know a great many of the soundest and best democrats in New Hampshire concur with the *Argus* and with myself in this belief. The *Argus* has sustained in this controversy precisely the same principles which it sustained fifteen years ago, when it had the cordial support and encouragement of yourself and your venerated father. It has not changed on this matter of corporations. It did not move or change when the *Patriot*, and a large portion of the Democratic Party gave way on the Wilmot Proviso. And it will stand by its principles and flag, if it stands alone, no matter by whom it may be denounced. But I have dwelt longer on this topic than I intended.

Before this reaches you, you will have learned that Gen. Scott has been nominated. The nomination of Graham, with the platform, will generally unite the Whigs of the South. I think, with Gen. Scott's great and undisputed military services, it will require some effort on the part of the Democracy to beat him. I am afraid our friends have been all too confident of success. They seem to take it for granted that we are to carry the election. I cannot learn that they are doing much. They are not going into the combat with the promptness and energy which the occasion demands. I do not think our Central Executive Committee is made up of the right sort of men. Robert McLane of Baltimore is Chairman. He is a man of talents, but I think he has not the industry nor the practical experience necessary for getting up good political tracts. Dr. Gwin is also a man of ability and good sound sense, but he has too much California business to attend to. And Messrs. Edgerton and Penn [?] of the House, are neither of them the right sort of men for such duties as will devolve on the Executive Committee. Ten days ago I placed in the hands of the Committee a proposition with regard to the establishment of a Welsh paper in Pottsville, Pa. I had secured a letter from Col. Hughes, Secretary of State of Pennsylvania, with regard to the subject, and also communications from other gentlemen of that State. I supposed the matter would be attended to, but so far from that, on Monday last Mr. Penn [?] told me the *Committee had not organized*. Our friends here seem to think the battle is to be won without fighting.

I have had some opportunity to observe the effect of Scott's nomination, and am satisfied that it will very generally unite the Whig party. Many of the delegates from the South are now in the city, and I find that the adoption of a platform and the nomination of Graham has removed their objections to Scott, and all those Whig politicians in Congress, who have not so far committed themselves against Scott that they cannot honorably back out, will go in for him. I understand Gen. Dawson of

Ga. has already given in his adhesion. I am satisfied that the Whig party will be united under Scott and that with his unquestionably great military reputation and long public service he will be a hard candidate to beat. Therefore I think it is time for our party to lay aside the delusion that we are to gain an easy victory, and make up our minds for one of the hardest contests we have ever had. I believe we shall be successful if we fight the battle as we ought. If we do not we shall be beaten.

I dined in company with Mr. Soulé and other gentlemen yesterday. Mr. S. spoke of his interview with you, and in the most complimentary terms of yourself. I think he was most agreeably disappointed. Col. Barbour also was highly delighted with his acquaintance with you. Both he and Mr. Soulé not only spoke most favorably of your deportment as a gentleman, but of your unblemished character and your knowledge of public affairs. I think it was very well that the Committee¹ visited you in person.

I have mentioned the name of Dr. Hebbé to you in former letters. His connection with and great influence over the foreign population, make it important to have him take the right course in this election. He is a Swede, by birth, and a man of profound learning and high character. He was educated in Germany and was expelled that country on account of his liberal principles. He is intimate with Kossuth, and other distinguished characters engaged in the European popular movements. He is a thorough and philosophical democrat and espouses our side from a conviction of its intrinsic merits. He has succeeded in bringing out several leading German papers in support of our nominations, which took a neutral position in consequence of Cass' defeat. He has also been to New York and addressed the foreign trade societies in that city urging upon them the support of our ticket. And being by birth a Scandinavian he desires to go through Iowa, Wisconsin, and other States of the West in which most of the Swedes, Norwegians and Danes reside, and address them before the election. He will also during the summer make you a visit, in order that he may speak to his countrymen of his personal knowledge of you. Mr. Fleischmann, a German, who was my principal draughtsman in the Patent Office, and recently consul at Wurtemberg, a man also of very great learning and attainments, has also assured me that he will stump it through the German regions. He will also visit you this summer for the same reason assigned by Dr. Hebbé. The grand ideas which are to be most potent in this election are sympathy for the liberals of Europe, the expansion of the Republic southward and westward and the grasping of the magnificent [prize? illegible] of the commerce of the Pacific — in short the ideas of which the term 'Young America' is the symbol. Both Hebbé and Fleischmann and Mr. Soulé and the young men of the Republic have these ideas moving them deeply.

As to the subject suggested in my letter by [illegible] Mr. French has written a sketch of your life which he read to Mr. Hubbard and myself

¹ See VII, Burke to Pierce, June 10, 1852, p. 116, note 2.

before he sent it away to be published. It was very well, but not sufficiently full and strong on some points. There is also a sketch of your life for sale at the book stores prepared, I understand, by Lester of New York. That is too expensive. We want a strong pointed biography in pamphlet form to be widely circulated by members of Congress. And we want also a good likeness of you. None has yet appeared. If you had sent me a daguerreotype engravings from it would have been on sale ten days ago. We want a biography to be translated into German. As I shall leave the city as soon as I can close up some business at the Patent Office I shall not now have time to attend to any of these matters. Pardon me this very long letter and believe me

ever yours truly,

EDMUND BURKE.¹

X. G. C. HEBBÉ TO EDMUND BURKE.

Honorable Ed. Burke. WASHINGTON CITY July 15th 1852.

Dear Sir

I have many times already had great reasons to wish that you had remained here and lent your energy to the Central Committee which acts with deplorable imbecility. It was a great misfortune that you did not become a member of that Committee, and a no less one that you are not Editor of the Union. I have had several conferences with Dr. Gwin and Hon Mr. Senn [Penn?], but the committee has not yet collected so much money that it has dared to grant aid to those papers which I have recommended to its patronage. The Committee committed the blunder to order a Philadelphia paper to publish 25,000 copies in German of the life of General Pierce — when this order ought to have been given to Mr. Newman as recommended by myself — I told Mr. Penn yesterday that if Mr. Forney's advice is to be taken on such matters — the committee has to take upon themselves the responsibility of the consequences. The paper to which this order was given — is very influential in Pennsylvania —, but there is now much less hope to carry that State than New York — and consequently all ought to be done to secure the latter State — in which we have more hope to succeed — But it appears as the interests of certain individuals are to be promoted at hasard even to see the party defeated —

¹ Further information relating to the ante-convention movements which brought about Pierce's nomination is to be found in the files of the *Boston Daily Advertiser* (Whig) for November, 1853, and of the *Arkansas Whig* for December, 1853. These articles are based upon Burke's own story of how the "mysterious" nomination was effected, which appeared in the *State Capitol Reporter* (Concord) in October, 1853. For this paper, which was a violent anti-administration organ, Burke was for the time an editorial writer. Burke's story may also be found quoted in *The New Hampshire Statesman* (Concord) for October 29, 1853. In January, 1904, an article appeared in *The Minneapolis Journal* which sheds further light upon the nomination. The writer, a law-student in Concord in 1852, boarded in the same family with one Henry P. Rolfe, then a student in the law-office of Minot and Pierce, and bases his statements upon conversations taking place between himself and Rolfe on the day when the New Hampshire delegation left Concord for Baltimore.

I have had letters from Gen. Kossuth — in which he complains much of the deception which certain persons of the Democratic party have made themselves guilty of in regard to himself — and I have had the utmost difficulty in preventing him from taking steps which would undoubtedly have led to the disorganization and defeat of the Democratic party — I hope that General Pierce's letter to the Democrats of Philadelphia has satisfied Gen Kossuth at least to some degree — still I know that he expected from Gen. Pierce a still more explicit avowal in regard to the course of foreign policy which this country ought to pursue —, but I think, that the General could not say more in the present state of affairs

I have written an urgent appeal to the adopted citizens of Scandinavian birth to support General Pierce, and I hope that this appeal which appeared in the "Skandinoven" of last Saturday will have a good effect and give General Pierce at least 10,000 votes from that quarter.

I have also written about 35 letters to several German papers — and to English papers — urging upon the readers of these papers the necessity and duty to sustain the Democratic nominees — I intend to sail for Europe on Saturday from New York — but hope to return before the 1st of Sept. when I will have the honor to visit you and then begin to stump the States of New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Wisconsin and Iowa — From Europe I will transmit several letters to papers in these States in order to advocate the success of our party —

I am a democrat at heart because I consider that party — notwithstanding its many defects as the only one which at present can do any practical good for the advance of freedom throughout the world — I am, however, sorry to see that the influence of the South is preponderant here in Washington — It is a great mistake to think that the South can accomplish the victory of the Democratic party — when on the contrary it is clear that the result will chiefly depend upon the votes of the northern and western states —, where the votes of the adoptive citizens are decisive —

I have from Gen. Kossuth that General Pierce has promised to visit New York — and I hope that he will do so — as such a visit would probably do much to influence the people of that State.

I hope that you will exercise all your energy in behalf of the Democratic party — as I am fully convinced that you can do much for the success of our cause in the present struggle — I should be very glad to hear from you before my departure — and I think that a letter addressed to me — care of Nicholas Day 74 Wall Street New York — would reach me before the departure of the steamer on Saturday.

I have the honor to remain with the most sincere regards,

Dear Sir

Yours most truly,

G. C. HEBBE.

In great haste.

XI. JAMES CAMPBELL TO ARTHUR S. NEVITT.¹

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,
March 1, 1856.

Sir:

I have thought it my duty to send you the enclosed copies of papers which have just been placed on file in this department. Not so much to satisfy myself upon any point made against you as to furnish the occasion for a statement calculated to satisfy all unprejudiced minds.

If there are persons in your office who sympathize with a political party hostile to the Democratic Party, and bound by secret oaths to principles contrary to the letter and spirit of the Constitution under which we live, you should know them and should neither employ them nor trust them.

I desire something more than a mere statement of your employees, that at a given time they do not belong to a Know-nothing organization. Have they been Know-nothings? Do they sympathize with that political organization? Is your chief clerk a Whig with Know-nothing sympathies? What was his action at the last election?

If you cannot answer these questions with confidence and satisfaction, changes must be made. Reformation in the office is due not only to the Department, but to yourself.

I wish you would answer promptly and fully.

I am, respectfully,

Your obt. servant,
JAMES CAMPBELL.

Arthur S. Nevitt, Esq.,
(P. M.) New Orleans, La.

XII. JOHN W. GEARY² TO FRANKLIN PIERCE.

Confidential.

Executive Department,
LECOMPTON, Kansas Territory,
December 22nd 1856.

His Excellency,
Franklin Pierce, President.

My Dear Sir:

The removal of Donaldson,³ Clark and LeCompte⁴ has been received here with general acclamations by the people, and men recently disposed to vilify and abuse you are loud in your praise. None blame you except those interested in having certain crimes laid in oblivion.

It is my duty to speak frankly and honestly to you, and from time to time I have done so without prejudice, fear or favor. The Country

¹ This letter is apparently in Pierce's handwriting, but is signed in lead-pencil, "James Campbell", and addressed to Arthur S. Nevitt, Postmaster, New Orleans, La.

² Governor of Kansas Territory.

³ J. B. Donaldson, U. S. marshal for Kansas Territory.

⁴ Samuel D. LeCompte, Chief Justice of Kansas Territory.

should know, and if I live long enough, it shall know, that the censure which has been heaped upon your administration for mismanagement in Kansas affairs is not attributable to you, but is the consequence of the criminal complicity of public officers some of whom you have removed the moment you were clearly satisfied of their true position.

I could not have credited it, unless I had seen it with my own eyes, and had the most conclusive evidence of the fact, that public officers would have lent themselves to carry out schemes which at once set at naught every principle of right and justice upon which the equality and existence of our government is founded. You know that there is no man in the Union, that more heartily despises the contracted creed of the abolitionists than I do, or more clearly perceives the pernicious tendency of their doctrines, and on this question I trust I am an impartial judge. The persecutions of the free-state men here was not exceeded by those of the early christians. I am not their vindicator, and wish not to extenuate the numerous outrages committed by them, the perpetrators of which, in due time, I will endeavor to bring, as well as others, to condign punishment, but I do say that the men holding official position have never given you that impartial information on the subject so necessary to form correct conclusions, which your high position so imperatively demanded. I wish not to speak of the injudicious and criminal proceedings of some of the emigrant aid societies and of the fanaticism which called some of them into existence, there are persons better versed in the origin of these movements who can explain them better than myself, but occupying the confidential and official relations I do to yourself, which at your pleasure I am most willing to lay at your feet, it is necessary that I, especially, should do "equal and exact" justice to that side of the question.

Let us go back then to the origin of the Kansas difficulty and see what was the agitating cause, or causes, and let us candidly examine whether or not *our friends* were faultless.

From the most reliable information I am satisfied that there was a settled determination in *high quarters* to make this a Slave State *at all hazards*; that policy was communicated to agents here, and that most of the public officers sent here were secured for its success. The consequence was that when Northern emigrants came here at an early day, *even before* the emigrant aid societies began to excite public attention, that certain persons along the borders of Missouri began to challenge unexceptionable settlers, and finding many not for a slave state, they were subjected to various indignities, and told that this soil, which previous to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise was devoted to freedom, did not belong to such as them, and *that they must settle in Nebraska*.

These immigrants, *highly conservative* in their character, excited by this unjust treatment, wrote back to their friends in the North and thus by a little indiscretion on the part of overzealous persons in Missouri a spark was ignited which nearly set the whole country in a flame. This virulent spirit of dogged determination to *force* slavery into this Terri-

tory, has overshot its mark and raised a storm which nothing but an honest return to the beneficent provisions of our Organic Act can quell. Lecompte, Donaldson, Clarke, Woodson¹, CALHOUN² and Isaacs³ were prominent actors in this fearful tragedy and willing tools to carry out this wicked policy. *They have therefore destroyed their public usefulness*, and their removal would be hailed with a tumult of joy by the entire population. But well do I appreciate your position in the matter and beyond your own sense of justice and propriety I would not desire you to go. Could it be done, it would restore you to that position in the popular affections which you so justly occupied at the period of your Inauguration.

I was much surprised and somewhat amused to learn to-day that Clark, the ex-agent, had just received a letter from Genl. Whitfield⁴ in which the latter says that you told him that all the odium brought on your administration was the dire result of Clark's, Whitfield's, Atchison's,⁵ Stringfellow's,⁶ and others' indiscreet action. Why Whitfield would write thus when he owes his seat to you and me, I know not, but I am sure that *he never penned a greater truth*.

In your whole administration which has been remarkably eventful there is not a shadow of complaint except this Kansas Matter over which, with the dearth of reliable information, you could exercise little influence. Almost every public officer here, necessarily the channels of information, conspired to give you ex parte and prejudiced statements. It was natural and generous that you should believe men professing to be your friends in preference to others notoriously your enemies.

There is a plan in Westport, Mo. to invade the Territory with about 1000 men, to take possession of the "Shawnee Reserve", about the 20th of Feby. *The Indian agent lives there. Calhoun has been there 10 or fifteen days. Can't you blow this conspiracy out of water?*

On the Shanee [*sic*] Reserve, after the Indians have made their selections, there will remain about 1500 quarter sections for preemption.

I thank you for the firm and prompt manner with which you have sustained my policy and seconded my suggestions in the removal of the men indicated, and I earnestly trust you will be seconded in the good work.

¹ Daniel Woodson, secretary of the territory under Reeder, acting governor upon Reeder's removal, secretary under Governor Shannon, and again acting governor upon Shannon's resignation.

² John Calhoun, surveyor-general of Kansas Territory. Instrumental in prejudicing the administration against Geary. See Rhodes, II, 239.

³ Isaacs, U. S. district attorney for Kansas Territory. See Davis to Pierce, July 23, 1857, to appear in the REVIEW for January, 1905.

⁴ J. W. Whitfield, elected Delegate to Congress by the pro-slavery party, November 29, 1854.

⁵ David R. Atchison, previously senator from Missouri.

⁶ B. F. Stringfellow, co-editor of the *Squatter Sovereign*, published at Atchison, Kansas, which professed to be the organ of the Washington government in western Missouri.

I can, and will with the aid of the National Govern't., make Kansas a model state, enriched with Democratic Institutions based upon the Constitution of the U. S., and blessed with all the rich treasures of learning, ennobled by virtue, intelligence and enterprise of the millions of freemen whom its exuberantly fertile soil is capable of supporting. After you have laid aside the cares of State, if I am called to remain here, I want you to give me the pleasure of a visit to Kansas. I will make a tour with you through the Territory. The salubrity of the climate, the beauty of the country and the warm reception I promise you from our generous people will compensate you for the trip.

With the assurance of my high regards I am devotedly your friend and obedient servant,

JNO. W. GEARY.

Some Papers of Franklin Pierce, 1852-1862.

(*Second Installment.*)

XIII. HON. JOHN W. GEARY TO PRESIDENT PIERCE.

Private.

LECOMPTON, KANSAS TERRITORY,
January 12th 1857.

His Excellency, Franklin Pierce.

My dear Sir :

Your friendly letter of the 12th ult., by the hands of Col: Winston¹ has been received.

I thank you, not only for your many personal assurances of confidence, but also for your public and decided approval of my official action.

Next to my personal honor and the approbation of my conscience, I value the success of your administration and hold sacred the delicate trust confided to me.

“Be so just and true to the right that no man can challenge your impartiality”, is an instruction so eminently just that it meets a warm response in my heart and will be my steady rule of action.

In the discharge of my executive duties, I have known and will continue to know “no party, no section, nothing but Kansas and my country”, and any measured success I have attained here is due to my determination to administer “equal and exact justice”.

Fully conscious of all the difficulties surrounding my delicate and responsible mission and with the general prediction of failure, I entered upon it calmly and deliberately with no fear of failure so long as I was conscious of your cordial and energetic support.

This feeling was necessary for my success, and my usefulness will be destroyed the moment this consciousness ceases.

The removal of Judge Lecompte became a necessity and “public policy” will certainly justify it in the eyes of all right thinking men. His peculiar entanglement in Kansas affairs and his partizan feeling evinced on repeated occasions, destroyed his public usefulness and was a great obstacle in the way of the recognition of the authority of the courts. The collision between the Judge and myself must be judged in the light of its *Kansas surroundings*.²

I deemed the act necessary (and upon the maturest reflection have no reason to change the opinion then formed,) to prevent the rescue of the Free-State prisoners and to preserve the peace of the territory.

¹ Isaac Winston, United States marshal for Kansas Territory.

² See “A Defense by Samuel D. Lecompte”, in *Kansas Historical Collections*, 1903-1904 (VIII, 389 ff.). See also *ibid.*, VII, 375, note.

It will not do to apply the same rules to the government of an old, well regulated state and to a Territory just emerging from an insurrection, like a sleeping volcano ready to burst forth at any moment. An act done in the one may be harmless, while in the other it would produce an explosion.

All eyes were upon me, and the moment I evinced the slightest complicity with either party, that moment the equilibrium was destroyed and the peace endangered.

No arrests were supposed to be made without my agency, and all discharges were attributed to me, as I had really resurrected the civil authority.

The discharge of Hayes,¹ after his arrest, through my agency, at once placed me in a false position, and public confidence would have been annihilated in the impartiality of my administration had I not immediately repudiated all connection with the imprudent action of the Judge.

There is a matter in this case which should have some weight in the question. The evidence before the Grand Jury was pointed to the fact that Hayes was the very man who committed the horrid act for which a pro-slavery Grand Jury found a true bill against him for murder in the first degree ; and of this I was advised when I ordered the arrest.

The right to destroy property to prevent the spread of a conflagration has been traced to the highest necessity and the natural rights of man independent of society or civil government. It is referred by moralists and jurists to the same great principle which justifies the exclusive appropriation of a plank in a shipwreck, though the life of another be sacrificed ; with the throwing overboard goods in a tempest for the safety of the vessel ; with the trespass upon the lands of another to escape death by an enemy.

The common law adopts the principles of the natural law, and places the justification of an act otherwise tortious precisely upon the same ground of necessity.

Actual or strong apparent necessity must exist as the sole ground of justification and the conduct of the individual must be regulated by his own judgment as to the exigencies of the case.

Being the centre of almost hourly communication with every part of the territory, and occupying an independent and impartial position, I had access to sources of information entirely closed to others. My judgment imperatively demanded the course of action I adopted, and I would have been recreant to duty and self-convicted of all consequences, had I evinced hesitation.

¹ Charles Hays, a member of the band of Kickapoo Rangers, found guilty by a grand jury of the murder of David C. Buffum near Leecompton, and discharged on bail by Chief Justice Lecompte. See John H. Gihon, *Geary and Kansas* (Philadelphia, 1866), 166-181, for a full though partizan account of this affair, showing the part taken by Pierce and Geary. See also Charles Robinson, *The Kansas Conflict* (New York, 1892), 339 and "A Defense by Samuel D. Lecompte", cited above.

The beneficial result of new and impartial officers will soon be apparent to the country in the general recognition of law and respect for the civil authority.

I desire especially that all officers coming here should be impressed with the necessity of attending to their legitimate duties, entirely avoiding partizan affiliations, as the best means of securing the respect of the people.

Judge Cunningham¹ and Mr. Winston² (neither of whom I had previously known,) seem to be "intelligent, thoroughly conservative and right minded men". The benefit of their presence is already apparent. I have heard favorable accounts of Messrs. Harrison³ and Spencer.⁴ I wish you would send them here as soon as possible.

As I have always endeavored with all the Territorial officers, so will I continue, to "cultivate kind relations with Judge Cato"⁵ although I regret that his associates have been anything but satisfactory. I am, however, happy to be able to say that I have less objection to him than to any of the old officers.

Last Tuesday was the day fixed by the Topeka State Constitution for the meeting of the so-called Free-State Legislature.

In my last dispatch to the State Department I mentioned the precautionary measures which I had quietly taken in the matter.

I had also confidential agents at Topeka and other places and had every assurance that no quorum would be present and that no business would be transacted in the slightest manner conflicting with the territorial government. Dr. Charles Robinson gave me assurances that he would resign his Governorship, which he accordingly did, and he was on his way to Boston upon the day of the meeting. W. Y. Roberts⁶ the Lt.-Governor, I was informed would not attend, and Mr. Klotz,⁷

¹ Thomas Cunningham, of Beaver County, Pennsylvania, appointed by Pierce November 19, 1856, to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of Associate Justice J. M. Burrell. He was an active Democrat and one of the electors for Buchanan. After looking the ground over carefully, he resigned. Joseph Williams, of Iowa, was appointed as his successor, June 3, 1857.

² See note 1, page 350.

³ C. O. Harrison, of Kentucky, nominated by Pierce November 17, 1856, to supersede Leconte as chief justice, but not confirmed by the Senate, February 17, 1857. See *Kansas Historical Collections*, VII, 332, note.

⁴ William Spencer, appointed by Pierce in 1856 as United States marshal of Kansas Territory to succeed Israel B. Donalson. *Ibid.*, IV, 657.

⁵ Sterling G. Cato, of Alabama, associate justice of the United States court for the territory of Kansas. See *ibid.*, IV, 555 ff., VIII, 390, note.

⁶ Colonel William Y. Roberts, of Pennsylvania.

⁷ Robert Klotz, of Pennsylvania, who reached Pawnee in December, 1854, and opened a hotel there, which, according to a local chronicler, usually had a more ample stock of "fluids" than of "solids". He superintended the construction of the building erected for the use of the legislature. For some reason the early Kansas lawmakers boycotted his hotel. Klotz was a member of the Topeka Constitutional Convention of 1855. He later returned to Pennsylvania and was elected a member of the Forty-seventh Congress. Philip C. Schuyler was secretary of state under the Topeka Constitution, and continued in this office until the dissolution of the Free-State organization. See *Kansas Historical Collections*, VII, 372.

the Secretary of State, was in Pennsylvania. So you will perceive that I had but little occasion for apprehension.

To provide against all contingencies I had a reliable agent at Topeka, to give me early notice of all movements, determining to repair there in person in case my presence became necessary.

Certain officious gentlemen in this place, under the impression and with the wish that the Free-State men would resist as heretofore, and thus furnish a pretext for renewed excitement, and in pursuance of a scheme they had been nursing for a long time, through their agent Saml. J. Jones, Ex. Shff: of this County,¹ made an information before Judge Cato against some thirty-four members of the old Topeka Legislature for usurpation of office on the 4th of March, 1856. Judge Cato issued a warrant to Marshal Donaldson, whose Deputy, Pardee, proceeded *alone* to Topeka, arrested twelve persons without the slightest resistance and brought them to Tecumseh, where, waiving all examination, they were held to bail in their own recognizance in the sum of Five Hundred Dollars each.

The intelligent action of these Free-State men in promptly submitting to the process of the Court entirely defeated this nefarious conspiracy to disturb the peace of the Territory, placed its actors in a ridiculous light and has excited a respect and sympathy for men heretofore regarded as fanatics. The Free-State men now understand their true policy to be in favor of peace, as even the color of disturbance here would prevent the immense spring emigration and they are fully resolved to furnish no pretext for disturbance.

The object of the meeting at Topeka, as I am reliably informed, was to petition Congress for the repeal of the Kansas Statutes and the reorganization of the Territory upon the Organic act with such additional checks as the wisdom of Congress might suggest, and not to enact *laws*.

Judge Cato in the strongest terms condemned it to me, but remarked in his own justification that "the information being made before him in due form by a responsible man, it was his *duty* to issue the warrant".

If this Topeka movement had not been noticed, it would have died a natural death, as they failed to secure a quorum, and this imprudent interference has furnished a plausible excuse for what would otherwise have been a gross failure. They will not lose so good an opportunity to write glowing letters, redolent with Kansas outrages and the violation of Constitutional rights.

No real injury however to the interests of peace will result from this ridiculous *faux pas*.

As I have informed you in former letters, there has almost from the first, been a combination here (the leaders of which are Genl. Calhoun, Sheriff Jones, with other lesser men at various points of this Territory, and having their headquarters in Westport) to defeat my policy and to create the impression that the existing peace is entirely illusive and with-

¹ Douglas County. See *ibid.*, 333, note.

out solid foundations. Various expedients have been devised to precipitate a collision between myself and the Pro-Slavery party and with this view the most lying rumors had been put in circulation and the boldest predictions of war proclaimed.

The Convention that was to meet in Leavenworth, assembled here this evening, and before receiving the credentials of its members, a discussion ensued whether the body was to be termed "law and order" or Pro-Slavery, and an amendment was carried that no person should be entitled to a seat in the Convention *unless he was in favor of making Kansas a Slave State*. Genl. Clark,¹ Sheriff Jones, J. H. Stringfellow² and Jones³ of the Lecompton Union were the principal speakers. The resolution was carried by few voices and met with no enthusiasm.

The Legislature organized to-day and I expect to transmit my message as soon as I have proper notice of the organization.

I will exhaust all the resources of circumspection and prudence in my official communications with parties in this Territory. I apprehend no difficulty. I am fully resolved that the spirit and intention of the Organic act shall be fairly carried out, and if needs be, I will use a vigor of action sufficient to awe conspirators and preserve the peace.

With sentiments of the highest respect, I remain,

Your friend

JNO. W. GEARY.

XIV. PIERCE'S CABINET TO FRANKLIN PIERCE (COPY).

WASHINGTON 3 March, 1857.

Sir :

We are not willing to allow our common relation as members of your Cabinet to cease without communicating the sentiments which the retrospect of intimate and long continued official association has left indelibly impressed on our minds.

We have witnessed with satisfaction and respect the untiring devotion to the public service, — the most ardent zeal for the good of the country, — the purity of purpose, — and the scrupulous observance of constitutional principles which has been manifested by you at all times and in all circumstances. As the territory, population, wealth and power of the Union continue to increase, so, in the same proportion do the cares and responsibility of the administration of its government. Each successive presidential period brings with it new events of national importance and

¹George W. Clark, United States government agent for the Pottawatomie Indians. See letter of Geary, December 22, 1856, in the REVIEW, October, 1904, 124-127. *Kansas Historical Collections*, VI, 63-64.

²Captain John H. Stringfellow, of Virginia, a brother of Dr. B. F. Stringfellow, and co-editor of the *Squatter Sovereign*, which was established February 3, 1855, by J. H. Stringfellow and Robert S. Kelley, at Atchison. They sold it in 1857 to an association of which Ex-Senator S. C. Pomeroy was agent, and it became a Free-State paper. See *Kansas Historical Collections*, VII, 331-332, note.

³A. W. Jones and C. A. Paris established the *Lecompton Union*, May 3, 1856, as a pro slavery paper.

consequent collision of interest or convictions. Ours are institutions of free thought and speech. Every citizen participates in the conduct of public affairs, and in the scrutiny and the judgment of public men. He, therefore, who is highest in place and in functions, is, of necessity, peculiarly subject amid the prejudices and the passions of the hour to encounter blames when a better understanding of his motives and of his acts would ensure commendation. We who have seen you most and with the fullest opportunities of appreciation, know well how conscientiously you have discharged the high trust devolved upon you, and we confidently believe that, as time rolls on, the voice of impartial history will ratify our attestation of the integrity and patriotism of your exercise of the executive power of the United States.

We desire also to express our grateful sense of the dignified courtesy and considerate candor which has uniformly marked your deportment towards us, both in the consultations of the Cabinet and in the business of our respective Departments. This, while it has served to lighten our official labor, and facilitate its performance, has efficiently contributed to maintain a unity of administration, few examples of which occur in the annals of the Republic.'

With earnest regard and warm wishes for your health and happiness,

We have the honor to be,

Your sincere friends,

W. L. MARCY
 JAMES GUTHRIE
 JEFFERSON DAVIS
 J. C. DOBBIN
 R. MCCLELLAND
 JAMES CAMPBELL
 C. CUSHING.

Franklin Pierce,
 President of the United States.

XV. FRANKLIN PIERCE TO MEMBERS OF HIS CABINET (COPY).

WASHINGTON March 4, 1857.

Gentlemen :

Your uninterrupted manifestation of personal friendship for me, during the past four years leaves no occasion for reassurance of your cordial regard now that we are about to separate.

I participate fully in the gratification which you express in reference to our daily intercourse happily undisturbed by any element of discord and I shall ever hold in grateful appreciation the extent to which my most severe and perplexing official labors have been lightened by your unflinching and cheerful cooperation.

It will, I am sure, be an agreeable recollection to us all, that whatever else the Administration may have done or omitted to do, it has not sought applause by the adoption of temporising expedients, nor immunity from censure by the negative character of its policy and measures.

The violent assaults which it has encountered on the one hand, and the zeal with which it has been defended on the other, are conclusive upon the point that it has been one of positive good, or positive evil.

The exercise of the veto power on sundry occasions, involving, in some instances, large individual pecuniary interests, and in others questions of public policy, of an exciting character; the discussion in annual and special messages of controverted constitutional principles and of the rights of the States under our system, have undeniably been a fruitful source of complaint and vituperation. These were matters which alone could be determined by my own conscience and judgment and in the responsibility of which no one could participate.

You may I think recur to the condition of the country during the four years now about to close. It has concededly been a period of general prosperity; defalcation on the part of federal officers has been almost entirely unknown; the public treasury, with more than \$20,000,000 constantly on hand, has been free from the touch of fraud or peculation; long pending foreign questions have been amicably and advantageously adjusted; valuable additions have been made to our already vast domain; and peace has been maintained with all the nations of the earth and without compromise of right or a stain upon the national honor.

Whatever of credit pertains to the Federal Executive in the accomplishment of these results, is attributable in great measure, to the fidelity, laborious habits and ability of the heads of the different Departments.

In my final retirement from active participation in public affairs I shall observe the career which awaits you individually, with the interest of constant and unabated friendship.

Your friend,

FRANKLIN PIERCE.

Hon. Wm. L. Marcy
“ James Guthrie
“ Jefferson Davis
“ Jas C. Dobbin
“ Robt McClelland
“ James Campbell
“ Caleb Cushing.

XVI. GENERAL G. T. BEAUREGARD TO FRANKLIN PIERCE.

NEW ORLEANS, March 5th, 1857

My dear General:

Permit a sincere friend upon your retirement from the Presidential chair to congratulate you on the prosperous and favorable condition in which you leave the country and the Government to your successor, notwithstanding all the troubles and obstacles arising from the excitement of the worst passions of the worst parts of our population you had to contend with.

Let your opponents, enemies and false friends croak as they will. History will give you ample credit for the ability firmness and fearless-

ness you have displayed in the execution of your always responsible, and at times very trying, duties. We of the South are or should be, everlastingly grateful to you for the manly and independent course you adopted when our sacred rights were about being trampled upon by an unscrupulous and insolent majority in the lower House of Congress.

Shall we not have ere long the honor of a visit from you and your estimable Lady? We would be proud and happy to be able to extend to you both the Hospitalities of our good city.

That you may find in your retirement all the comforts and enjoyments you are both so deservedly entitled to, is the hope and prayer of, my dear General,

Your most sincere friend and serv't,

G. T. BEAUREGARD.

General Franklin Pierce,
Ex-president of the U. States,
Washington, D. C.

XVII. JEFFERSON DAVIS TO FRANKLIN PIERCE.

BRIERSFIELD MI. July 23, 1857.

My dear friend.

I had intended to have written to you some time since, but when I returned from Jackson where our state convention met in the latter part of June, I found my little boy quite sick and, as soon as he was able to travel, hurried off to the sea-coast of Missi. where I left my wife and the children for the summer. Little Jeff was well and Maggie and Mrs. Davis in better health than when they left home.

During the session of the Convention a resolution was introduced censuring Gov. R. J. Walker.¹ An amendment was offered to include Presidt. Buchanan, and a member² proposed to extend the censure to you; on the ground that he had learned from the U. S. Dist. Atty., Isaacs,³ that you had made appointments for Kansas with the design of aiding the free-soilers and had sent out agents charged with your views to oppose the introduction of slavery into that territory. I replied, when subsequently called on to address the Convention. First stating what had been reported to me, for I was not present when the remarks were made and asking if I had been correctly informed. Upon being answered in the affirmative I proceeded in terms less polite than just to pronounce the statement untrue. An animated conversation ensued and the position was changed to the statement that Mr. Isaacs had told him (Mr. Archer) that certain persons who had come to Kansas stated your wish to be that Kansas should be a free State. After ridiculing a charge based upon the report of unknown persons of a conversation held with another at a remote time and place, I said that of your personal prefer-

¹ Robert James Walker, of Mississippi, appointed by Buchanan March 10, 1857, as governor of Kansas, to succeed Geary.

² Archer.

³ See No. XII., Geary to Pierce, December 22, 1856 AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW, X, 124-127, October, 1904.

ences it was not for me to speak, nor in the present connection for them to inquire but that he who charged you with using your executive functions to aid the free-soilers in Kansas uttered a slanderous falsehood, which years of friendship and an intimate knowledge of your opinions authorized me to denounce.

I said that Northern Democrats generally feared the political effect of a pro-slavery constitution in Kansas, that Southern Democrats had not claimed that Northern Democrats should concur in their abstract opinions in relation to African slavery, that he who recognized the rights we have under the Constitution had done all which was essential, and when as in your case his cordial support of those rights had brought upon him the combined batteries of all our enemies that he was entitled to the support of southern men, and instead of carping criticisms, to unstinted commendation and unqualified approval. Mr. Archer is an extreme man, of high personal respectability and great tenacity of purpose. He announced toward the close of the altercation that he would write to Mr. Isaacs, and said he had been an ardent friend and supporter of yours until he felt you were not sincere, and that the report of certain persons had been strengthened by the character of the governors sent to Kansas by you.

The Convention was so entirely on my side that Mr. A. had little attention and no support, and but for the threat to sustain his allegations by writing to Mr. Isaacs and the possibility that the public would hear of the matter again, I would not have disturbed you with this recital. The attempt to make a distinction between you and myself was rejected and with happy effect. I think the motive was friendship for Walker, not hostility to you, and beyond the irritation of the occasion will not be visited upon me. I add the last lest some report of a [word illegible] correspondent should lead you to think otherwise.

Mrs. Davis and myself speculate on the chances of meeting Mrs. Pierce and yourself again. We were much gratified to hear of her improved health and trust a southern winter will confirm it. Your many friends in this region expect a visit from you.

I thank you for your speech in Faneuil Hall, it was quoted by me in my speech at Jackson. Your mode of saving the Union is substantially the same as that proposed by Calhoun in his last speech in the Senate, a concurrence which was hailed by the State's Rights Democracy, which means all from whom you could accept anything in this community.

With love to Mrs. Pierce, I am as ever

Your friend,

JEFFN. DAVIS.

Presdt. Franklin Pierce.

XVIII. CHIEF JUSTICE R. B. TANEY TO FRANKLIN PIERCE.

FOUQUIER WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, Aug. 29, 1857.

My Dear Sir:

You will see by the date of this letter that I am again at the place where I had the pleasure of meeting you last summer, and I have met

here again our old friend Mr. Taylor. We talk about you and Mrs. Pierce when we meet, and when the mails come I look to see if the newspapers say anything as to your whereabouts or of the health of Mrs. Pierce and yourself. The last accounts represented you as in good health and Mrs. Pierce as improving. I hope the report is true as to both.

You see I am passing through another conflict, much like the one which followed the removal of the deposits, and the war is being waged upon me in the same spirit and by many of the same men who distinguished themselves on that occasion by the unscrupulous means to which they resorted.

At my time of life when my end must be near, I should have enjoyed to find that the irritating strifes of this world were over, and that I was about to depart in peace with all men and all men in peace with me. Yet perhaps it is best as it is. The mind is less apt to feel the torpor of age when it is thus forced into action by public duties. And I have an abiding confidence that this act of my judicial life¹ will stand the test of time and the sober judgment of the country, as well as the political act of which I have spoken.

Your successor has, I think, a difficult time before him. Symptoms of discord are already appearing. Feeling as I do the necessity of cordial union among the friends of the administration in order to prevent the government from falling to pieces, I am unwilling to find fault with the present administration even when I cannot approve. Yet I must say to you that I deeply regret the adoption of the principle of rotation in office.

Its inevitable consequence will be to multiply the number of political adventurers and trading politicians who are always ready to sacrifice the public interests for their own individual profit, and our elections instead of being contests for principles will in a short time become contests for the emoluments of office, and influenced by mere mercenary motives. The removal of persons who are opposed to the Administration by seeking to displace it, stands on a very different principle. Indeed I never could comprehend how a man of right principles and right feeling could consent to hold an office under persons whom he thought it his duty to oppose and was endeavoring to turn out. But the principle adopted by the present administration is a very different one; is now, for the first time, brought into the Government and will, I fear, do great mischief.

I shall return to Washington about the 15th or 20th of September, and hope that at some leisure moment you will let me hear from you. And with my best regards to Mrs. Pierce, I am, dear sir, most respectfully and truly,

Your friend and servt.,

R. B. TANEY.

General Franklin Pierce,
Concord, New Hampshire.

P. S. Mr. Taylor, having understood that I was about writing you, requests me to send his best regards.

¹ The Dred Scott decision.

XIX. JEFFERSON DAVIS TO FRANKLIN PIERCE.

WASHINGTON, D. C. Jany. 17, 1859.

My dear friend.

Your letter relieved [me] of an anxiety created by the absence of any recent intelligence concerning you. We are dragging on here in a manner significant of no good to the country. Each day renders me more hopeless of effecting anything for the present or prospective benefit of the country by legislation of Congress. Even more than heretofore Members and Senators represent extreme opinions and may increase, but cannot allay, the ferment which gave to them political life. I am gratified by the view you take of my New England tour. The abolitionists and the disunionists combined to assail me for the speeches made there. I hope the Southern assailants have been scotched and the others may rail on to their content. That tour convinced me that the field of useful labor is now among the people and that temperate, true men could effect much by giving to the opposite section the views held by the other. The difference is less than I had supposed.

Your old friends in Missi have not forgotten you and are ready to show their appreciation of you on the first occasion. Many said to me that your renomination for the Presidency was their first wish and best hope.

Mrs. Davis was quite happy in our sojourn in Maine and at Boston but often wished it could have been possible to have found Mrs. Pierce at home. Our children have grown rapidly and the little girl is now quite a companion to me when at evening I go home to forget the past and postpone the future.

Clay¹ and Fitzpatrick² were happy to find you still remembered them and both said they would write to you. I will send you some papers which I hope may be more fortunate in their journey than were those of last year.

Please give my kindest regards to Mrs. Pierce of whom we speak often and to whose return we look with affectionate solicitude. You may scold me roundly as I deserve for not writing to you more regularly, but do not I pray you fail to give me credit for good resolves and do let me hear from you as often as your convenience will allow.

As ever your friend,
JEFF^{DA} DAVIS.

XX. JEFFERSON DAVIS TO FRANKLIN PIERCE.

OAKLAND, Allegheny Co., Md, Sept. 2, 1859.

My dear friend,

I am rejoiced to know that you are again at home and to learn from your remarks at Boston that Mrs. Pierce is in better health.

Your letter from England³ was not received until after the date on which you directed me to write to you at London. I consequently

¹ Clement Claiborne Clay, elected United States senator from Alabama, 1853, re-elected in 1859, withdrew 1861. *Appletons' Cyclopaedia of American Biography.*

² Benjamin Fitzpatrick, United States senator from Georgia. *Ibid.*

³ Where he had gone for the benefit of Mrs. Pierce's health in the spring of 1858.

waited to hear further of your movements. We are here because of Mrs. Davis' feeble health. She has not been well since last winter and this place was selected because of mountain retreats it was the most accessible. I returned from Missi. near to the last of July and have been seriously ill, though now free of disease my strength has not been restored and there is constant apprehension of a relapse. Please give our love to Mrs. Pierce and assure her of our constant solicitude and desire to see her. Maggie says she remembers you both and always loves you. Jeff is nearly as large as Maggie and very stout. The infant (Joe) is more like Maggie than Jeff. I hope we shall have the satisfaction of submitting them all to your inspection at some future day and I will [not] trouble you now with a description impartial though it would naturally be. Will you make your once contemplated visit to the South this winter?

In reference to your views of your political position I will say that I do not think you are called upon to make any disclaimer in relation to the Charleston Convention. You would not under any circumstances seek the nomination and I hope you will not obstruct the wish of your friends, should circumstances indicate it, to use your name for the nomination.¹

In Missi. I am sure you are preferred above all others. The reason is two-fold: first it is personal, which includes attachment and confidence, second it arises from the fact that the opposition to your administration was of a kind which would make the issue between the Abolitionists and the friends of the Constitution as distinct as the most ultra pro-slavery man could render it, without the draw-back which may be felt on account of the fiction just now prevalent that the South desires to reopen the African slave trade and to enact a slave code by Congress to be enforced in the Territories, by federal power.

The decency and good sense of the people must revolt against the low chicanery by which the Presidency is sought by certain ambitious demagogues and the reaction will be favorable to a gentleman whose self-respect and respect for the people have led him to withdraw from public notice rather than obtrude himself upon the popular attention as a candidate for the Presidency, an office which you will doubtless agree

¹ There are among the Pierce papers several letters from prominent politicians of the period in which inquiry is made as to the availability of Pierce as a candidate before the Charleston Convention of 1860. Some writers merely express the hope that Pierce will accept a renomination. Others warmly urge him to that course upon the ground that he is the only man who can unite the Northern and Southern wings of the party and save the Union.

On September 22, 1859, in a letter written from Andover, Mass., to Eli S. Shorter of Eufala, Alabama, Pierce said: "I feel . . . that my public life is closed and have not a single lingering desire that it should be otherwise. This and more my friends at the North fully understand. They know that it would annoy me if I believed that my name could come before the Charleston Convention under any possible combination of circumstances. Although some of my warm personal friends have been elected delegates in Maine and Massachusetts and more probably will be in New England, I have reason to believe that they will regard my wishes in this relation."

with me, can never be properly filled by one who has sought it in the mode and by the means known as electioneering.

Until we meet I will hope to hear from you often. Not knowing where to send this if you shall have left Boston I will request that it be fordd. to you. With best wishes I am as ever very truly yr friend

JEFF^S. DAVIS.

Exc'y. F. Pierce

XXI. FRANKLIN PIERCE TO H. D. PIERCE.¹

CLARENDON HOTEL CITY OF NEW YORK Dec^r 21, 1859

My dear Brother—

I hope you will feel a sufficient interest in us to desire to know how we have progressed thus far on our journey.

After three or four weeks with our friends (the Masons) in Boston very agreeably, we made pleasant visits of a week at Hartford and a week at New Haven.

On Wednesday last we came to this City where we will remain till this day week, (Saturday Jan^r 7th) when we propose to embark for Nassau in the Island of New Providence, one of the Bahama group. The climate is represented to be very fine and we shall in the absence of bad weather or bad luck reach the Island in four days. Frank had better find it on the map and thus get a distinct idea of our geographical location. I am sorry to say that in my intercourse with residents of this city or with people casually here I have found nothing to quiet my apprehensions with regard to the serious dangers which threaten the Union. Orders for merchandize and for various articles of manufacture are being constantly countermanded by the Southern people, social intercourse between the North and the South and business arrangements also are being seriously disturbed—and if the interruption becomes much more complete, political relations cannot long be maintained. What the effect even of this interruption must be upon New England which depends to so great an extent upon the intelligent application of ingenuity and industry to the mechanic arts no well informed man can fail to foresee and no man whether well informed or not will fail to feel. Disasterous as disruption would be to all portions of the Country the blow will fall most heavily upon New England so far as property and prosperity are concerned. Prosperity! there would be none, and property not enough to talk about. But after all the prostration of material interests would constitute but one of the most inconsiderable elements in the general disaster. Under existing circumstances I deplore the necessity, which calls me away from home. The Union meetings² are well so far as they go and for the present. But

¹ His brother, of Hillsboro, New Hampshire.

² The *Boston Daily Courier* for Friday, December 9, 1859, in giving an account of the Union meeting in Faneuil Hall on the preceding evening, prints a long and interesting letter of Pierce to the Executive Committee of Boston Citizens, dated Concord, December 7, 1859, giving his opinion of the John Brown raid and of Abolition sentiment concerning the raid. Soon afterward Clark, Fellows, and Company, of Boston, reprinted the *Courier* of December 9 as a pamphlet, with an edition of 5,000 copies. A copy of this letter in Pierce's handwriting is among the Pierce papers.

if we cannot wrest political power from the hands of fanatical sectionalism, the speeches which have been made, the letters which have been written and the resolutions which have been passed will not be worth the paper on which they have been printed. If, for instance, sectionalism is still to be dominant in N. H. and Connecticut when the only elections are to be held next spring, the South will and may well take such results as indicating that men, who mean to obey the Constitution in all its parts not of one party, but of different parties have made an earnest struggle for the right and were yet powerless. Can our people be roused to a sense of duty and obligation before it is too late. Time alone can determine. I shall write you again upon this subject and make some suggestions with regard to your property and business. In the mean time bring the latter into as narrow a compass and into a condition of perfect security, as you can—and make no new purchases or contracts. You can show this letter to Judge Potter¹ and to Genl. and John McNeil² but to nobody else.

Love to y^r wife and the boys.

Y^r affec^t Brother

FRANKLIN PIERCE

P. S. Do not fail to write me the day you receive this and direct to this City. I have no time to reread and you may find it necessary to supply words but you will I hope make out the sense and mind it.

XXII. JEFFERSON DAVIS TO FRANKLIN PIERCE.

SENATE CHAMBER, Jan'y. 30, 1860.

My dear friend,

We are yet as when you sailed talking in the Senate and wrangling for organization in the House. There is a belief that Smith³ an old line Whig of North Carolina will be elected, but so many chickens have been counted from eggs which proved addled that I have no confidence in the prophecies of the House.

Govr. Dana of Me. is still here and much concerned lest our party should be divided at Charleston. I have not been able to show him how the question can be adjusted by "resolution", but have told him of the only way I have seen and which is that of nominating the man who will be accepted by both sections without a platform.

Yesterday we had our youngest boy christened Joseph Evans and wished we could have had you and Mrs. Pierce to wish a "God speed" on the journey of life.

Nicholson of Tenn.⁴ is reading a speech need I say on what, do we ever speak of anything but that over which we have no control, slavery of the negro.

¹ Judge C. E. Potter of New Hampshire, a relative of the President by marriage.

² John H. McNeil, a brother-in-law of Pierce.

³ Representative William N. H. Smith.

⁴ Senator Alfred O. P. Nicholson.

more and are disposed to rush blindly on dangers which they feel are at hand but do not appreciate; others see in the crisis only the vulgar struggle of the ins and outs; and have no fear of a catastrophe; whilst a few are willing to abandon the government to get rid of men who are unfaithful to it.

I have never seen the country in so great danger, and those who might protect it seem to be unconscious of the necessity. If our little grog-drinking, electioneering Demagogue¹ can destroy our hopes, it must be that we have been doomed to destruction.

Hoping soon to see you and in the meantime to hear from you fully, I am, as ever Cordially your friend,

JEFFN. DAVIS.

To Presidt. F. Pierce.

XXIV. A LETTER OF PIERCE ON THE SECESSION MOVEMENT.²

CONCORD, N. H., Nov. 23, 1860.

My Dear Sir.

I have just received your letter of the 21st and sympathize with all you say with regard to the inestimable value of the Union. By letters, by speeches, in private conversation, I have uttered for more than twelve years words of warning against the heresies which have swept over the North and culminated in the enactment of laws which are directly in the teeth of the clear provisions of the Constitution, in eleven states.

But you know how futile have been all patriotic counsels. I have desired to do just what you suggest, but the difficulty is to see just what as an honest man I can say.

I have never desired to survive the wreck of the Union. With submission to the Providence of God, I do not desire to live to see the day when the flag of my country, with all its stars in their places, will not float at home and abroad. But when you ask me to interpose, then comes this paralyzing fact that if I were in their places, after so many years of unrelenting aggression, I should probably be doing what they are doing.

It is not the election of Mr. Lincoln, *per se*, which has caused this emphatic movement at the South. That election is beyond all doubt Constitutional, but the people of the Southern States look beyond it to see, if they can, what it implies. They see the great and powerful state of Massachusetts electing by 35000 majority a man who justified the armed invasion of Virginia last year³; and they believe that the people of Massachusetts are acting deliberately. They see Mr. Lincoln elected and they take his election as an endorsement of his opinion that we cannot go on as we are, but must in the end be all free or all slave states. Foolish, absurd and groundless as this view is and will always stand, the

¹ Douglas.

² This letter is in the handwriting of Pierce, is unsigned and unaddressed, and bears the indorsement, "Copy of letter not sent."

³ Governor John A. Andrew.

The prospect for our country is not less gloomy than when you left. The condition in which Genl. Cushing said men should provide for storm seems to be rapidly approaching. I will stand by the flag and uphold the Constitution whilst there is possibility of effecting anything to preserve and perpetuate the govt. we inherited — beyond that my duty and my faith binds me to Mississippi and her fortunes as she may shape them. I hope on for the kind providence that has preserved us heretofore, and still labor at my [post?] as a member of the general govt.

Please present my kindest remembrances and most friendly wishes to Mrs. Pierce.

Mrs. Davis would I know join me in these expressions of affection to Mrs. Pierce and also to yourself.

Hoping to hear from you often, I am as ever, truly yrs.

Presidt. F. Pierce.

JEFFN. DAVIS.

XXIII. JEFFERSON DAVIS TO FRANKLIN PIERCE.

WASHINGTON D. C. June 13, 1860.

My dear General,

Your welcome letter of the 11th inst. relieved me of speculation of your whereabouts as I have seen it stated in the newspapers that you were about to go directly to New Hampshire, but had not found a verification of the statement. It grieves me beyond expression to learn that Mrs. Pierce is ill and Mrs. Davis joins me in expression of our sympathy and affectionate regard.

We all deplore the want of unanimity as to the candidates among our Southern friends and I do not see any satisfactory solution of the difficulty. The darkest hour precedes the dawn and it may be that light will break upon us when most needed and least expected.

If your hope should be realized as to the action of the N. E. and N. Y. delegation in relation to the delegates to be admitted from the South, it will have a good effect, if they should otherwise decide in favor of the spurious delegates, the Democratic party will become historic.

Our people will support any sound man, but will not vote for a "squatter sovereignty" candidate any more than for a "free-soiler".

If northern men insist upon nominating Douglas, we must be beaten and with such alienation as leaves nothing to hope for in the future of nationality in our organization.

I have urged my friends to make an honest effort to save our party from disintegration as the last hope of averting ruin from the country. They would gladly unite upon you, or Dallas and would readily be brought to any one of like character and record.

I urged upon Mr. Minot¹ before he went to Charleston the evil effect of permitting N. H. to be mustered under the banner of Douglas, but it was of no avail. Matters are now more complicated and men are more unreasonable. Some are unwilling to go into the Convention at Balti-

¹ James Minot, formerly Pierce's law partner, and later his executor.

South takes his election as an endorsement of resistance to the law for the return of fugitives from service of 1851, and of the other heresy broadly promulgated by him and Mr. Seward, referred to above. of an "irrepressible conflict".

If our fathers were mistaken when they formed the Constitution, if time has proved it, the sooner we are apart the better. I think it is all false, all wrong. I have tried to make other people believe it, but in vain. How can I urge the men of the South to take a view I should not take if I were there, a view which I do not take as a northern citizen with all I have at stake here. It is vain to talk about eloquence and appeals. Action, immediate action, on the part of the northern states which have nullified the Constitution is what is wanted and just what we cannot have. Is it not Mr. Wilson¹ who said his heel was upon the neck of the South and [who is] accepted everywhere by the people of Massachusetts? Is not Mr. Sumner, who has said more offensive things than that, equally accepted and applauded? Both are true — all is true, which they allege with regard to our aggressions on their Constitutional rights.

XXV. JEFFERSON DAVIS TO FRANKLIN PIERCE.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Jan. 20, 1861.

My dear friend:

I have often and sadly turned my thoughts to you during the troublous times through which we have been passing and now I come to the hard task of announcing to you that the hour is at hand which closes my connection with the United States for the independence and union of which my Father bled, and in the service of which I have sought to emulate the example he set for my guidance.

Mississippi not as a matter of choice but of necessity, has resolved to enter on the trial of secession. Those who have driven her to this alternative threaten to deprive her of the right to require that her government shall rest on the consent of the governed, to substitute foreign force for domestic support, to reduce a state to the condition from which the colony arose. In the attempt to avoid the issue which had been joined by the country, the present administration has complicated and precipitated the question. Even now if the duty "to preserve the public property" was rationally regarded, the probable collision at Charleston would be avoided. Security far better than any which the federal troops can give might be obtained in consideration of the little garrison at Fort Sumpter. If the disavowal of any purpose to coerce So. Ca. be sincere, the possession of a work to command the harbor is worse than useless.

When Lincoln comes in he will have but to continue in the path of his predecessor to inaugurate a civil war and leave a soi-disant democratic administration responsible for the fact. General Cushing² was here last week and when we parted it seemed like taking a last leave of a Brother.

¹ Henry Wilson, colleague of Charles Sumner, as senator from Massachusetts.

² Caleb Cushing.

I leave immediately for Mississippi and know not what may devolve upon me after my return. Civil war has only horror for me, but whatever circumstances demand shall be met as a duty and I trust be so discharged that you will not be ashamed of our former connection or cease to be my friend.

I had hoped this summer to have had an opportunity to see you and Mrs. Pierce and to have shown you our children. Mrs. Davis was sorely disappointed when we turned southward without seeing you. I believe she wrote Mrs. Pierce in explanation of the circumstances which prevented us from executing our cherished plan of a visit to you when we should leave West Point.

Mrs. Davis joins me in kind remembrance to Mrs. Pierce and the expression of the hope that we may yet have you both at our country home. Do me the favor to write me often. Address Hurricane P. O., Warren County, Miss.

May God bless you is ever the prayer of your friend

JEFFN. DAVIS.

President F. Pierce.

XXVI. FRANKLIN PIERCE TO BISHOP CARLTON CHASE.¹

HILLSBORO, May 6, 1861.

My dear Sir,

The perusal of your cordial note of the 22nd. inst. afforded me great satisfaction. The condition of our country, superinduced to a great extent by the wrong and persistent moral aggression of the North, but to a still greater extent by the arrogant rashness of the South, is to the last degree deplorable. What is to become of the republic, seems to me, to be beyond the grasp of human wisdom.

We cannot subjugate the Southern States, if we would. The idea that they can subjugate the Northern, Middle and Northwestern States, is simply preposterous. And yet in the face of these propositions, to which all intelligent minds assent, the masses of the people on both sides are apparently hurried forward against the plainest dictates of reason and humanity, as if stricken with judicial madness.

I enjoy the memories which you express of my venerated father and reciprocate your desire for the honest grasp of the hand, especially in a time like this.

I am glad our hearts, and if need be, our hands, are likely to go together in the fearful emergency which confronts us. The loss of life is much. The want of those who depend for their daily bread upon their daily labor is much. The loss of property, so far as I am concerned, is nothing. But the loss of my country — the overthrow of what I esteem the last hope of civil liberty is fearful.

¹Episcopalian bishop, consecrated first bishop of New Hampshire in 1844. Was rector for twenty-four years in Bellows Falls, Vt. ; later was rector in Claremont, N. H.

If I can I will, in a week or two see you at Claremont. If this may not be

Believe me truly, Your friend,
Bishop Carlton Chase, FRANKLIN PIERCE.
Claremont, N. H.

XXVII. CHIEF JUSTICE R. B. TANEY TO FRANKLIN PIERCE.

WASHINGTON June 12, 1861.

My dear sir :

I left Baltimore before your kind letter reached that city and it has been forwarded to me here.

Your cordial approbation of my decision in the case of the Habeas Corpus has given me sincere pleasure. In the present state of the public mind inflamed with passion and seeking to accomplish its object by force of arms, I was sensible of the grave responsibility which the case of John Merryman cast upon me. But my duty was plain — and that duty required me to meet the question directly and firmly, without evasion — whatever might be the consequences to myself.

The paroxysm of passion into which the country has suddenly been thrown, appears to me to amount almost to delirium. I hope that it is too violent to last long, and that calmer and more sober thoughts will soon take its place: and that the North, as well as the South, will see that a peaceful separation, with free institutions in each section, is far better than the union of all the present states under a military government, and a reign of terror preceded too by a civil war with all its horrors, and which end as it may will prove ruinous to the victors as well as the vanquished. But at present I grieve to say passion and hate sweep everything before them.

Accept, dear sir, the highest respect and best wishes of
Your friend and servt.

R. B. TANEY.

Franklin Pierce, Ex-President of the U. S.
Concord, New Hampshire.

XXVIII. FRANKLIN PIERCE TO HONORABLE JAMES A. PEARCE.¹

CONCORD N. H. January 15, 1862

My dear Sir —

I read with unusual interest and satisfaction, the debate, which occurred in the Senate on the 16th ult., upon the resolution of Mr Trumbull,² and desire to express my thanks for the sentiments and thoughts, which the occasion elicited from you.

¹ Senator from Maryland.

² On December 12, 1861, Lyman Trumbull, senator from Illinois, introduced the following resolution: "Resolved, That the Secretary of State be directed to inform the Senate whether, in the loyal States of the Union, any person or persons have been arrested and imprisoned and are now held in confinement by orders from him or his Department; and, if so, under what law said arrests have been made, and said persons imprisoned." *Congressional Globe*, 37 Congress, 2 Session, Part I, 67. For the debate referred to, see *ibid.*, 90 ff.

My convictions and sympathies are with you thoroughly, when you say, "I do not believe that it (imprisonment upon *lettres de cachet*) promotes the purposes of those, who desire to see this union brought together again, an object, to me, of all others the most desirable, if it be possible." In my estimation the mover of the enquiry deserves the gratitude of freemen everywhere, and only utters truth with force, when he declares, that, "the power, without charge, without examination, without opportunity of reply, at the click of the telegraph, to arrest a man in a peaceable portion of the Country and imprison him" is "of the essence of despotism." And yet, the public mind thus far, would seem to have been scarcely more roused, by current events of this character, than it was years ago, when we received accounts of similar incarcerations, ordered by the father, of the now deposed King of the Two Sicilies. How incredible it will appear hereafter, when history shall be written up, that at this period of the Republic, the constitutional safeguards of personal liberty, could have been so easily and with so little apparent concern, swept away.

The Secretary of State,¹ on the 20th ult., four days after the debate in which you participated, addressed an *official* note to me, which serves to illustrate, in a striking manner, the slight grounds, or rather the groundless suspicions, upon which, in these times, citizens are liable to suffer in reputation, if not in loss of liberty. I replied without delay, and so far as I am personally affected, may, I trust, well leave the matter, in quietness, upon the files of the Department. It is my belief, however, that no recent measure, has been fraught with more mischief, than the issuing of *lettres de cachet*, and consequent arrests and imprisonments in violation of the provisions of the Constitution; and that the earlier the system is effectually checked, the better it will be, for the Government and the Country, as well as for the subjects of oppression. The evidence is abundant to show, that the plea of *necessity*, except in the presence or immediate neighbourhood of hostile armies, where the administration of law, under its usual forms, may be inevitably suspended, is not graciously accepted by the mass of the people. Union, without security for personal liberty, is not the Union, which they have cherished and to the restoration of which they look, with earnest desire and hope. Nothing, perhaps, could express more clearly their views, on this point, than the language of the great modern historian, who died, at a comparatively recent period, leaving his work incomplete. In tracing the successive steps in the progress of British liberty, he says, "We have been taught by long experience, that we cannot without danger, suffer any breach of the Constitution to pass unnoticed" — "As we cannot, without the risk of evils, from which imagination recoils, employ physical force as a check on misgovernment, it is evidently our wisdom to keep all constitutional checks on misgovernment in the highest state of efficiency, to watch with jealousy the first beginnings of encroachment, and never to suffer irregu-

¹ Seward.

larities, even when harmless in themselves, to pass unchallenged, lest they acquire the force of precedents." Who in our land will affirm, that any other doctrine is worthy of those, who hold their rights under a solemn written charter? It is cheering to know, that enquiry has been moved in the right quarter, and that able and fearless men are stirred by a sense of what is due to our fellow-citizens, who have been imprisoned, without assignment of cause and discharged without explanation; and yet more to such as are still in confinement and, precluded by guards and prison doors from the privilege of the great writ of liberty, and thus from confronting, before a competent judicial tribunal, imputation, which the act of imprisonment itself implies. Of this latter class, I believe from my knowledge of the men, are not a few worthy sons of Maryland, who love the union, as you do, and who have striven, not to destroy, but to preserve it. If free from any taint of crime, as I take them to be, they will derive unfailing capacity for endurance, from consciousness, that they have never nourished their manly strength to strike stout blows at the foundations, which the fathers laid, that they have never participated in lines of action or in startling utterances calculated to encourage aggression upon the rights and institutions of Sovereign States, to foster sectional distrust and animosity, or to inaugurate conflict between different parts of the Confederation, and thus to weaken unity of feeling, interest and purpose. If, on the other hand, they are guilty, the law will inflict adequate punishment, whatever that may be, as it should do. But how long is such durance, without a hearing, to be their allotment?

I am, very truly,

Y^r friend

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