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Title: Letter from Edwin Stanton to James Buchanan (Copy)

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1861
May 11.

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Washington, May 11. 1861.

Dear Sir:

Your letter by Mr Magraw was received and I designed to send an answer by him but he left here without my knowledge. On the 24th of April the day after the Baltimore riot and again on blue Tuesday, the day before the arrival of the New York regiments, I wrote to you.

These letters will probably reach you sometime if they have not already arrived, but I regret their miscarriage as they kept up a regular chain of Washington events from the date of Lincoln's first proclamation after the capture of Sumter, and since that time incidents have passed so rapidly that I cannot recall them in their order.

The fling of Mr F. W. Seward about 'negotiations' would merit a retort if there were an independent press, and the state of the times admitted discussion of such matters. The negotiations carried on by Mr Seward with the Confederate Commissioners through Judge Campbell and Judge Nelson will some day perhaps be brought to light, and if they were, as has been represented to

me. Mr Seward and the Lincoln Administration will not be in a position to make sneering observations respecting any negotiations during your administration. It was in reference to these, that Jeff Davis in his message spoke of so much severity. You no doubt observed his allusion to informal negotiations through a person holding a high station in the Government of the United States, and which were participated in by other persons holding stations equally high. I have understood that Judge Campbell was the person alluded to, and that Judge Nelson and perhaps Catron were the other persons cognizant of Mr Seward's assurances respecting the evacuation Fort Sumter.

Mr Holt is still here. Judge Black has been absent some weeks but returned night before last. Mr Holt stays at home pretty closely and I have met him very seldom though I occasionally hear of his visiting some of the Departments.

The state of affairs is tolerably well detailed in the public prints.—

But no description could convey to you the panic that prevailed here for several days after the Baltimore riot, and before the communications were reopened. This was increased by reports of the trepidation of Lincoln that were circulated through the streets. Almost every family packed up their effects. Women and children were sent away in great numbers. provisions advanced to famine prices. In a great measure the alarm has passed away but there is still a deep apprehension that before long this city is doomed to be the scene of battle and carnage.

In respect to military operations going on or contemplated, little is known until the results are announced in the newspapers. Gen Scott seems to have carte blanche. He is in fact the Government, and if his health continues, vigorous measures are anticipated.

For the last few days I have been moving my family, my former residence being made unpleasant by troops and hospitals surrounding me.

In the present state of affairs I do not like to leave home or I would pay you a visit, but no one knows what may happen any day, or how soon communications may be again interrupted. Marching and drilling is going on all day in every street. The troops that have arrived here are in general fine looking able bodied active men, well equipped and apparently ready and willing for the service in which they are engaged. Your cordial concurrence in the disposition to maintain the Government and resist aggression gives great satisfaction, and I am pleased to observe a letter from you in the Intelligencer of this morning.

I beg you to present my compliments to Miss Lane. There are many stories afloat among the ladies in the city that would amuse her, but as they are no doubt told her by lady correspondents, it is needless for me to repeat them.

I hope you continue in the enjoyment of good health, and remain with sincere regard,
yours truly,

Edwin M. Staton.