

January 1852

# Letter, 1852, from Gourdin to Thoms Green Clemson

Gourdin

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Charleston Aug: 26. 1852.

A  
C626.

My Dear Sir,

I have not written to you for some time, as I could give you no particular information about your picture of Mr. Calhoun. It has been exposed to a bright light. We since its arrival in Charleston, but no change has taken place in the color, which contains a dark and a mottled as well. My own picture of Mr. Calhoun, I put into the hands of Mrs. Jackson, and she has certainly improved it very much. She is the widow of Jackson who was a very successful trader and owner of picture. He died about a year since, and Mrs. Jackson who acquired the art from him, continues the business. At the risk of having my picture ruined, I placed it in her hands, but she has managed it very well, and although not perhaps what it was before it was damaged, it is very greatly improved. She says that the picture was no doubt damaged with ketchup, and covered over with the white of eggs, with a view to their preservation, but this kind of varnish not infrequently becomes very dark and so very hard that it can scarcely now be removed entirely, and as sometimes gets incorporated with the

Colours, they are very apt to come off, unless, you will all  
the care that can be used. This has been the case  
with the picture she has claimed for me and she has  
had consequently to retouch these portions of it, and it is  
these portions that are not equal to what the picture was  
originally. Still it is much better. She says that she  
found water alone totally inadequate to the removal of the  
stains, and she has had to use some composition of her own.

Now, if after what I have said, you desire to have Mr.  
Jackson make a trial on your picture I will place it in  
his hands. She has had it now at her rooms, for the  
purpose of comparing it with mine, as they were equally  
injured, and if you desire it, I will not hesitate to work  
on it.

Since writing to you last I have  
been at Fort Hill, where I passed three days very  
pleasantly. I was pleased to find Mr. Colburn looks  
so very well and in so calm and cheerful a state of mind.  
Mrs. Colburn and William were also well.

I was delighted with Eckhardt's portrait of Mrs.  
Olmsted, and your two interesting children. The  
former is a magnificent picture as a work of art, as  
well as for the taste in the arrangement, and its fidelity  
as a likeness. The portrait of your little boy, with  
his

dog, is unsurpass'd in Simplicity and Beauty by any thing  
that I have ever seen. The position of the white girl  
is also very beautiful, but a canary, in the place of so  
huge a bird as a parrot, would have been better. The  
bird is almost as large as the child, and I have little  
doubt that in France they would be the most attractive  
portion of the picture, but with me, I confess I should  
have preferred something less conspicuous, and of a  
more pleasing character than De Mory a pet -

These pictures confirm me in the opinion that  
Cebaut is far superior to De Block as a painter -  
The portrait of Mr. Calhoun by the former is far su-  
perior to those of the latter, a work of art, and the  
picture at Fort Hill also needs them far - but possibly  
these are not fair specimens of De Block's painting.

Pray remember me kindly to Mr. O'Brien and to  
James, if he is with you.

I am truly disappointed about Mr. Calhoun's  
book. It does not sell and we can do nothing  
to move it. Yours very truly

St. Louis the 14<sup>th</sup> Dec 1847

to Mr. Lupp on your order

\$ 2326. 62. 1/2 N. Ct. in equal to \$ 2338. 15. proceeds of Dr. Dennis's  
dft for \$ 2350. Adams.