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Title: Letter from James Buchanan to Christopher L. Ward

Date: September 20, 1853

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Legation of The United States.

London 20 September 1853.

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My dear Sir /

I am very sorry to give you ~~the~~ trouble, but really I could not refuse Ladies Wellesley & Stafford. They are both very decided Roman Catholics, - as you will perceive from the letter of the latter, informing me that she has devised her Bradford property to the Catholic Bishop of Pennsylvania.

Lady Wellesley, though in wretched health, still retains traces of her former beauty & her manners are perfect. Lady Stafford, 'erst Betty Cotton, - the belle of belles in America is very fat, ~~has a~~ you would not suppose she had ever been handsome. The fate of these three American girls has been distinguished; & yet I firmly believe, they would have been more happy had they married independent & respectable gentlemen at home. Neither of the three has ever had a child.

I am very sorry I did not see you before I left the Country. I had no heart for this mission; but I had got myself so entangled in the matter, that it was impossible for me at last to decline it, without ^{danger of} an open

capture with the administration. I shall endeavor, however, to make the best of it & render myself as comfortable & happy as possible. I heartily rejoice to see that Stanbaugh has got an appointment. I trust it may be one of value. Poor fellow! He needs & deserves it.

London is at present dull & I am glad of it. All the world, that is to say in the fashionable language here, the Nobility & gentry are now in the Country or on the Continent, & will not return until about the meeting of Parliament in February next. The fashionable season closes with the adjournment of Parliament.

I have not yet succeeded in procuring a house, though I have looked at many. You will be astonished to learn that most of those ^{which I have seen} left by the nobles & commons are dirty, I might almost say filthy, - the furniture old & decayed & not fit for the residence of an American Minister. The rent asked is from £600 to £800 Sterling. I shall not feel at home until I can procure a house. I am much pleased both with Col. Seckles & Mr. Welsh.

My presentation to the Queen was entirely private at Osborne in the Isle of Wight. Mr. Ingersoll & myself

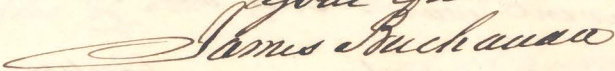
went together, - he to take his leave & I to deliver my
letter of credence. Mr. Ingersoll's conduct towards me
~~has been~~ every thing I could have desired. He & Miss Welton are
now in Paris. They will return home by the Steamer from
Liverpool of the 5th October.

The manners of the queen are graceful & dignified
& her reception of me was gracious. She does not possess
personal beauty, being low & inclined to corpulence. She
is ~~an~~ almost universally popular & the loyalty of ~~her~~ the
English people towards her is enthusiastic. This she owes
to her excellent private character & the prudence & propriety
of her public conduct. The real power, however, is in
the hands of the responsible ministry. Prince Albert &
Lord Clarendon were alone present at ~~my~~ ^{my} interview
with Victoria.

The absorbing public question now here is; - will
there be war between Russia & Turkey? It is certain that
France & England will exhaust every effort of diplomacy
to prevent war. They are much disturbed at the prospect.
The truth is, - there is a prestige about the Emperor Nicholas
which gives him an almost commanding influence in the

affairs of Europe. Still I think the danger of war proceeds mainly from the Sultan. He has exhausted the resources of his empire in preparing for its defence & he will never again be in such an attitude to meet the inevitable struggle as at the present moment. Besides, the fanaticism of the Turks has been raised to the highest pitch; & should the Sultan now recede from his modifications to the note of the mediating powers, his head would be in danger. I am yet still inclined to believe we shall not have war, though it may commence any day.

Occupied in new duties, I feel that my interest has diminished in political events at home, though my attachment to my personal friends has increased. How often do I think of you all with kindness! May the Almighty prolong my days & enable me to meet you all again in my beloved native land!

Please to give my kindest love to Ellen. May she be prosperous & happy! Remember me very kindly to Mrs. Ward & believe me ever to be sincerely & gratefully
your friend
C. L. Ward Esq. 

P.S. When you write ~~to me~~ you can direct your letters to me United States Legation London & you need not pre-pay the postage. - or you may direct to me - U.S. Legation London, - to the care of J. Franklin Pierce, Despatch agent, New York & the letters will then be put in the Despatch Box. Do write often & tell me all the news.

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