

A letter such as
rejoiced the heart
of Salmon P. Chase

E. M. Chester

June 27/63

4483

Confidential.

New York, June 22nd 1863.

Hon. S. P. Chase,

My Dear Sir,

If I thought that a word which I am desirous of saying to you would for an hour distract your attention from the onerous duties resting upon you, I would forbear. You know what my wishes were in regard to a candidate to be presented at the last presidential election. I early saw that divisions in Ohio would prevent those wishes from being gratified. Hence I forbore to trouble newspapers with what I contemplated saying to the public.

You know too, after the election of the present executive, how desirous I was that you should occupy your pre-ent position, & my anticipations of the reputation you might achieve. The opportunity & success have vastly outstripped my anticipations.

I have now one word to say to you as to the future - if delicate you will pardon it on two scores, first of old friendship - secondly, on the score of an impossible & earnest desire for the best interests of the nation.

Until very recently I have supposed in common with many others, that the next president must be taken from among our prominent generals. I anticipated that

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some one of them would become so prominent that the nation would spontaneously take him up for that position. It is now nearly reduced to a certainty that this cannot be. The very number of those whose particular friends would look upon as the proper men, will destroy the chances of the whole class. And the rivalry that will exist will make each & his friends rather look to a civilian than endure the success of a rival in military life. I'm looking forward therefore I feel pretty sure that a civilian must be taken up.

I am gratified to learn by a letter from my brother, now in Washington who has made himself much more active & efficient in political matters than I have been, & who is intimate with the Western League, & who rendered very efficient service in the late campaign in Germany that my views, quietly formed in my own bosom, are not singular. Without consultation on the subject we have independently come to the same conclusion.

It cannot but be gratifying to me that in all the trying circumstances of this war, an old friend has been regarded by the truly patriotic as the back-bone of the cabinet. It namely gratifies my pride to find my judgment at the outset was not at fault.

I have only to say now that I hope you will hold yourself in a position, that if God, in his providence, shall open the way, you may occupy a position where I confidently

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believe, you can promote the best interests of our common country. May God bless & guide you - and at length forgive & bless this nation. In all the vicissitudes of this war, not less under defeat than in the hour of victories, I have felt an assured confidence that we were held by a hand that would guide us to a safe result - the end of slavery & the moral elevation of this nation. My courage has never failed. If I have felt depression it has been more on account of the corruption seen in the gigantic frauds of the employees of the government here & elsewhere, than from any disaster in the field. But I may not trespass further. Forgive this & believe me as ever,

Your friend

E. W. Chester.

P.S. Perhaps to make sure of this reaching you & not falling into other hands I had better send it under cover to my brother to be handed you.

In your position you have many friends & many to occupy your attention when in the city, & I have forbore to be in their way. If the time ever comes when you would spend a quiet night or two, I need not tell you that you would gratify me much by spending them under my roof - No 42 W. 32^d St. You would find, I think, a not disagreeable lady to welcome you.

