

1872.  
July 23

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Letter to Hon. Charles Sumner.

Dear Mr. Sumner — Though I should be strongly induced, by the <sup>friendship</sup> subsisting between us, to avoid taking a position antagonistical to your own under ordinary circumstances, even if I deemed it erroneous, yet when the public welfare is seriously imperilled, all personal considerations must be subordinated to it. You do not believe in silence at a time like this, nor do I. In your recent letter to certain colored citizens of Washington, you have spoken plainly, vehemently, and with rhetorical amplification, in utter condemnation of the President of the United States, and as warmly in favor of the election of Mr. Greeley as a rival candidate. <sup>In re-</sup> ~~to the~~ reviewing that letter, I propose to speak with equal plainness, and as earnestly: to advise my colored countrymen to consolidate their votes upon President Grant, by every consideration pertaining to their safety and happiness, to the cause of equal rights, and to the promotion of national peace and unity.

In apologizing for your delay in answering the letter of inquiry referred to, you state that you "wished to be aided by the information which time might supply." The kind of information you expected or desired to gain in the course of seventeen days is left to conjecture; but, in view of your long avowed estrangement from the President, it <sup>could</sup> cannot have been needed to intensify your hostility to his re-election. Your reply is dated July 29th, and it appears to have been as carefully timed ~~for immediate and special effect~~ to influence the election in North Carolina on the 1st of August, before any-  
 thing could be done to <sup>counteract it,</sup> baffle its design, as was your Grant-indictment speech to affect the action of the Philadelphia Convention. ~~These~~ These coincidences, indeed, may have been ~~purely~~ accidental; but you must not be surprised ~~that~~ if, owing to your well-known inflammatory state of mind, a general belief obtains that you <sup>have</sup> unfairly availed yourself of opportunities to work division in the Republican ranks.