

Mayville N.Y.

Saturday p.m. July 15th '8

My dear Nixon:

Since my letter of this morning was mailed, it has occurred to me, that possibly, the reason you were "by no means pleased with the tone" of my letter of the 6th inst, was because you misceived the purport of my statement that I had "acted ~~as~~ acted as a pilot for THE INTER OCEAN." Of course, I used the term "pilot" in the railroad railway sense as the context shows, of going ahead ^{of the train} merely to find what obstacles there may be in the way, rather than in the nautical sense of showing the way. Nothing derogatory to you ^{especially} nor commendatory of myself was intended by this. I merely intended to say that I occupied a position where I could make mistakes without injuring THE INTER OCEAN, while you cannot. I had no idea of intimating that I made fewer mistakes than you. So utterly remote was this idea to me that it had not occurred to me until a few moments ago.

What I meant was that there are a lot of questions which the editor of a great journal, however clear his convictions in regard to them may be, is likely to run counter to popular approval in regard to. Such a journal must have a sort of infallibility, and while it may sometimes gain approval by a frank retraction and confession of error, the less it does of that sort of thing on public questions, the better. Such mistakes are sometimes very serious.

I have often thought that we had, by sheer accident almost, to a certain extent, solved this general problem of journalism, and that I served you well by taking grounds you could not take, and which I would not have dared to take had I been in your place; thereby draw-

2

ing to you many who agreed with me, or perhaps went beyond me, without your being compelled to offend those who did not go so far. Perhaps, if I had used the term "feeler" which was the sense in which I employed the word "pilot," you would have been less likely to misunderstand.

For instance on the "Race Question," it would no doubt, have ruined THE INTER OCEAN if it had taken the Bystander's position at the outset. Now, it represents a crystalized sentiment of increasing potency. It was not only agreeable to me but profitable to you, to have a "pilot" or a "feeler", if you like it better, to go upon the track before you. It is due to this that the BIRMINGHAM DAILY GRAPHIC of England lately said: "THE INTER OCEAN of CHICAGO is the only journal in the UNITED STATES that seems to have any sense of justice towards the colored man, and this fact has lately brought it forward into a distinct and deserved prominence as perhaps the foremost of American journals despite its extreme protection ideas."

So, too, "John Workman" which you think made so little impression, seems appears to have opened the eyes of many to the belief that political economy is something besides vague theory. At least, a Chicago newspaper man offered me after they had run eleven months, who had somehow guessed their authorship, exactly what you now pay for THE BYSTANDER, to continue them for him under my own name. I did not accept simply because to do so would have been to violate a fundamental principle of my theory of literary business.

What I fancy that *may have* what you regarded as an egotistic assertion, meant to claim credit for the success of THE INTER OCEAN, was merely an analysis of a function which I did not even dream that any one could suppose I regarded as anything but subordinate and adjutory.

I did not imagine that you would think for a moment that I meant anything more, or that I intended in any way to depreciate your efforts, your wonderful pluck, your merit, or that of any one associated with you. I have no doubt that I am worth more to THE INTER OCEAN than I could be to any other journal, and I merely desired to call your attention to the ^{elements of} value of such a relation, as I view it. Because of this, I thought that my work should bring me more with THE INTER OCEAN and than elsewhere and be put in a more secure and permanent form.

If you thought that I was arrogating to myself the credit of having made THE INTER OCEAN the success it is, or that I had acted the part of "pilot" in the nautical sense of a steersman who shoved the way, rather than in the railway sense of a feeler who went before the really important train and tried the way to prevent its running into unforeseen obstacles, you certainly owe me an apology ^{for rating me both} as a braggart and a boor, after so many years of familiar acquaintance.

My purpose in alluding to the character of my relation to THE INTER OCEAN at all, was simply to meet in advance the very comparison you make between my work and other impersonal work. To my mind, ^{the value, that is the market value, of such work,} it is not at all relevant. Of course you could easily fill your columns with ^{matter,} very good matter ^{too,} so far as inherent quality is concerned, at almost nothing a column. The only question would be as to its reliable drawing power. You have not only my work but my name which carries with it a constituency somewhat singular, perhaps, for its ^{staunchness:} For this, I have worked just as hard, and fully as long as you have upon the INTER OCEAN. It no doubt constituted a chief element in your belief that my work was "profitable to THE INTER OCEAN." The question is, not merely whether you could fill the

space as cheaply or even whether you could fill it with as good mat-
ter for less money, but whether you could fill it with another's
work having as large a following and with the power of holding and
increasing it which I have shown. I am confident the Bystander's
Notes would not have been worth as much to you as they have been
but for the name attached to them. This is just as distinct an ele-

ment of value as the work itself and a constantly growing increment.

Your own experience has proved this: my work
In other words, ~~it was~~ that I supposed ^{this} a very proper and legit-
without any name, except in one instance, has
imate method of endeavoring to convince you that your estimate of
never attracted half the attention it has with it.
my value to THE INTER OCEAN was at fault and that, in dollars and
cents, it was worth more than you rated it at, according to the rule
of merely impersonal matter.

I seem to have been unfortunate in my manner of expressing
my thought. That is all.

Very sincerely yours,

Whitcomb D. Sougée