

October 5, 1936

Dear Mr. James:

Pardon the intrusion but I want help and you seem to be my best bet!

It is your excellent book on Richard Olney and his public service that leads me to you. Here is the cause:

Some time in the late '90's I went to see Mr. Olney hoping to persuade him to write the story of the Venezuela episode for McClure's Magazine. I had met him once - that was at the McKinley Inaugural Ball. Of course he did not recall it, but when I recalled it to him he flushed and said,

"Outgoing Cabinet members are not expected to attend the Inaugural Ball of a new president." (I hadn't known that or of course I should not have spoken.) "But there was a reason for my presence. General Miles, then head of the Army had come to me to say that there were rumors of an attempt on McKinley's life. If both he and Hobart should be assassinated before a new cabinet is appointed you would be acting president. You must go to the Ball, walk with Mrs. McKinley. I didn't like the idea but General Miles insisted so I went but the new president walked with his wife and I had to hang around conscious that more than one Republican was saying, 'What's Olney doing here?'"

I had the feeling that his sense of official etiquette and official dignity had been hurt by the episode, that he did not like to think about it.

Now I have a piece of work on hand in which I want to refer to the incident. I have been trying to find some reference to it but have not

succeeded. It occurred to me that possibly with your wide acquaintance with the Olney material you might be able to refer me to something in an interview or letter which would add to the interest of my little reminiscence. If so, I shall be greatly obliged.

And in any case believe me, dear

Mr. James

Very sincerely yours