

tendance shall be no longer necessary; at which time he must be required to leave the country and return to the United States.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. L. MARCY,  
*Secretary of War.*

Major General W. O. BUTLER,  
*Commanding the Army of the U. S. in Mexico.*

[PRIVATE.] NEW ORLEANS, (Sunday morning),  
April 25, 1847.

MY DEAR SIR: I reached here from Mobile yesterday morning, one day later (as it happened) than if I had kept with the mail from Montgomery; but every body concurred in representing this land route—nominally of 36 hours, but in reality of 48 hours staging, without rest—as so excessively fatiguing, that I made up my mind, on reaching Montgomery, to take the steamer which was then there waiting for us. This was strongly recommended by Dr. Gwinn, who had just come up in her, and whom I met at Notasulga, 50 miles from Montgomery, on his way to New York via Washington. He represented the land route as the most fatiguing in the United States, and considered it next to certain that the steamer would reach Mobile *before* the mail; as would have happened, had she not lost about five hours on the river, in consequence of the extreme darkness of the nights.

Anticipating the possibility of this determination on my part, I had, during the hour that we had stopped at Atlanta, in Georgia, written a letter to Mr. Prieur, requesting him to take the necessary steps for holding the best of the cutters in readiness for sailing at a moment's warning on Saturday. This letter I mailed at Montgomery, and Mr. P. received it on Friday, the day that I should have reached here, had I remained with the mail. Unfortunately, however, Captain Foster (who has the direction of the cutter service here) had put to sea a few days previously, in the only steam cutter on the station at present, for the purpose of regulating her compass, &c.

But for this *contretemps*, I should have gone down the river yesterday afternoon, and been fairly out at sea before this time. It will not, however, cause me to lose more than two days; at least, there is no probability that it will, as you will see from the following statement of the circumstances of the case:

Independently of my movements, one of the lieutenants of the revenue service, (Rogers,) had been detailed to set out yesterday, at one o'clock, (in the same steamer that brought me from Mobile, and which starts back at that hour,) to carry to Captain Foster at Cat island or Ship island, where he would be lying, despatches received the day before from the Treasury Department. My first thought was to go with him; but upon reflection, I perceived various conclusive reasons against my taking this course.

One of these was, that to go back in that way in the very same steamer that brought me, to be dropped on a desert island with my baggage, in quest of a chance to get to a revenue cutter, would be to give immediate publicity to the whole affair. I therefore got Mr. Prieur to write to Captain Foster, (enclosing a copy of the Secretary of the Treasury's letter, as a full warrant for such an order,) desiring him to proceed instantly to the mouth of the river, and there await the gentleman mentioned in the Secretary's letter. Should Lieutenant Rogers lose no time in reaching Captain F., and should every thing prove favorable, the captain will be at the mouth of the river early to-morrow. Secrecy has been enjoined upon him.

This order having been despatched, I considered the whole matter settled, and intended to go down last evening in one of the tow boats. But reflecting on what Mr. Prieur had told me respecting this steamer, (the "Bibb," I think she is called,) and then consulting with him upon the subject, I came to the conclusion that I might find myself at the mouth of the river *without a vessel to proceed in*. This is the steamer's experimental trip, and it may have been found that she is not fit for the sea. Mr. P. says our navy officers pronounced her unfit, from the size of her masts and spars; and although she has undergone alterations to the amount of some \$800, she may have proved unfit *from other causes*. She was built up the river somewhere, (Cincinnati or Pittsburg,) and is, I think, the twin sister, or the cousin german, of the very vessel which was lost in the gulf a few weeks ago, and was so near proving the coffin of her whole crew, including Lieutenant McLaughlin, her contriver. So, after taking all this into consideration, I got Mr. P. to give a second order; to the effect, that one of the sailing cutters, now here, is to proceed *immediately* to the mouth of the river, take in a month's provisions, and await further orders. If, on seeing Captain Foster, I find that he has any doubt whatever about his vessel's being a safe sea-boat, I shall go in the sailing cutter; for, to say nothing of considerations more peculiar to myself, the object of my mission would be but very little furthered by your letter's going to Davy's locker, instead of the city of Mexico.

What I have given you above, tediously detailed as it is, is but a slight sketch of the matters that I had to take into consideration before concluding upon the course I have adopted. For instance: so soon as I learned that the steamer was not here, I determined at once to go in one of the others, and I requested Mr. P. to give the order for her to be got ready to go down with the tow (or tug, as they call them in England) of last evening. I qualified this request, however, by desiring him not to give the order until he should have ascertained that I should gain time by sailing at once, instead of waiting until the steamer could be brought round. He came back and told me that Captain Nones said that the steamer is now a perfectly safe sea-boat, and would go, with certainty, to Vera Cruz in three to four days, whilst it would take the sailing cutters eight or ten. It was on learning this, that I concluded to send the order to Captain Foster to repair instantly to the south-

west pass. I shall go down this evening, if there be an opportunity; and if not, certainly to-morrow evening, for there is no doubt about opportunities then. According to present probabilities, therefore, I shall put to sea in the course of the forenoon of to-morrow or of the day after.

On reaching the railroad depot, (the steamer from Mobile lands its passengers on the shore of Lake Pontchartrain, whence they are brought by a short railroad to the city,) which is fortunately in the lower end of the city, I inquired for a Spanish or French tavern in that quarter, but was told that there is nothing of the kind there except sailor boarding-houses.

I was compelled, therefore, to come up to within a half a square of the St. Louis—the great French exchange and hotel combined—and within sight of the St. Charles, into neither of which could I venture without the certainty (besides having my name gazetted) of meeting within the first five minutes some one who would be sure to say, "You here! Oh, you are going to Mexico, I suppose." Then there would be Slidell, and Soulé, and dozens of others, calling, and making remarks, which, in whatever way they might be treated, would have the effect of disclosing everything to all *practical* intents. I am, therefore, at the *Hotel d'Orleans*, a well-thronged French auberge, of the economical order, where the old lady writing my name in her book "Docteur Tarreau," I corrected her by making her substitute a round *o* in place of the *eau*, saying, "c'est un nom espagnol." Having put my baggage under her charge, I sallied forth in quest of a hack, and it was some time before I could find a close carriage, almost all their hacks here being (under the name of *cabs*) open chaises on four wheels. Having at last found one, I drove off to Mr. Prieur's house with a note I had written him; but he had just gone out; and though I pursued him successively to two other houses, it was with the same result; and I had to return to my auberge breakfast at 8 o'clock, and there to await patiently the fruit of my bargain with the French-Creole-negro-hackman, whom good fortune had thrown in my way, for he knew Mr. P. personally. He went and took his station at the custom-house, watching for his arrival there, and brought him to me about half past 10, from which time he devoted himself to me with all possible kindness and cordiality, touching upon the subject which brings me here but once, and then merely to observe that he had immediately inferred what the object of my mission must be. This is all that has passed between us in regard to it.

By means of his acquaintance with the old Spanish merchants, I have obtained a catalan as a *criado de mano*, or body servant. He is well recommended, and, from his appearance, I am strongly disposed to think he will justify the recommendation. It is the first time in my life that I have ever thought of indulging in such an expensive luxury, (and it will be quite an expensive one in this case: his wages, which he has left to me to fix, "after he shall have served me the two, three, six, eight, or ten months, or whatever the term may be," will probably be \$25 or \$30, graduating them by what men of that class can earn here;) and if I do indulge in it, it is not at all with reference to the personal comfort attending

it, but to more important considerations. It is not at all impossible that I may be, for a time, so situated as to make it quite important to the object of my mission to have some one person at least connected with me, and gathering the small news for me, whilst I shall be surrounded on all sides by the enemy: and in case of illness, I shall have a faithful servant to watch over me; and though I do not apprehend being sick, it is quite a comfort to me, and will be a far greater one to Mrs. T., to know that I am thus provided beforehand. The inquiry for such a servant was made on behalf of a French merchant, who is going to Mexico for a term which may prove very short, or last several months, according to circumstances; and this is the character in which he knows me.

I have written until I am tired, and fear that you will tire before you reach the same point; but I thought it best to go into details, knowing the anxiety which both the President and yourself will feel in regard to my making headway.

With faithful esteem and friendship, yours,

N. P. TRIST.

HON. JAMES BUCHANAN.

UNITED STATES REVENUE CUTTER, "EWING,"

Vera Cruz, May 6, 1847.

SIR: We have this moment cast anchor in this harbor, after a passage of eight days from the mouth of the Mississippi; and having been boarded by Captain Stringer, of the navy, I have learned from him that a large escort is to leave this day for head-quarters, under circumstances which will probably determine me to set out with it. I had intended, in my first communication, to give you the result of my reflections, since my departure from Washington, with reference to the isthmus of Tehuantepec, and the state of things which I may possibly find existing at the city of Mexico in regard to that subject. These have led me to the conclusion, that not only may my success in making a treaty of peace be promoted, but a most important collateral object secured, by means of a secret additional article to that treaty, totally distinct therefrom, so far as regards ratification or non-ratification by our government, on the subject of the isthmus.

You will excuse this hurried scrawl, in consideration of the circumstances under which it is written; the state of things mentioned by Captain S. having determined me to send by him a message to the governor of Vera Cruz, requesting him not to allow the escort to depart until he shall have seen me. My health is perfect. I learnt from our Mexican pilot that there is a good deal of fever among our troops here, but no vomito as yet.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

N. P. TRIST.

HON. JAMES BUCHANAN,  
Secretary of State.

You will deeply regret to learn that our friend General Shields is considered in great danger from a wound received at Cerro Gordo.

[CONFIDENTIAL.]

VERA CRUZ, (Friday night,  
May 7, 1847.

SIR: A hasty scrawl written yesterday on board the "Ewing," immediately upon entering port, (and erroneously dated the 7th, from my not adverting to the difference between "sea time" and the way of counting the days on shore,) will have apprized you of my safe arrival here; and I now, at 11, p. m., after having passed the day in making the necessary arrangements for my departure to-morrow morning, sit down to write a few lines in addition to those of yesterday.

This I should have postponed doing until my arrival at Jalapa, but for the fact that General Scott expects (as I was confidentially informed yesterday by Colonel Wilson, the governor of this place) that all communication between himself and the seaboard will be for a time cut off, after the opportunity afforded by the large train which is to leave to-morrow, under a strong escort of somewhere about one thousand men, all told. This will consist in part of the "Tennessee dragoons," under Lieutenant Colonel Allison, of whom I have formed a very favorable opinion. The colonel of the regiment is in the upper country with General Scott.

This train carries, among numberless other things, a large amount in specie; and the universal impression here yesterday (entertained by Colonel Wilson himself) was, that it would be attacked on the road; though no one considered it at all uncertain what the result would be. This evening, however, the conjectures seem to incline somewhat decidedly the other way, and I myself consider the probability to be that it will not be assailed. General Scott had sent orders that it should not move until after the arrival of a downward train, which was expected here somewhat anxiously when I landed yesterday. It came in last night, having passed unmolested, although under a guard of ninety men only. This guard, consisting of a detachment of the United States rifle regiment, (Persifer Smith's,) which is the terror of the Mexicans, under the appellation of the "Malditos rifles," will form part of the escort of the train to-morrow; the greater part of which has already gone off during the day, and will await the rest at Santa Fe, to make a fair start day after to-morrow morning. We shall probably be overtaken by Captain Ruff, (whose appearance is every way promising,) with a full company of the "United States rifles," the greater portion of which is here ready to move, and the remainder momentarily expected.

You will readily conceive that my determination to go up with this body has been taken in consequence of the utter uncertainty as to the time when another equally safe opportunity might occur, however favorable the state of things above might be to the object for which I have been sent. It is impossible to obtain any satisfactory information in regard to what this state of things now is; (every man here, without exception, from the governor down—at least among the officers holding responsible stations—having every moment of his time too urgently engrossed to permit to give his

attention to anything but the duties of the moment.) I am induced, however, to believe that it would at the present instant have been favorable in a very high degree, if Santa Anna's defeat at Cerro Gordo could but have been a little less inglorious to himself personally. And whether *he* be or be not forever prostrate, (which he is generally considered to be,) some other tangible *head* of the nation may at any moment arise, and the opportunity be lost if I remain down here, particularly with the communications cut off.

Colonel Wilson left it entirely to me to determine every point in regard to the despatches for General Scott; and the result of my consideration of the various alternatives that present themselves was, that they left here (including of course the letter to the minister of foreign relations) yesterday, about 5, p. m., in charge of Lieutenant Lacey, of the Tennessee dragoons; a *picked* officer, of most prepossessing appearance, accompanied by 40 picked men of the same regiment. This force I considered the proper medium for reconciling perfect safety with expeditious travelling; and the despatches are before this time doubtless in the hands of Gen. Scott, (at Puebla, in all probability,) together with a letter from me, of which I had no time to take a copy.

I was never more pleased with any man, on so short an acquaintance, than I am with Colonel Wilson. The selection of him for this post was manifestly a most judicious one. It is, however, *immensely* arduous. One must be here to conceive how very arduous—and not only be here, but be acquainted with the character and ways of the race over which he is governor. The remark is applicable to most other officers here, in any post of responsibility. With respect to the amount of toil they have to undergo, their position, compared with that of those in the field, is like the base of a pyramid compared with the top layers. Some of them are evidently *overtasked*; for instance, I deem it next to impossible that Captain Hetzell should hold out long in this climate, where head labor, (and, above all, head *distraction*, from numberless things claiming the attention in rapid succession,) when carried beyond a certain point, is the most killing thing that a man can be exposed to—if he is not relieved from a portion of the labors by which I see him oppressed. I have not exchanged a word with him on the subject; but it is evident to me that they are entirely too much for any one man to stand up under long, in *any* climate. The only remedy for this would be to send out two or three *truly capable and efficient men*, really competent to subdivide the duties amongst themselves, and to discharge them. As to "quartermasters," there is no lack of them; but I have most sorry accounts of them, of which strong corroboration stares one in the face, all round.

The new tariff went into operation yesterday. The plan of having the duties discharged by officers of the army, or persons attached to it, is, so far as regards this place, (and I believe it must be so at every *base* of operations,) entirely *out of the question*—a physical impossibility, for the present at least. On being consulted by Colonel W.—who appeared very much disheartened at this un-

expected addition to his burden—I advised him to consider the subject as being only in an especial manner under his control and supervision, and to let the *work* under the new tariff be done by the same persons as under the existing arrangements. That the authority to employ *all* necessary agents and instruments for their collection and safekeeping upon just and fair principles, (provided only they really be necessary,) is necessarily involved in the power to levy military contributions, is too manifest to my mind to admit of a word of rational argument on the subject. I was also consulted by Commodore Perry upon some new points intimately connected with the raising of a revenue from these people, which I will explain hereafter; and I unhesitatingly advised him to take the responsibility, or, in other words, to *exercise*, until he can receive instructions on the subject, the power which is necessarily attached to his position.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

N. P. TRIST.

Hon. JAMES BUCHANAN,  
*Secretary of State.*

P. S.—More recent intelligence respecting General Shields, as I am most happy to say, is every way satisfactory. He is at Jalapa, *out of danger.*

[No. 4.]

JALAPA, May 21, 1847.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a very extraordinary letter, (if, indeed, anything from his pen can properly be so designated,) received by me from General Scott, together with a copy of my reply and of a letter enclosing that reply.

Although the explicit order delivered to him in the latter, on behalf of the President, with respect to the transmission of the communication from yourself to the minister of foreign affairs, may perhaps prove effectual, I beg leave to suggest for consideration whether it would not be advisable to despatch to General Scott a special order, through the War Department, confirming the one thus delivered by me; for, from the officer capable of writing such a letter, under any circumstances—and, above all, such as it was written in, so totally wanting in anything like provocation—I do not know what to anticipate or not to anticipate.

Excepting a report which came in here last evening that General Herrera had been elected President, and that this event is considered favorable to peace, no news whatever has been received here since my arrival. When we reach Puebla—for which I shall set out to-morrow afternoon with General Twiggs's division—I hope to have it in my power to give at least some account of political affairs and prospects, whether favorable or unfavorable. A youth from Guadalajara, who is here on his way to Vera Cruz to embark

for England, tells me that in his native place (some 300 leagues nearly from Mexico) *all* are in favor of continuing the war, at least there is but a handful of the opposite sentiment. But in the city of Mexico, where he passed a month, *there is a very strong party* in favor of peace. This I consider good evidence of the state of public opinion, on that face of it which is likely to catch the eye of persons of his class—intelligent and modest lads of the age of 17 or 18.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

N. P. TRIST.

Hon. JAMES BUCHANAN,  
*Secretary of State.*

P. S.—On the occasion of transmitting this correspondence with General Scott, I should do him injustice, although he could not be injured thereby with any person at all conversant with his character, were I to omit to mention that, so far as “respect” for the government can be proved by such outward acts as bear the same relation to this sentiment which genuflexions and upturnings of the eyes bear to religion, nothing could have been more perfect than the proof afforded in my case of the sincerity with which he professes the established creed upon this point. Not only was I met on the road, as we approached the city, by General Scott's aid-de-camp and the chief of the quartermaster's department, deputed by him to conduct me to the quarters which he had caused to be secured for me, but I was subsequently called upon by the governor, in compliance with orders from the general-in-chief, to offer me a guard, (which I declined, there being no necessity for it.) So far, therefore, as ceremonial goes, and attentions to my person, as that of “a functionary of the government,” nothing could be added to the proof, which it receives in this shape, of respect for its authority.

HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE ARMY,  
Jalapa, May 7, 1847.

SIR: I have just received your note of yesterday, accompanied by communications to me from the Secretary of War, and one (sealed!) from the Department of State to the minister of foreign affairs of the republic of Mexico.

You are right in doubting whether there be a government, even *de facto*, in this republic. General Santa Anna, the nominal president, has been, until within a day or two, in the neighborhood of Orizaba, organizing bands of rancheros, banditti, or guerillas, to cut off stragglers of this army; and, probably, the very train, all important to us, which you propose to accompany into the interior; the safety of which train has detained me here and caused me a high degree of solicitude. Hence I regret that Colonel Wilson, commanding at Vera Cruz, has allowed himself, a second time, to

be persuaded to detach, to bring up despatches, (for your accommodation,) a material portion of the force I had relied upon as the escort of that train. The other detachment to which I allude came up some days ago to escort Lieutenant Semmes, of the navy, duly accredited by Commodore Perry, to the Mexican minister of foreign affairs, to negotiate the exchange of Passed Midshipman Rogers, now a prisoner of war. That matter, also, seems to have been considered too important to be entrusted to my agency!

But, to return to the actual government of Mexico. Señor Anaya is, I believe, president, *ad interim*. But you may have learned that the Congress, after hearing of the affair of Cerro Gordo, passed many violent decrees, breathing war, to the uttermost, against the United States; declaring that the executive has no power, and shall have none, to conclude a treaty, or even an armistice, with the United States, and denouncing as a traitor any Mexican functionary who shall entertain either proposition. I have communicated a copy of those decrees to the War Department, and, until further orders thereupon, or until a change of circumstances, I very much doubt whether I can so far commit the honor of my government as to take any direct agency in forwarding the sealed despatch you have sent me from the Secretary of State of the United States.

On this delicate point, however, you will do as you please; and when, if able, I shall have advanced near to the capital, I may, at your instance, lend an escort to your flag of truce; and it may require a large fighting detachment to protect even a flag of truce against the rancheros and banditti who now infest the national road, all the way up to the capital.

I see that the Secretary of War proposes to degrade me, by requiring that I, the commander of this army, shall defer to you, the chief clerk of the Department of State, the question of continuing or discontinuing hostilities.

I beg to say to him and to you, that here, in the heart of a hostile country, from which, after a few weeks, it would be impossible to withdraw this army without a loss, probably, of half its numbers by the *vomito*, which army, from necessity, must soon become a *self-sustaining machine*, cut off from all supplies and reinforcements from home until, perhaps, late in November—not to speak of the bad faith of the government and people of Mexico—I say, in reference to those critical circumstances, this army must take *military* security for its own safety. Hence, the question of an armistice or no armistice is, most peculiarly, a *military* question, appertaining, of necessity, if not of universal right, in the absence of direct instructions, to the commander of the invading forces; consequently, if you are not clothed with military rank over me, as well as with diplomatic functions, I shall demand, under the peculiar circumstances, that, in your negotiations, if the enemy should entertain your overtures, you refer that question to me, and all the securities belonging to it. The safety of this army demands no less, and I am responsible for that safety, until duly superseded or recalled. Indeed, from the nature of the case, if the enemy, on your petition,

should be willing to concede an armistice, he would, no doubt, demand the military guaranty of my signature, for his own safety.

Should you, under the exposition of circumstances I have given, visit the moveable head-quarters of this army, I shall receive you with the respect due to a functionary of my government; but whether you would find me here, at Perote, Puebla, or elsewhere, depends on events changeable at every moment.

The sealed despatch from the Department of State I suppose you to desire me to hold until your arrival, or until I shall hear farther from you.

I remain, sir, respectfully, your obedient servant,

WINFIELD SCOTT.

N. P. TRIST, Esq., &c., &c., &c.

JALAPA, May 20, 1847.

SIR: The enclosed reply to the tirade against our government, which you saw fit to put into the shape of a letter to me, (I regret exceedingly that it did not receive a more appropriate form and direction, by being made up, *at once*, into an "article" to adorn the columns of some reckless partisan press,) was commenced at San Juan del Rio; where, after taking time to recover from the amazement which your letter occasioned, and coolly to reflect upon its extraordinary character—as I have repeatedly done since on the journey—I passed nearly the whole night in writing, so desirous did I feel to dismiss the unpleasant subject from my mind. Having motives also for wishing that my reply should reach you before my arrival here, I purposed finishing it at the first place where it could be resumed. With this view, when we reached El Encero, I got out my writing materials, intending to pass the greater part of the night in this labor, and that of taking a copy. This design having, however, been defeated by the *alerte* which we had there just about sunset, causing Col. Riley to order the advance of the train with which I was to retire from its position in and around the house and out-buildings; the completion of my task has, from this and subsequent causes, been unavoidably delayed until now.

I was, most assuredly, not sent to Mexico for any such purpose as that of engaging in a correspondence with you; above all, in one of the nature of that which I have so unexpectedly found forced upon me; and I doubt whether the government will approve of my having allowed myself to employ any portion of my time in it. Certain I am that this would be censured, but for the fact that your letter found me under circumstances rendering it impossible that I should occupy myself upon the object for which I was sent here. The same excuse will not exist hereafter; and even if it should, numberless other good and sufficient reasons will always exist to compel me to decline the honor of maintaining a correspondence with you.

The communication from the Department of State to the Mexi-