New Orleans 17th June 1865.

My dear Sir!

I have often during the past two years been tempted to write to you or Judge Bell, with a view to give you my crude ideas of passing events, but an objection, I have always dissuaded from writing, for fear that the reception of a letter, however innocent, might have led to serious trouble with the dominant Mob, who have so far, and intolerably held away in Austin. You are no doubt, by this time, fully aware of all the important changes which have so rapidly crowded upon us for the last three months, and which have happily broken the power of the Military, tyranny which for so long a time has been the bane and the bane of the Southern part of the Republic but an equally important part of the secession rebellion still remains to be settled, and in it I sincerely hope you, and other good and brave Men will take a prominent part in Texas. The reconstruction of state
Government, I do not think will be so easy or rapid, as has to be the impression in Texas, if Gov. Maunch's act, is to be taken as an index of opinion there, on the subject. I rather think that Texas will for some reasonable time be governed by a Military Governor, and aided by the Military Power now transferred to Texas. Genl. Hamilton is the Governor, and I have no doubt will exercise the functions as such, until Civil Government shall be established. He is now at Washington or on his way back, and I am informed by letters from there, that he possesses the confidence of the President and Cabinet — I know there is great and bitter Prejudices in Texas against him, but I think they are ill founded, except so far as his occasional irregular habits may make him objectionable. He is I am sure kindly disposed to all, even those who prosecuted and hunted him, and not offenred any wrongful acts on his part, and I am equally confident that he desires to promote the best interests in Texas.
Know him as well, perhaps much better than I do. He will need aid and good counsel — I hope you will be his friend and truly both aid him, and promote the welfare of the State.

I do not know or clearly understand the policy of President Johnson towards the Southern States, but I feel confident that it is widely different from that of the late Mr. Lincoln, who was truly a good and a liberal man, perhaps too much so — his martyrdom is a great loss to us — So far as I can judge, (I may be in error, but I prefer to err on the dark side rather than to hold out any false hope.) The Government does not intend to tolerate the perpetuation in power, of any officer, or other influential persons having held office or been conspirators in the late rebellion; I think also that alone amongess generally will be restraints as much as possible from further intervention in the reconstruction, for fear that they might by State legislation, permute slavery, though in disguise
And hence the various efforts to make Negroes voters — I think the Amnesty pro-
clamation of Pres. Johnson will be the
strict rule, by which the qualification
for the exercise of political rights will
be judged — and the reconstruction to be
governed pretty much according to his North
Carolina prescriptions — I know there is
a large class of influential citizens in Texas
who yet think that they will govern the
state as formerly, but they will no doubt
realize the mortification of being mistaken
in that respect, but otherwise I think they
will have very little to apprehend either to
their personal safety or property — except
those who do not come under the rule of
pardon, and such as may hereafter show
hostility to the Government — It is no doubt
that the government will make itself re-
pected by all, and felt by those who
may choose to remain appendix —
In commercial relations the Government
will undoubtedly be equally just to the
South as to the North, restrictions upan
Commerce is daily disappearing, and the duties upon the products of insurrec
tionary states, are abolished east of the Mississippi river, and I have no doubt, will be extended over the country west of that river in a very short time. But on the other hand we must necessarily, with our new quotas of prisoners, to which the loyal states have so patiently and literally submitted during the whole period since the rebellion broke out, this may be inconvenient, but we must do it cheerfully.

The effort at re-construction in Texas, under the auspices of Gov. Murray, I think is decidedly premature, and how ever well meant by the Governor, I fear will nevertheless be construed as aushi on his part to perpetuate a defective system. It had better be abandoned at once, I don't think the assembling of a Convention or the State legislature will be tolerated by the military power.
In Texas, and certainly cannot be continued by the Government at Washing-
ton. If we forget that we were once slaves, the government cannot be so obtuse as to that fact. We are not going to come back under impressions that by so doing we are lessening a favor upon the government, but rather ask, the laws as erring and repentant citizens — the government is well able to take care of itself, and of us that we do no more harm.

As regards the Negroes — they are free, and the only question, as yet undecided, is whether they shall not immediately be allowed to exercise all political rights that other concessions may be delayed a little while, but it will not be many years before color, or caste, will be no part of the qualifications of a citizen, South or North. But I think the government will lend all aid and means, as much as in order to make them useful and industrious agriculturists, in fact, it
I now a question of great solicitude as a subject of political economy a part from humanity as compatiably with it. And to give proper direction to this important element for the wellbeing of Texas will be one of the most important cares of the governing class. Utteralty to the Negro will be disastrous to the planter and the State if the planter can realize their situation and accommodate themselves to the altered condition of the planter, they can easily doubly prosper by raising cotton with paid labor, and I have no doubt realize greater profits from their farms than they ever did under the late labor system. Cotton is high and will continue so. Texas is now the most prominent State for the production of this staple, and will no doubt remain so under a wise and liberal govern, mut which will enforce justice to the Negro as well as protection to the planter interest. It is worse
To try to reach laws that is not equally applicable to the White, as the black man, and any evasion of as full justice to the Negro as to the White man, will only involve us in embarrassment.

We must also make up our minds to treat as void, all enactments, and State obligations, passed under Rebel rule — this involves repudiation of the revolutionary part of the State debt, which is very unpalatable to me in principle, but it has to come either now or in a few years, and it had better be done at once while so many other unpleasant doors have to be shut than to be left a subject of future controversy and discontent — I was in Mobile a few days after that City was captured, and an influential Citizen of Ala. remarked to me "We must come out and begin anew" — I believe there was wisdom in his good natured remark.
Up to the time when I left Texas, we were very much in error as to the power and energy, as well as resources of the rebellion last summer there was a very critical period in fact many wise men trembled for the safety of the Country, not so much perhaps simply an account of the rebellion in the South, but foreign affairs were complicated and peculiar, and above all there was a powerful party at the North who favored the elections of Genl. McClellan, they were inimical to the Lincoln administration and seemed perfectly willing to acknowledge the separate existence of the South as a Government, and to sacrifice the integrity of the Country they failed and with it the rebellion was doomed to failure also. I was in Washington a couple of months during that period, and it was painful to witness the capacity of the loyal men, and equally disgusting to hear Northern men as well as from other sections, talk treason publicly and wantonly as they could have done in Mexico. I was much surprised at the tolerance of the Government, and I yet doubt whether it had not been a better policy to silence the cantonment, and undisclosed effort in all the large cities to overthrow the Republic. I spent also some time in Arkansas.
And called occasionally on Mrs. Why and Miss Juliet, they write them well, and I think they yet continue to enjoy good health, I occasionally have letters from Mr. Persson and he always mentions them. In the country all was peace and prosperity, and apparently all were growing rich from the enlisting prosperity of industry. And should the finances of the U.S. be well managed henceforth, I think the War has made the North far more wealthy at present there is the most unbounded confidence in the North to pay all its liabilities, and even to extinguish the debt in a comparatively short period, the magnitude of the debt is so far above my real comprehension as is the source of the country to pay it, I think the financiers are right, but it is not easy to suppose that a country which has impaired its industry and destroyed one-fourth of its resources can be more really prosperous now than before the war. Therefore I take for granted that the prosperity is apparent, and that a period not very distant will come, when financial embarrassment will unseat all the great masters as well as the Government, but this is really beyond my comprehension.
And I hope I am wrong in mistrusting the very confident assertions of financiers all over the country— I do not however fear any great depreciation in the Treasury Note, because the Bank has it in its power to suspend it for interest bearing debt, or tax it out of existence. I mean absorb it by taxation. What I do fear is a depletion of Cain, and a want of products for export, to meet the demand for foreign liabilities. I am sorry to be large exporters of species are now being made from New York, and consequent sell in gold. This is a bare tick that Gov. Bonds in Europe cannot up to our notions of their value. Gold now is 42.50 if we are ready, to be steadily advancing. Cotton would mend the matter at once, but I fear there is not enough of it in the country, and but very little will be produced this year. Be this as it may, it is true that all who have aided and supported confidence in the Government must have prospered, and those who have mistrusted the government credit, or been disloyal, have either been ruined, or impaired their fortunes at will at their standing in society—I have most bitterly deplored the extreme folly of Texas, following in the lead of South Carolina, she has very fine the folly...
of killing the grass that laid the golden egg, could Texas have remained loyal, she would now be more wealthy than all that remain to the whole South. — The Texans who shan
dure the country rather than take up arms have all been prosperous in a small way, they have been placed in all government employ
ment at handsome wages — and I am proud to say all have established a reputation for
honesty and efficiency truly enviable, partic
cularly to the creole population of New Orleans. who could not be trusted, and consequently have been
deprived of all government support except
as charity — but are more than a hundred
Texans in civil employment in Gulf offices
in N. C. and perhaps one half have sala
ries equal to five dollars per day, and now
I think have less than those dollars per day
unless it be some poor fellow unqualified
for better duty than watching the

Judge Duval has been recognized as a good
office all the time, and he is well deserving
of this distinction for his devotion to the
government. — He is at present with his
family at Bay Saint Louis, but like all
the rest anxious to return to Texas. I
believe I am the only one who has no such
intentions, and I do violence to my inclining.
In making an exception to the general rule of returning home, I commenced here, times have about three months ago, and I wish to try to make a living as a commission merchant. Doctor Puddle is here, he has been sick for some time past, I hear he is convalescent, and hope he may yet get well. He often speaks of you, and the people of town, in general, with great affection, he says Athens is the only place where he ever received any kindness during his long confinement.

Mr. Morrill went to New York about three weeks ago, I heard for him by an omnious carrier. Dr. Lane accompanied Genl. Hamilton to Washington, and I understand he has been appointed U. S. Marshal for Duval's Dist. E. H. Turner is here, I hear also, that he will be the U.S. Dist. City.

Dr. Ashbel Smith and Mr. Ballinger need less on behalf of Gen'l. Magruder & Drummond but has been anticipated by Gen'l. C.K. Smith through Gen'l. Buckner & Price. And they were also on behalf of Gen'l. Murrah. It is my opinion they did not accomplish much, or at least not all that they desired. Col. Smith, accounts for, given to the Prop. paper in Strange News to us. I hear much pleased to find those Gentlemen so well disposed
Towards the Government and I admired
this manliness and devotion to the state,
I saw none of Mr. Ballinger than Capt. L.
and I shall be much mistaken if he does
not accomplish some good for the State
although himself excluded from all direct
participation in political affairs - I think
he is an estimable and trustworthy Gentle
man. And I feel sorry that he should
have consented to have held so objection
an Office, which will undoubtedly be
embarrassing to his fortune for the balance
of his life. In fact all the officers of the
late rebel Government will be held indivi
dually responsible for all acts of depred
ations upon property.

I had a letter a few days ago from Mr.
Cane, he is in Havana and intends to
return to Texas, braving the edicts of
having acted with the rebels, as far
feasible to perfect his punishment. He says
he never changed the sentiments he entertai
ned at the dawn of secession -

I hear Mr. Shaw is alive - and is
in Europe, but I have not had any letter
from him since 1869.

Capt. Allston and his wife (Ellen Robinson)
are here awaiting transportation to St. Car,
The late, lamented, but can all discern the wounded pride, peculiar to the citizens of that State, I think he is also a liberal manner of the death of the "Divine Ser." in this, he is not singular, and possibly has greater means than most of us, who have comparatively but little to lose at that property. Ellen looks to be in delicate health.

I also met the other day, with another Austin girl, (Miss Clara Fillman) she is now Mrs Kent—her husband is a native of this city and appears to be very respectable.

It is said Evle Flinnigard was arrested an yesterday and sent to Washington. It seems to be the fate of all the prominent Rebels to make involuntary journeys, mostly, particularly so, with the Governors of insurrectionary States, who have held power under usurped authority. Poor Liebbock has been in limbo for some time. This must make Gen. Clark and Murrah feel uncomfortable, as it no doubt is a striking admonishment to them.

I have all the usual League publications which I procure for the purpose of sending to you or to Uncle Luwack, but I never had a safe opportunity to do so, and now—
There are several letters. I don't know whether to trouble any one with them. I frequently lend papers to my wife and I hope she has been neighborly with them.

Give my Kindest Regards to Mrs. Peace your Daughter, Mr. Ward, Judge Bell Marshall, Mr. Harris - Hamilton and all other friends.

And with my best wishes for your health and happiness, I am sincerely your friend and most devoted servant.

S. W. Sneed

[Signature]

I don't know that I have done right in writing so long a letter when I began. I did not intend to write more than one that as much, but it being Saturday night and alone at my ease, I have rambled away without reflection. I hope there may be some thing of news to you so I heard from your Brother who lives at Janesville through a Mr. Blossom who had seen him recently. He was well.

Yours.

[Signature]