

communicate to me any intelligence so obtained, which might be of the remotest interest to our government, in connexion with the object of my mission. In this expectation I am sorry to say I have been disappointed. Not even a newspaper has been communicated to me. I have even been prevented from obtaining a sight of papers, in consequence of their being retained far longer than is usual in regard to borrowed newspapers even in ordinary times. In one instance, for example, I heard, as a matter of common talk, that an interesting Mexico paper (in French) of the 29th May, had been received at head-quarters. Several days after, my inquiries after this paper proved so far successful, that I obtained the address of a French resident who receives it. Upon applying to this gentleman, I was informed that the governor, General Worth, had sent to him for it. I afterwards succeeded in obtaining one, and it proved to be the "Courier Français," containing, from the "Razonador," the most important indication that the Mexican press has afforded since the war began. The next day, the same thing happened in regard to several numbers of the "Republicano," or the "Monitor Republicano," (I forget which) down to the 30th of May, that had been received by an English merchant. They also, he informed me, had been sent for by General Worth; and they had been transferred by him to head-quarters: at least, I heard such papers spoken of as having been received there. Five days after, I again made application for them, and they had not yet been returned. To-day, Mr. Kendall, on visiting this house, (General Smith's head-quarters,) mentioned having seen and examined, either at General Scott's or at General Worth's, (I forget which,) a number of Mexico papers down to the 8th instant. These are specimens of what is constantly occurring, and of the regard shown for the public interest in this respect. Had a different course been pursued, and had the newspapers so obtained, by virtue of the public posts occupied by the persons who possess themselves of them, been sent for my perusal, after they had served all the military purposes which they were susceptible of—had this been done, I should doubtless have discovered at a much earlier day—and greatly, perhaps, to the public advantage—how totally General Scott was in error when he informed me, that there no longer existed in this republic even so much as "a government *de facto*."

Among the papers mentioned by Mr. Kendall was one containing some intercepted correspondence to this army, which has been taken on its way from Vera Cruz to Jalapa, in charge of a Mr. Sowers and eight men. Mr. S. and three others were killed, and the remaining five captured. It seems to be a very extraordinary piece of business that such papers should be entrusted to such keeping, and I fear that it is likely to turn out a very disastrous one, for one of the published letters is said to be from Colonel Hunt, (quartermaster at New Orleans,) indicating an utter want of pecuniary resources in our government; and the Mexicans, so Mr. K. said, are exulting in the idea that our money has run out, and that all that is necessary is for them to hold out a little while longer.

On the 2d instant, General Santa Anna withdrew his resignation of the presidency *ad interim*. At the time when I last wrote, it was impossible, with the lights I had, to form a satisfactory opinion in regard to the character of that proceeding on his part, the resignation. This point is now settled by the fact, which I can state with positiveness, that its withdrawal took place on the very day when it was to be acted upon *and accepted*. A want of firmness alone on the part of the majority in Congress, and not any lack of disposition to release him, has prevented the formal acceptance of the resignation without regard to the withdrawal.

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

N. P. TRIST.

Hon. JAMES BUCHANAN,  
Secretary of State.

PUEBLA, June 6, 1847.

SIR: Perceiving, from the published accounts of the proceedings of the Mexican Congress, that a proffer of the mediation of her Britannic majesty's government has recently been presented by you to that of Mexico, and finding myself placed at this moment, with reference to the same object for which that proffer was made, in a position of the gravest responsibility, it has occurred to me that I might, without any breach of the delicacy which belongs to the subject, venture so far as to address to you the inquiry contained in the present note.

I left Washington on the 17th of April, charged with a communication from the Secretary of State of the United States to the Minister of Foreign Relations of the Mexican republic, the object of which is explained by the following passage:

"The President will not again renew the offer to negotiate, at least until he shall have reason to believe that it would be accepted by the Mexican government. Devoted, however, to honorable peace, he is determined that the evils of war shall not be protracted one day longer than shall be rendered absolutely necessary by the Mexican republic. For the purpose of carrying this determination into effect with the least possible delay, he will forthwith send to the head-quarters of the army in Mexico Nicholas P. Trist, esq., the officer next in rank to the undersigned in our department of foreign affairs, as a commissioner invested with full powers to conclude a definitive treaty of peace with the United Mexican States."

This note was, immediately upon my arrival at Vera Cruz, on the 6th May, forwarded by express to the general-in-chief of the army of the United States, then at Jalapa, with a view to its being transmitted by him under a flag of truce.

From causes into which it is not necessary here to enter, the note has not yet been transmitted; and, until yesterday, I saw no reason to regret this delay, having been led to believe that there no longer existed "a government, even *de facto*, in this republic," to which the note from my government could be delivered. Of

the entire erroneusness of this information I am now, however, fully convinced. The perusal of a few straggling numbers of various newspapers, published at the city of Mexico during the last month, has sufficed to make manifest that not only has a regularly organized government, complete in all its parts, and its authority universally recognised by General Santa Anna himself, the President *ad interim*, as well as by all others, been in existence, and in the undisturbed discharge of its functions, from the time when the commotions connected with the ejection of Gomez Farias came to a termination, but that the very period when the note from the government of the United States reached the hands of General Scott presented a juncture highly favorable for its delivery. The tone of the press at that time, and since, in regard to the dispositions of Señor Anaya, the President substitute, as well as of his Minister of Foreign Relations, and many leading members of Congress, with respect to the proffered mediation; the appearance of such a paper as the "Razonador," which, by its signal ability and its honest boldness, so nobly justifies the name it has assumed; these and other indications constitute proofs that cannot deceive in regard to the great benefits which must have resulted from the presentation of the note at that crisis; and amongst them, of the influence which it was calculated to exercise in the then impending election of President by the State legislatures.

This opportunity, however, is now irretrievably lost, in consequence of the changes that have probably attended General Santa Anna's return to the capital, and the non-acceptance, by congress, of the resignation tendered by him, which, as I am informed, was the state of things at that city so late as the 1st instant. My attention, therefore, is now given to the best practicable mode remaining for giving effect to this measure on the part of my government, before another conflict of arms at the gates of Mexico shall complicate the question still further, and place at yet greater disadvantage those Mexican citizens who have given proof at once of their patriotism and their wisdom, by avowing such views as those advocated by the "Razonador."

The best course which seems to be left me, under all the circumstances of the moment, is that which I pursue, in taking the liberty to address to you the inquiry, whether you would have any objection to receive (accompanied, of course, by an open copy for your perusal) the note from the Secretary of State of the United States, for delivery to the minister of foreign relations, and, meanwhile, to make known the existence of this note and my presence at head-quarters, so far as this knowledge may be deemed, by you, conducive to the opening of negotiations; the note of my government, when received by you, to be delivered immediately, unless it should appear decidedly advisable to await the installation of the new President; and should it so appear, then, so soon as his ministry shall be formed, or his minister of foreign affairs shall be in place.

Possibly the Mexican government, upon being made acquainted with the fact of your having received this communication, should

it comport with your views to make it known, might deem it proper to despatch a flag of truce half way, to receive the note from a similar flag sent from hence, giving me, at the same time, the proper notice. My only motive in making this suggestion is, that *time* would thereby be saved; and that upon the saving of a day or two of time, everything may depend, so far as regards the prevention of further bloodshed, and such consequences as might ensue from a battle at the gates of the capital; the immediate issue of such a battle being a point upon which no one here entertains a shadow of doubt, and this army being, to a man, eager for it.

Possibly, also, the Mexican government might deem it proper, without waiting until the note from that of the United States should be actually delivered, to make the intelligence communicated to them respecting it the ground of a proposition, that this army shall suspend any further advance upon Mexico, until they shall have had time to receive and to consider that note. Should such a proposition be addressed to the general-in-chief of this army, fixing any reasonable period for the object, reference being had to the approaching installation of a new executive, and to the organization of its cabinet, I will recommend it to his favorable consideration. Upon him will devolve the duty of deciding upon the propriety of acceding to it; taking into view, on the one hand, the strong desire entertained by the United States to re-establish peace and amity with Mexico; and on the other, the bearings which such suspension of the advance of the army might have, as a military question, with regard to future operations, should the necessity not be obviated for the further prosecution of the war.

I am, sir, with great respect, your obedient servant,

N. P. TRIST.

CHARLES BANKHEAD, Esq.,

Minister plenipotentiary of her Britannic Majesty at Mexico.

PUEBLA, June 7, 1847.

DEAR SIR: The courier who undertook to deliver the enclosed to you this morning, got back to this place a little before day, having found the road *impenetrable*. The party consisted of three, and succeeded in forcing their way through several obstacles, but, finally, were compelled to retreat. I am desired, on the part of the person who now undertakes to deliver it, to say, that any answer which you may send to the house of ———, will meet with prompt despatch.

Accept the assurance of my respectful and friendly remembrance.

N. P. TRIST.

CHARLES BANKHEAD, Esq.,

Minister plenipotentiary of H. B. M. at Mexico.

PUEBLA, June 11, 1847.

SIR: I need not say how truly obliged I feel to yourself and to Mr. Thornton for the mode adopted to afford me an opportunity to place the enclosed in your hands; although my first emotion was one of mingled surprise and regret, that he should have exposed himself to the very serious personal risk attending such a journey; a point upon which my anxiety cannot but be intense, until I shall learn that he is again safely through the dangers of the road.

The conversation I have had the pleasure to hold with him, has confirmed the correctness of the grounds for the regret expressed in my former letter, that the communication for the minister of foreign relations of this republic had not been transmitted to him early last month.

The motive which actuated the President in causing this communication to be written, being a sincere desire to restore peace, and not the mere wish to throw upon this country the responsibility of protracting the war, the spirit of my instructions would, consequently, require me, under certain circumstances, to deviate from the intention of my government at the time I left Washington; which intention was, that the communication in question should be delivered at once, upon my arrival in this country. Nevertheless, from the nature of the subject, I cannot allow myself much latitude upon this point. My legitimate discretion with reference to it does not, as I conceive, go further than to authorize me to postpone the delivery of the communication in one case, and in one case only; that is to say, for want of a government, having an actual and positive existence, to whom it could be delivered, and by whom it could be considered and acted upon, under the responsibility to their own country and to the world, proper to all determinations upon questions of such deep import.

This I consider to be the limit of my discretion on the subject, unless I had the strongest reason to believe both that the actually existing administration of the government was one from whom a fair and rational consideration of the communication could not be expected; and that it was, at no remote period, to be succeeded by a new administration, of a different complexion. Except in a case where very strong reason for such belief should exist, I should deem it my duty to limit myself to the one condition already stated, and, without regard to the manner in which it might be received, to deliver the communication: provided only that there existed a government to whom it could be delivered, whose authority was sufficiently recognised to admit of its being considered by a candid world as the organ of the nation, by its acts subjecting that nation to the responsibilities which belong to one.

In availing myself of the friendly readiness evinced by you to take charge of this communication, I have to request, therefore, that you will govern yourself in regard to its delivery by the view here presented of my duty with respect to it, were I on the spot to see and act for myself.

With respect to the fate which may attend this new effort on the part of the United States to bring the war to a close by means of an amicable and honorable understanding between the two parties, in which the views of both shall be consulted and shall exercise a fair and equitable influence, I will remark that I have become thoroughly satisfied, since my arrival in the country, of what I previously had been strongly inclined to believe: that a very important, if not the chief practical hindrance to the restoration of peace consists in the fact that the mode of conducting the war thus far pursued on the part of the United States, has inspired many with the hope that its indefinite protraction would prove highly advantageous to what, according to their views, is required by the interests of particular classes, or of the country at large. This is a delusion which, for the welfare of Mexico, cannot too soon cease. The conduct of the war here referred to is but one of many modes, all equally practicable. There is, most obviously, a natural term to it; and this term, manifestly, is not far off. Should the United States, by the persistence of the Mexican government in a course that sets at naught every recognised international principle with respect to states that have come into collision with each other, here again be baffled in their endeavor to terminate the war by a negotiation which shall settle down upon terms just and honorable for both parties, and mutually satisfactory, and should they in consequence find themselves compelled to take the matter altogether into their own hands, no one can fail to perceive that the necessity thus forced upon them must involve a course of proceeding radically different from that heretofore pursued; one which shall cut off from every interest in this country all hope of deriving benefit from the continuance of the war, and which must ultimately cause the country at large to find itself deprived of many advantages, which, down to this moment, it depends upon her government to secure for her. This necessity may be forced upon the United States, and the time has drawn very nigh when the point must be decided; and should the question receive a solution so contrary to their sincere wishes and earnest endeavors, there will at least be nothing of self-reproach to hinder them from conforming to its dictates, and from giving to the second phasis of the war a character no less decided and decisive than that which the first has received from the purely military operations proper to it. Whether their present endeavor to avoid this necessity is to prove as fruitless as were their repeated efforts to avert the war in the first instance, is the point now soon to be decided.

Accept, sir, the assurance of the most respectful consideration of your obedient servant,

N. P. TRIST.

CHARLES BANKHEAD, Esq.,

Minister Plenipotentiary of H. B. M. at Mexico.

[No. 11.] AYOTLA, August 14, 1847.

SIR: I left Puebla last Sunday morning, the 8th instant, in company with General Scott, whose guest I now am, and reached this place (on the margin of lake Chalco, and within 18 miles of the capital) on the 11th, with the advance of the army, consisting of Gen. Twiggs's division. General Pillow, whose division formed the rear, arrived yesterday and took up his quarters near the town of Chalco, where he had been preceded the day before by General Worth. General Quitman's division had followed us; so that our forces are now concentrated within very short supporting distance of each other. The movement from Puebla has been everything that could be desired, no casualty of any kind having attended it, save the loss of a single man, a dragoon of Quitman's rear guard, killed through his own rashness in a rencounter with a comparatively large body of guerillas. The enemy, after expending great labor in fortifying a long chain of heights, forming the pass of Rio Frio, had left them unoccupied, as he had similar fortifications at numerous points all along the road from Jalapa to this place. The whole route, indeed, presents a series of natural defences which would have amply sufficed our countrymen to cut to pieces any army of one hundred thousand men that should have persisted in attempting the march from Vera Cruz to Mexico; and it would not have required more than a thousand of our riflemen to do it. There are hundreds of points where they would have decimated the enemy, under the certainty of effecting their retreat without the loss of a single man.

We are now in the presence of the Peñon, the last of their remarkable strongholds; outside of the city; though besides the obstacles presented by the lakes and marshes, and artificial inundations, and bridgeless canals, (a perfect labyrinth,) there are numerous others of a less distinguished rank in all directions; for they have fortified every point and pass within a circle of eight to ten miles.

The Peñon, midway between us and the city, is about eight and a half miles distant. The day after our arrival I accompanied General Scott to a spot between the main road and lake Tezcuco, about two and a half miles from that height, where we had it in full view, as well as a portion of the city beyond, including the cathedral. It (the "Peñon, or Rocky mount") rises from a plain, open all around, and is now surrounded with water. It has been ascertained to be a place of great strength. Yesterday, besides previous reconnaissances by Captain Lee and other officers of the engineers, Lieutenant Stevens of that corps passed the whole day in a close examination of it, its defences and armament, the result of which he reported in detail last night. He was the greater part of the time going from one spot to another round the height, about 1,000 yards from the batteries, wading about in the lake and the drowned land, in full view of the 10 to 12,000 troops collected there, including a large body of cavalry, and about a mile and a half from General Smith's brigade, sent out as his support; his im-

mediate escort being *two dragoons*. One of these waded across the inundation (to try the bottom) to within about 300 yards of the enemy.

I give this as a specimen of our engineer corps; and there is not an arm of the service that would not afford, in its own appropriate sphere, proof of the same spirit; and, at the same time, proof that this was not considered by the actors as a thing worthy of note, but as much a matter of course as buckling on one's sword to go on parade. It is, indeed, a noble army, full of confidence in itself, and full of confidence in its commander. (And he gives every possible proof that this is nothing more than his strict due. To appreciate the man, to know him at all, one must see him in this sphere.) There is not a man in it (or if there be such, they keep silent) but is determined to make his way to the "Plaza" of Mexico, and who does not look upon this just like any other part of the march; only a little tougher work perhaps—a thing which is to take place at any rate—a matter about which there can be no sort of doubt. And it would be all the same if there were a dozen Peñons in the way, to be carried by assault, one after another.

The Peñon, however, will probably not be the point of attack. General Scott said to me the other evening that if he could take the city in one way with the loss of 800 men, and in another with that of 900, he would deem himself a murderer if he adopted the latter, however brilliant; and he evidently never loses sight of this principle.

Hon. JAMES BUCHANAN,  
Secretary of State.

[No. 12.] HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE U. S. ARMY,  
Tacubaya, August 22, 1847.

SIR: On the night of the 14th instant, I despatched from Ayotla, in an incomplete state, my No. 11, the duplicate of which will be transmitted hereafter. Just as I was closing that despatch, a different plan from the one there mentioned was resolved upon by General Scott, in consequence of information then received respecting the road round lake Chalco, on the south side, which satisfied him that this route was not, as he had been led to believe, altogether impracticable for carts; in which case it would have been so, *a fortiori*, for our trains (numbering nearly 1,000 wagons) and heavy artillery. This fact, together with the uncertainty which still remained in regard to the state of the roads and the defences which we should find beyond Mexicalcingo, after carrying that post, brought him back to his first predilection; that is to say, for the route round the lake, which, for some weeks before leaving Puebla, he had strongly inclined to select as our way into the city. This selection has proved a most happy one. We commenced the march from Ayotla on the following day, (the 15th,) and on the 18th, after great toil in passing round the lake, the general head-

quarters were established at San Augustin, a town on the main Acapulco road, where we had been preceded by General Worth. Thus far, there had been no fighting; but here evidently it was to begin, if ever; for the only road to the city (this road being the continuation of the one leading from Mexicalcingo to the capital, and on which we should have had to travel, had the plan been pursued of carrying that place) here consisted of a causeway, flanked on either side by flooded lands, (on the firmest spots of which a man would have been ankle deep in mud, and consequently impracticable for cavalry or artillery,) and intersected by a series of redoubts and batteries of great strength and very heavy metal. The first of these, about three miles by the road from San Augustin, was at the hacienda of San Antonio. It presented an obstacle so formidable, that, after the most careful reconnaissances—in the course of which Captain Thornton, of the dragoons, was cut in two, while supporting Captain Mason of the engineers, over whose head the ball passed—but little or no doubt remained that it would cost General Worth, who had approached it for this purpose, half of his division to carry it by assault.

Other reconnaissances were made on the day of our arrival at San Augustin; and the result being brought in by the engineers late at night, the determination was then taken to turn San Antonio, by opening a road through the hilly country, from San Augustin to an excellent turnpike which connects some manufactories with the city.

On this work General Pillow's division was detailed, to (commence operations on the morning of the 19th,) and that of General Twiggs to act as the support of the working party. This design on our part having become apparent, through the employment on the day previous of Captain Lee, of the engineers—whose supporting party had been attacked by, and had driven, an immensely superior force—the next morning (the 19th) the enemy appeared in heavy force, consisting of cavalry and artillery as well as infantry, occupying a position of very great strength, just beyond the turnpike to which I have referred as the one which our contemplated road was intended to enable us to reach with our wagons and artillery. There was but one possible track for this road; and this track, for the greater part of its length, was commanded by the position which the enemy occupied on the morning of the 19th.

The design, however, was not abandoned. Pillow's division went to work with their pickaxes and spades, with Twiggs in proper position to protect them. About three o'clock, they reached a point beyond which the labor could not proceed without first driving the enemy, for there they came under the fire of his guns, 26 in number, and many of them of exceedingly heavy calibre. Owing to the nature of the ground over which our troops had to approach the enemy, and which was absolutely impassable for horse or artillery, or even for single horsemen picking their way, the work of dislodging him had to be done entirely by the infantry. Then commenced a series of actions, and a display of qualities on the part of our troops, which can never be properly estimated by

our country—for this would require a detailed and personal knowledge of the inconceivable difficulties presented by the ground, and these aggravated by the weather—but which, I feel perfectly convinced, surpass in military merit anything that has ever occurred under our flag.

The battle of Mexico—as this series of most brilliant exploits is called—terminated about three o'clock in the afternoon of the second day, the 20th instant; the last point carried being Churubusco, a small town on the main road from Acapulco to Mexico, which we here again came upon, having left it at San Augustin. It is but three and a half miles from the capital; and our troops might beyond doubt, have penetrated there—possibly without any additional fighting—had not this been forbidden by considerations of humanity towards the unoffending inhabitants, to say nothing of the *reasons of policy* which stood in the way, or of the condition of our troops, who were in a state imperatively demanding food and rest. I must say in justice to General Scott, that he is never unmindful of *either* of these considerations.

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

N. P. TRIST.

Hon. JAMES BUCHANAN,  
*Secretary of State.*

PALACIO DEL GOBIERNO FEDERAL,  
Mexico, 20 de Agosto de 1847.

El infrascrito, ministro de relaciones interiores y exteriores, tiene orden del exmo. S. Presidente interino de la republica de decir á S. E. el S. Buchanan, ministro de negocios extranjeros de los Estados Unidos de America, que no siempre el exito de las batallas acompaña á la justicia de la causa porque se han dado: atendida esta y nada otra cosa, si otra hubiera que atender, el gefe de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos ha combatido hasta el momento en que por sucesos que no és la ocasion de referir, las tropas de los mismos Estados Unidos de America se encuentran en las puertas de la capital: escuchando entonces otros deberes que tambien tiene como primer magistrado de su pais, y mando de las facultades que le competen conforme á su constitucion, ha resuelto se dé oido á las proposiciones que haya de hacer D. Nicolas Trist nombrado por parte de aquel gobierno, con tal que ellas sean ventajosas á las dos naciones y dejen á cubierto el honor de la republica Mexicana, como constantemente se ha dicho en las camaras de Washington y lo aseguró el ministro Norte Americano al gobierno de la Gran Bretaña, y en la inteligencia de que el gobierno Mexicano se prestará á que se abran preliminares de paz no pasando de un año el termino dentro del cual haya de celebrarse un tratado y sometiendo este, segun la constitucion del país, á la aprobacion de la autoridad á quien ella comete esta atribucion.

La naturaleza de esta comunicacion no permite estenderse en