

Philadelphia Nov. 7 1853

Major J. S. Rollins

My dr Sir

I wrote to you more than a month since, and as I have received no response, I am forced to the conclusion, either that my letter did not reach you, or that you are not such a punctual correspondent as I have given you the credit of being.

As your knowledge of my habits may lead you to suppose, I have not been idle during my sojourn here. I am very buisily engaged upon my companion to the "County Election"—the "County Canvass."<sup>3</sup> I have already completed the drawing and am proceeding rapidly with the painting. As much as you admired the "County Election," I think you will be still better pleased with the present work. I have found less difficulty in the management of the subject, admitting as it does of a much greater variety of attitude, if not of expression. Sartain is very much pleased with the drawing and grouping of the figures, and surrenders the opinion which he had previously entertained, that I would not be able to surpass the "County Election."<sup>4</sup>

He has been indefatigably engaged upon my plate since I have been in the city, and thinks he will have it completed by the 20th of December. I had been under the impression that the 20th of Nov. was the date agreed upon, but when I referred to the contract, I found I had made a mistake of one month. It engages him to complete the plate in fourteen months from the time he received the picture.

The gentleman whom I have engaged, under the advice of Mr Sartain, to print the work, has sent an order to London for the paper. It will be of the finest and most substantial quality, each sheet will weigh a fraction over a pound, and will cost, when delivered, about 30 cts. as near as can now be ascertained. There will be due Mr Sartain, as soon as he completes the plate, the sum of thirteen hundred and fifty dollars, including the amount which he has already received. This, with three hundred dollars for the paper, I must be indebted for to your liberality, until I can avail myself of the benefit of my subscription to that extent.

I do not think I will need it more than two months after I get fairly in the field with my engraving.

I expect to have my "County Canvass" ready for exhibition by the time Sartain terminates his labors upon the Election, and be obtaining subscribers for that while distributing the print of the other.

I have quite a serious notion to follow your suggestion, and make old *Bullion*<sup>5</sup> *appealing to the people of Missouri* the subject of a future picture. That passage in the commencement of his speech at Fayette,<sup>6</sup> in which he designates the friends whom he came to address, as those only who had *heads to perceive and hearts to feel the truth*, would afford, I think, the best point of time for pictorial representation, as the action which accompanied it, and gave it such emphasis, would display his fine portly figure to the very best advantage, and also tell with most happy effect in the faces of the audience. The subject possesses an additional recommendation to me, from the fact, that I could introduce into it the portraits of many of my friends who were present upon the occasion, and by a license, which painters, as well as poets can take, I could make others present in the pictures, who were not present in fact. I think an engraving from such a work would sell, and if painted on a large scale it would be well suited for a place either in the Capitol or University of our State. If you see proper you can get Col. Switzler to throw out a hint of my purpose, although I cannot say that it is yet fully formed.

I promise myself the pleasure of hearing from you soon. I see by an extract from the Statesman that the number of students in the University is considerably below what it was last year. Does its most excellent president regard this falling off as evidence of increasing public confidence in his own efficiency and good management?

Eliza asks to be remembered to yourself and Mrs R. She says she is taking your advice in reference to her music, and has a piano in her room for daily practice.

Yours Sincerely

Geo. C. Bingham

<sup>3</sup> The name "County Canvass" was later changed to "Stump Speaking." The picture is now owned by the St. Louis Mercantile Library Association and hangs in the City Art Museum of St. Louis, as does also the original of "The Verdict of The People."

<sup>4</sup> Bingham made replicas of many of his paintings. The replica of "The Verdict of the People" is, I think, still owned by Mr. J. W. S. Peters of Kansas City. The replica of "General Order No. 11" is owned by a Mr. Brown of Independence, son-in-law of Mrs. J. W. Mercer who formerly owned it. And the replica of "The County Election" is owned by the Mercantile Library Association and now hangs in the City Art Museum of St. Louis.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Hart Benton, because of his insistent advocacy of "hard money."

<sup>6</sup> Made September 1, 1849, in the Chapel of Central College. Vigorously denounced the Jackson Resolutions. Benton considered Fayette the hotbed of his enemies. (Meigs, Wm. M., *Life of Thomas Hart Benton*, pp. 412-413.) Unfortunately Bingham never painted this picture. It would have added an important fourth to his election series.