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

Date: July 26, 1861

Location: I-SpahrB-1959-9

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Washington, July 26. 1861.

Dear Sir:

Three days ago I received the enclosed letters under cover addressed to me. Upon reading the first sentence, I perceived there must be some mistake and turning over the leaf saw that the address was to Judge Black, and I therefore returned them unread. I should have handed them to him, but have not seen him since they were received, and I am informed that he left here some days ago.

The dreadful disaster of Sunday can scarcely be mentioned. The imbecility of this administration, culminated in that catastrophe - an irretrievable misfortune and national disgrace never to be forgotten are to be added to the ruin of all peaceful pursuits and national bankruptcy, as the result of Lincoln's "running

the machine" for five months.

You perceive that Bennett is for a change of the Cabinet and proposes for one of the new Cabinet, Mr Holt, whose opposition to Bennett's appointment was so bitter and intensely hostile. It is not ^{un}likely that some change in the War and Navy Departments may take place but none beyond these two Departments until Jeff Davis turns out the whole concern. The capture of Washington seems now to be inevitable. During the whole of Monday and Tuesday it might have been taken without any resistance. The rout, overthrow, and utter demoralization of the whole army is complete. Even now I doubt whether any serious opposition to the entrance of the Confederate forces could be offered. While Lincoln, Scott, and the Cabinet are disputing whos to blame, the city is unguarded and the enemy at hand. Gen. McClellan reached here last evening. But if he had the ability of Caesar, Alexander, or Napoleon what can he accomplish? Will not Scott's jealousy, Cabinet intrigues, and Republican interference thwart him at every step?

While hoping for the best, I cannot shut my eyes against the dangers that beset the government and especially by this city.

It is certain that Davis was in the field on Sunday, and the Secessionists here assert that he headed in person the last victorious charge. Gen. Dix is in Baltimore - after three weeks neglect and insult he was sent there. The warm debate between Douglas' friend Richardson and Kentucky Burnett, has attracted some interest but has been attended with no bellicose result.

Since this note was commenced the morning paper has come in, and I see that Mr. Clellan did not arrive last night as I was informed he had. Gen Lee was after him, but will have to wait awhile before they can meet.

Yours truly
Edwin M. Stanton.

His Ex^{ty}

James Buchanan.