

Charles Pettit Mcllvaine Letters

1-27-1862

Letter from Dr. Edwin Guest to C.P. Mcllvaine

Dr. Edwin Guest

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future peace of the world -

Letter from Dr. Guest, Master of
Cleric College Cambridge -
Jan 27 -

"My dear Bishop M. Swaine -
I did not write to
you when I first learned the issue
of the American difficulty for I felt
like a man who has just escaped a
great evil, but who sees before him other
just as men a long & almost no more
wants - I may take a glowing view of
things, but I hardly think my mouth
can pass away without a declaration
of war by one or other of our two countries
I judge so from the temper now preva-
lent in these countries & from the ma-
naces of future vengeance which
reach us from the other side of the At-
lantic & from the more than willing-
ness to meet them which I find among
my own countrymen - Any trifle
would precipitate us into a war;
but there are two sources of ^{misapprehension} ~~misapprehension~~
which at the present time seem to be

the most threatening -
1st Lt. Russell states his case on the fact,
that the Trent was on "an innocent
voyage" - Mr. Seward says that the
circumstance of her sailing from a neu-
tral ^{port} to a neutral port, was of no conse-
quence, & that Captain Wilkes was nec-
essarily guilty of an informality in not
taking his prize into port for condem-
nation - If this is to be the platform on
which the question is to rest I do not see
how war can be avoided - We have
mail packets in almost every quarter of
the globe, & they will continue to take
passengers, be they Federates or confed-
erates, civilians or military men, & if
the voyage be "innocent" that is accord-
ing to the usual course of traffic, the
Government will protect them - & if
they all carry a vote New York, war
will no doubt follow -
2ndly Our Government has been strongly
urged by France & I believe by another
great continental power to declare
the blockade of the Southern Ports
ineffectual & therefore illegal - Our
Government is naturally reluctant
to do anything which may appear like
interference between the two belligerents

Miss Mason & Phillips' mission is under-
stood to be entirely a basis of pressing this
question upon our government - but a
much more formidable pressure is
preparing for them in the North & as it
seems to be admitted that the black
code is insufficient I do not see how
they can resist such pressure - The
aid in the hands of One who over-
rules all things, but as far as man
can see there will yet be war -

From
Jan 24 1862

Wm. O. W. W. W.
Miss Mason

From Dr. William Keath etc.

Hershey Park

Jan 24 1862

My dear Bishop

Many thanks for
your letter - I have been much en-
gaged, and I would not have delayed
my answer even for a day -

Pray believe that no one desires
more than I do, that the cloud has
passed away, which hung over our two
countries (when you were with us - I
rejoice too that the newspaper writers
& readers of the class to which you allude
have not had their own way; but I
must confess (you will let me speak
frankly) that Mr. Seward's despatches
lead me to one of two inferences - viz - either
that such people have an influence be-
yond what you attribute to them, &
are to be conciliated by the enuncia-
tion of principles, & the assertion of
claims, which your Government
well know to be without foundation;
or (which would be a more serious
& alarming alternative) that your
Government is really in earnest in
those despatches, & they believe in
their principles & claims; in which
case I cannot but tremble for the