

1-22-1862

## Letter to Charles Adams

Henry B. Adams

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family." Expecting anonymity, HA had satirized the niggardly refreshments at London balls, "thimblefuls of ice cream and hard seed cakes." Reprinted *AHR* 25 (Oct. 1945), 74-89.

4. Francis Winthrop Palfrey.

To Charles Francis Adams, Jr.

London 22 January 1862.

My dear Warrior

Your last would have surprised me, if I had not seen that it was written in a caserne.<sup>1</sup> You find so much fault with my regrets at the necessity of your departure that I really feel almost inclined to beg your pardon for them. I merely meant, however, that I was sorry that you should go off to be "exposed" (the word you object to) to all the annoyances and dangers of a campaign, when under ordinary circumstances you would pursue a career much more adapted to your tastes. But we are quite reconciled to your departure now, and I rather envy you than otherwise.

For life here is by no means what it is cracked up to be. The Trent business coming first destroyed all our country-visits, for people have given up inviting us, on the just supposition that we wouldn't care to go into society now. The small list of friends that we have are not always so American as one would like. So we generally dodge "exposure" as much as possible. But I am personally flabbergasted by the explosion of my Manchester bomb, or more properly, the return of the boomerang, which has made me too notorious to be pleasant. The Times gently skinned me and the Examiner scalped me with considerable savageness. For myself I care about as much for the Times or the Examiner as I do for the Pekin Gazette, but, unfortunately, the American Minister in London is at this time an object of considerable prominence; an eyesore to an influential and somewhat unscrupulous portion of the community. Accordingly I form a convenient head to punch when people feel vicious and pugnacious. I have, therefore, to change the metaphor, found it necessary to take in every spare inch of canvass and to run (on a lee-shore) under double-close-reefed mizzen to 'gallant skysails, before a tremendous gale. In other words I have made myself as little an object of attack as possible. This reduces my means of usefulness to almost nothing and I might just as well be anywhere as here, except that I can't leave the parent birds thus afloat on the raging tide.

We are somewhat anxious still and are likely to be more so. The truth is, we are now in a corner. There is but one way out of it and that is by a decisive victory. If there's not a great success, and a success followed up, within six weeks, we may better give up the game than blunder any more over it. These nations, France probably first, will raise the blockade.

Such is the fact of our position. I am ready for it anyway, but I do sav

now that McClellan must do something within six weeks or we are done. This war has lasted long enough, to my mind.

There is precious little to tell you about here. France has again renewed her proposal to raise the blockade and there has been a discussion, or a battle about it. Prince Albert was strongly for peace with us, and now that he is dead it is understood that the Queen continues to favor his policy.<sup>2</sup> Besides her, the King of Belgium has come over and is pressing earnestly for peace. His great object always is to counteract French influence when it points to war. We have a majority (probably) in the Cabinet of neutrality men, nor do I know whom to call the leader of the war-party in the Ministry. You must not misunderstand Palmerston.<sup>3</sup> He means disunion, but not war unless under special influences.

We gave a dinner last week to Bishop McIlvaine, and I went with mamma another day to breakfast with Mr Senior. Met there the chief man of the Times, Lowe. He never speaks to any of us, and I certainly shouldn't care to seem to make up to him.<sup>4</sup>

Hope deferred is a bad thing, but to my mind this being the shuttlecock of accident is worse. I shall go over to Paris towards March for a little run, and shall indulge in all the vices and follies possible. I doubt about Beaufort as a good place for a permanent army. With our foreign relations as they are, the danger is not small of some accident which would play the deuce there. Give my regards to all my friends.

H.B.A.

MS: MHi

1. CFA<sup>2</sup> was writing from barracks (caserne) in New York, waiting to be sent to Port Royal.

2. Prince Albert died Dec. 14.

3. Henry John Temple (1784-1865), 3rd Viscount Palmerston, prime minister 1855-1865.

4. Charles Pettit McIlvaine (1799-1873), Episcopal bishop of Ohio, one of several unofficial emissaries in the campaign to influence British public opinion. Nassau William Senior (1790-1864), English political economist, commissioner of popular education. Robert Lowe (1811-1892), M.P., editorial writer for the London Times.

To Henry J. Raymond

(Private & confidential)

London 24 January. 1862.

My dear Sir

Circumstances make it advisable that I should, in the present state of affairs, cease to write or do anything that might be made public or that might by any accident bring me into public notice.<sup>1</sup> You will no doubt see how important this is, not only for myself, which I care little for, but for a variety of other reasons.