

koopman rare art



Henry Nutting

A Historic George III Treasury Inkstand

Silver

London, 1805

Maker's mark of Henry Nutting

Length: 11 7/8 in. (30.2 cm.)

Weight: 93 oz. 19 dwt. (2,923 g.)

£18,000

The inkstand rectangular with reeded borders and on four scroll feet, the double hinge cover with swing handle and engraved with the Royal arms and a coat-of-arms under a coronet, the interior fitted on one side with three compartments with a glass inkwell and sander with silver covers. Hallmarked underneath, on all covers and also the handle

Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh, also called (from 1821) 2nd Marquess Of Londonderry, (born June 18, 1769, Dublin—died Aug. 12, 1822, London), British foreign secretary (1812–22), who helped guide the Grand Alliance against Napoleon and was a major participant in the Congress of Vienna, which redrew the map of Europe in 1815.

Castlereagh was one of the most distinguished foreign secretaries in British history. He is equalled only by Marlborough in the personal ascendancy that he gained as British representative in the European diplomacy of his time. He took a leading part in bringing together the alliance of great powers that finally overthrew Napoleon and in deciding the form of the peace settlement of Vienna. The concept of a Concert of Europe was largely his creation, and his influence did much to promote the practice of diplomacy by conference.

Stewart was the son of Robert Stewart, an Anglo-Irish landowner, who was elevated to the peerage in 1789 and later promoted earl (1796) and ultimately marquess (1816) of Londonderry. On his father's death Castlereagh became the 2nd marquess of Londonderry. Educated at Armagh and St. John's

College, Cambridge, he was elected to the Irish Parliament of 1790 as an independent member. In 1794 he married Emily Anne Hobart, a beautiful if slightly eccentric woman to whom he remained devotedly attached throughout their long and childless marriage. From March 1798 he served as acting chief secretary to his relative Earl Camden, then lord lieutenant of Ireland. In November 1798 he was formally appointed to that office by Camden's successor, Lord Cornwallis.

Castlereagh's tenure as chief secretary coincided with the two most important events of Irish history in the late 18th century: the 1798 rebellion and the union with Great Britain. While taking severe and successful measures to quell the revolt in 1798, Castlereagh shared the view of Cornwallis that a policy of clemency was essential to end the disturbances. The threat of French invasion and the 1798 rebellion convinced Castlereagh of the need for a parliamentary union with Britain. The passage of the Act of Union through the Dublin Parliament in June 1800 provided the first great demonstration of Castlereagh's abilities as he singlehandedly forced the measure in the Irish Commons against bitter Protestant opposition. He believed that the union with Britain must be accompanied by the political emancipation of Roman Catholics. When, in February 1801, Pitt failed to obtain George III's consent to emancipation, Cornwallis and Castlereagh at once sent in their resignations.

Though out of office after May 1801, Castlereagh continued to advise Henry Addington's ministry on Irish questions, and in July 1802 he was appointed president of the Board of Control responsible for Indian affairs. His energy and intellectual powers gained him an immediate influence in the Cabinet, and, after Pitt's return as prime minister (May 1804), he also became in July 1805 secretary of state for war. His first important task, the dispatch of a British expeditionary force to Hanover, was rendered ineffectual by Napoleon's victory at Austerlitz (December 1805); but the move convinced Castlereagh of the strategic value of the British Army in continental warfare. On Pitt's death in January 1806 he left office and became the chief opposition spokesman on foreign and military affairs. He returned to the War Department in the Duke of Portland's ministry in 1807 and showed his determination to engage in major warfare against a continent now completely dominated by Napoleon. The adoption in 1808 of his plans for reorganizing the regular, reserve, and militia forces provided the country with adequate home defences and a larger and more efficient army for overseas operations. When the Spanish revolt against Napoleon broke out the same year, it was decided at once to send a major expedition to the peninsula. Castlereagh was influential in securing the command for Sir Arthur Wellesley (later duke of Wellington) in 1809. In 1809 a British expedition sent by Castlereagh against Napoleon's naval base at Antwerp was allowed to waste away of disease on the island of Walcheren. The disaster was in no way Castlereagh's fault, but it brought to a head the long-standing divisions and intrigues in the Cabinet. Since March 1809, George Canning, the foreign secretary, had been pressing for a change of policy, and even before the Walcheren expedition he had secured secret agreement to the replacement of Castlereagh by the marquess Wellesley. When Castlereagh learned of the ignominious position in which Canning had placed him, he challenged him to a duel that was fought September 21. Canning was slightly wounded and both men later resigned office. Castlereagh remained out of office for the next two and a half years.

In 1812 he re-joined the government as secretary for foreign affairs, and after Prime Minister Perceval's assassination in May he became leader of the House of Commons. British foreign policy then passed for a decade under unified control. Castlereagh's first task was to hold together the shaky and distrustful elements in the general European opposition to Napoleon; but as the end of the war drew near, he worked increasingly to obtain preliminary agreement among the allies for the resettlement of Europe. In talks in Châtillon in 1814, he secured acceptance in principle of his plans for a peace settlement under the control of the great powers. By the Treaty of Chaumont (March 1814), he obtained provision for allied cooperation for 20 years after the war. On the fall of Napoleon the Treaty of Paris (May 1814) secured immediate British requirements (the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy and the separation of the Low Countries as an independent kingdom) and set Castlereagh free to play a commanding and mediatory role at the peace conference at Vienna. His main European objectives were to prevent the aggrandizement of Russia and to strengthen the weak central European areas of Germany and Italy. He and Metternich, the Austrian minister for foreign affairs, dominated the inner negotiations, though it was Castlereagh who took the lead in resisting the territorial demands of Russia and Prussia. The final settlement, with some compromises, was a practical embodiment of his principle of the "just

equilibrium.”

Castlereagh also attached fundamental importance to regular consultation by the great powers on matters of common concern; and the peace treaty contained specific provision for periodic meetings of the contracting parties. Though the practice of holding such meetings became known as the “congress system,” Castlereagh’s aim was to make possible diplomacy by conference rather than to establish any system of international regulation or interference in the internal affairs of other states. The distinction became increasingly apparent in the remaining seven years of his career. The Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1818 readmitted France to the concert of powers. Castlereagh firmly resisted, however, a Russian attempt to institute a league of European powers to guarantee the existing order under sanction of military force. When the liberal movement in Germany after 1818 and the revolutions in Spain and in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in 1820 brought Austria and Russia closer together, he refused to treat their meeting at Troppau in October 1820 as a full European congress, and after the Congress of Laibach (1821) he openly repudiated the Troppau principle of intervention and coercion. His classic state paper of May 1820 emphasized the difference between the despotic states of eastern Europe and the constitutional structures of Britain and France and made it clear that the British government could only act on the expediency of any given issue and within the limits of its parliamentary system. With the emergence in 1821 of the questions of Greek independence and the fate of the Spanish colonies, however, British political and commercial interests became directly affected, and Castlereagh decided to attend in person the Congress of Verona in 1822. The instructions he drew up for himself showed plainly that he would not sanction forcible interference in either Greece or Spain and that Britain would ultimately be prepared to recognize *de facto* governments resulting from successful revolutions. It was clear that Castlereagh was preparing for that detachment of Britain from the reactionary policy of the continental powers that was accomplished after his death.

This development was largely hidden from the British public by the personal nature of Castlereagh’s diplomacy and his aloofness from public opinion. His apparent involvement with the eastern autocracies was disliked at home, and his role as spokesman for the government in the violent domestic politics of the post-war era kept him in a position of unpopular prominence. As leader of the House of Commons he was identified with the repressive policies of the years 1815–19 and with the Cabinet’s unsuccessful introduction in 1820 of a bill to dissolve George IV’s marriage with Queen Caroline. He was savagely attacked by such liberal Romantics as Lord Byron, Thomas Moore, and Shelley. After the abortive Thistlewood plot to assassinate the Cabinet in 1820, he always carried pistols in self-defence, and during the trial of Queen Caroline he was obliged to take up his residence in the Foreign Office for greater safety. The burden imposed on him by the royal divorce affair of 1820, in addition to his duties at the Foreign Office and in the House of Commons, probably hastened his final collapse. In 1821 he showed signs of abnormal suspiciousness, which by 1822 became outright paranoia. He was, or thought he was, being blackmailed on charges of homosexual acts, and on Aug. 12, 1822, he committed suicide shortly before he was due to set out for Verona.

Artist description:

Son of William Nutting late of Wormley in the apprenticed to Charles Wright of Ave Maria Lane London Citizen and Goldsmith 3 July 1782 on payment of £50. Turned over to Thomas Chawner of Ave Maria Goldsmith 4 February 1784. Free, 6 January 1790. First mark entered as plateworker, 9 April 1796. Address: 38 Noble Street, Foster Lane. Second mark, in partnership with Robert Hennell II (q.v.), 17 June 1808, same address. His son Henry was apprenticed to him 3 August 1808. The latter, rather than his father is presumably the Henry Nutting of Potters Bar Middlesex gentleman whose son John William was apprenticed, 5 October 1825, to William Simms mathematical instrument maker.