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James B. Finley Letters

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Letter from Thomas Corwin to James B. Finley

Thomas Corwin

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Washington 16th Feby 1836

Dear Sir

I received your kind & very grateful letter yesterday, & avail myself of the first moment of leisure to give you the information it asks. I find the pension law of 1832 provides, that, the pension granted by it shall in no case be liable to seizure for debt. It also provides that at the death of the pensioner, the balance (if any) then due, shall go to his widow. & if there be no widow then to his children. - From these enactments it is quite certain that the pension money due your father in law at his death can only be drawn by his widow or children. - Now this I foresee will place you in a singular dilemma having as you say already paid the debts of the decedent in anticipation of this fund. - Notwithstanding the positive enactments of the law of 1832. I am not sure that if the children receive this money, they will not in law be compelled to pay the debts of the deceased to that extent. - Having in the language of the law received, assets by descent, - If you should be unjustly required to sustain this last request to urge this point upon those who claim the money, which by every suggestion of moral sense is yours. -

I regret, & feel to the very heart's core, the degradation of our state, from the paratious folly, & I fear wickedness of the babblers, who now rule the legislature of Ohio. - They have employed a great portion of their time, in informing us here

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faint gleams of the Millennial dawn - what long years of labor, have you men of the pulpit to pass through, before that sun shall rise upon the world. It is true I see. I know there has been a gigantic stride in the intellectual improvement of the world, & chiefly in the last eight centuries, but I doubt whether the moral advances, be kept on at an equal pace with the intellectual. The first men born of woman, killed the second. - And what are the brethren of Adam's family about now! Murdering, Cheating, going, deceiving, each other - It is not six months since Ohio, & Michigan, neighbors, friends, relations, were ready to cut each other's throats - for what! why the right to chop the bark off the trees, fifteen miles, through a swamp! Never give up your itinerant system. The Gospel has to be carried to places where wolves would fear to howl, before the condition of things is changed. Laws, manners & literature may do much they have already wrought wonders, but religion, true religion is the only thorough civilizer of our race. - My dear Sir, will you pardon this tedious scrawl. - It is late, & I am alone, which is somewhat rare, & as such duty we cannot but wish to communicate our own thoughts however familiar they may be to others wherever we can obtain a hearing. - Good night. If a dinner's blipping were not a mockery I would add only benediction, to the most sincere wishes for the happiness of yourself & all your love -

Thos Brown

what we should do for the nation. This they accomplished and
a variety of subjects as if by intuition, whilst we here, were
stupid enough to reflect, to pause & consider, & with all the little
intellect wherewith heaven had blessed us, we found ourselves
men at a loss to determine questions, which the facile philosophers
& steam-panes, sages of the legislature decided in an hour. They
declared war against France in a day, & pledged the lives & property
of 12 hundred thousand of their constituents to its support. They
saw no difficulty in marching, dry shod, over the Atlantic, a suffi-
-cient "Militia" force to vanquish at the gates of Paris, a standing
army of 400 thousand veterans. They considered it perfectly
easy for a nation of 12 Millions, attached to their homes &
families, to wage a successful conflict with one of 32 Millions,
who are literally trained to war from their cradle. A nation who
in the last five centuries has been 300 years continually in the
field, & in that time has ^{fought} 180 pitched battles - All this, & much
more quite as reasonable, did those new illuminati promulgate,
for the edification or the scorn, the glory or the shame, of our
state, as it may please heaven to direct the minds of our people
in future time, I have seen the condition in which Louis was
placed. I did not approve his proceedings ~~last~~ summer, but I
could not but admire his bold & fearless defiance of the chains
of his party, & the executive attempts at dictation. When I saw
him abused by traitors of his party, for his nearly independence,
I felt a sympathy & respect for him, which was new to me.
Such a man is out of his proper place in a party, where all

are required to mind honor, conscience, right, mind & action, to
the sovereign despotic will of one man. But I forget that
this posing must be dull to you, whose life is devoted, not
to parties or politics, but to the poor babblers of weak & wicked
children in this world, but to that great war, in which crowns
of immortality, are the soldiers' bounty, & the lasting felicity his
"pension," when the war is over. You will pardon me for
adding one other item of intelligence, which I am sure you
cannot fail to receive with pleasure. The prospect of a
war with France is ended. The British Medication would
have put a period to all serious difficulty itself, but a
suicidal turn of affairs, on the Continent of Europe, has made
it necessary for France, to give her entire energies to another
mighty struggle. We learn to day that the President's message
is considered satisfactory & that the money will be paid.
The same papers bring news of rupture in Europe in
which England & France will take the field against Russia
& Austria. The former ask the restoration of Poland to its
former independence. I do not myself doubt that this
has had a controlling influence in our sitting our diffi-
-culties. It is possible war in Europe may not come, but
I shall be deceived in the character of Charles of Russia,
if he lets go his ruthless clutch upon poor little Poland with-
-out a bloody struggle. Alas my friend I see but