

Charles Pettit Mcllvaine Letters

11-27-1835

Letter to Mcllvaine

C. P. Buckingham

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Act. Vernon Nov. 27th 1835

Rev. & Dear Sir

Your note of the 20th inst was handed me this evening on my return from Jonesville - I hasten to apologise for the unintentional offence, which the tone of my note has given you - That note was intended for the Pres. of Kenyon College, and in that view was entirely official - It was not intended to demand an explanation, for I supposed there was none to be given -

In fact I will confess that I supposed I was doing exactly what you wished in offering to resign the Prof^{sh} in favor of some other -

Had I supposed, ^{it} possible for me to have misunderstood the nature of the arrangement with Doct. B. the note would not have been written.

When Doct. B. came upon the bill he sent without having seen me to demand the Key to the Phil. Apparatus - I thought it somewhat strange, but, however, the next day brought out the Key and gave it to Garrison requesting to have it returned; which was not done until

My note was written - It was soon after hinted
to me by Mr. Odium, that the Lecture
room which I have been at a good deal of
trouble to arrange and was then urging the
completion of, would be wanted for other pur-
poses, as Doct. B. was to have the dept. of
N. Phil. - I waited on Mr. Sparrow to enquire
into the truth of the matter and he told me
(apparently with some reluctance,) that Doct. B.
had been offered that Dept. Upon further
enquiry I found it had been the common talk
of the place - and was expressly told by Prof.
Fitch that Doct. B. had gone away with the
understanding that he was to have the Dept. -
Now under these circumstances how could I get
any other impression than the one I did? viz.
that I had been unceremoniously disposed of in
the department of instruction without being consulted.
Doct. Mitchell left Gambier for a similar reason,
(as he told me) - and loud complaints have been
made in other quarters for the same cause &
the principle itself has been strongly reprobated by
the members of the Faculty generally - Such being
the case I thought it high time for me to ascertain
the footing upon which I stood - Tho' indeed so

None was I that my disconnexion with the College
would be gratifying to you that I was on the
point of sending in my resignation without ex-
planation - In any event, it was far from my
intention to embarrass the College by suddenly
withdrawing, but was prepared on my return
to offer my services until no longer needed &
at the same time to state ^{to you that} our mutual friend
St. Kinsley thinks strongly of locating in this coun-
try and would probably be pleased with the
situation -

One part of my letter was entirely misunderstood
when I objected to holding a situation subordinate
to a stranger, the idea of the honor of the
thing was as far from my mind as you could
have supposed - when I gave up all thoughts of worldly
distinction to confine myself and labors to the
obscure walls of Kenyon College, it was from
far other considerations than honor - To
make myself understood it is only necessary to
remark that, contrary to your apprehension of the
relative connexion between Nat. Phil. & Math.
& Chemistry, the whole subjects of Nat. Phil.,
with the exception of the inconsiderable
portions comprising electricity & Magnetism, is entirely
built upon Mathematics - And the Prof. of Math.

is as much responsible to the Prof. of N. Phil. for
the manner in which he has prepared stu-
dents to enter his dept. as the teacher of a
grammar school to the Prof. of languages -
Now it seems, notwithstanding any exertions to
the contrary, that the Faculty are determined
to pass every student through my dept. good or bad,
and the consequence would be that Doct. B.
(if he knows any thing of Mathematics) would
think of me as I did at first of Mr. Denison,
- that he knew nothing of the subject - This
will explain why I was willing to submit
the "work of my hands" to Maj. Douglass, but
not to a stranger -

I observe your letter contains none of the ap-
pearances I required, but from its tone I am led
to infer them, and unless informed to the con-
trary shall take it for granted that my in-
ference is correct.

The foregoing is a very deficient statement of
my reflections &c. I could fill many sheets before
I could satisfy myself with my statements on every
point in justification of my course - But sensible
as I am that even now you do not probably entirely
understand me, I will not longer trespass on
your valuable time -

With every feeling of respect
I remain
Yrs. truly
C. P. Bucknigham

Rt. Rev. Ch. McIlvaine