

a decent order of things, by means of a government founded on republican principles. As was remarked to me to-day by one of our officers, in conversation on this subject, the position in which our country finds itself at this juncture is a phenomenon altogether unexampled in the history of the world: a nation, to whose principles and habits and institutions the spirit of conquest is altogether foreign, actually has thrust upon her, by its own inhabitants, the acquisition of a country rich beyond calculation in numberless sources of commercial prosperity, and abounding in everything that can make a country desirable.

Of these two parties the one has for its nucleus the best men of the *moderado* party; the other the best of the *puros*, or uncompromising republicans. The former, as is natural to their characters, are governed by their desire to put an end to the war. They see and feel that peace is the urgent want of their country; and they are anxious for it, on the best terms on which it can be obtained. The others, although no less strongly impressed with the evils of war, and no less anxious for peace, do not allow this desire to make them lose sight of other evils of a greater magnitude and more enduring character—the evils of misgovernment. They believe that the war may be made instrumental in averting these; and, to attain this end, they are willing that the war shall last as long as may be necessary for the purpose. They are *determined* that, so far as depends upon them, it shall not cease until it shall be attended with the effect of bringing about a connexion of some sort or other between the two countries, the more intimate the better; something of the kind they are inflexibly bent upon; something which shall suffice to secure among them the predominance of those political principles to which our country is indebted for the happiness which reigns there. "They talk," said one of these men to me, (a member of the present congress,) "of *nationality*. They say, that the first duty of the citizen is, and our first object at the present crisis should be, to preserve our nationality. But what is nationality worth—what is anything worth—except so far as it goes to secure *social advantages*? This is my touchstone for all political questions, and I recognize no other. Social advantages are the object, and nothing else is of any value, except as a means for securing this object. We have none in this country, and the only way in which we can acquire any is, by political institutions similar to yours. This is the reason why I have, all my life, to the very great neglect of the profession on which I depended for the maintenance of my family, been engaged in efforts to defend and foster the germs of liberty and State rights which we have among us. I have struggled for them, solely because they are means for the attainment of that in which the happiness of man consists. Nationality has been to us barren of all good; fruitful in nothing but anarchy, misrule, oppression, and corruption. Therefore its preservation is not an object with me, and I wish to see it merged in yours." He then entered into an explanation of the designs of those whose cure for all these evils consists in the introduction of monarchy; commented upon the

natural bias of the moderados—even those who heretofore have evinced an attachment to republicanism—to fall into the schemes of the monarchists; and concluded by saying, that, for himself, he would "never acknowledge any sovereign but God." He spoke of a plan which had existed for several years, of separating the northern States and seeking a connexion with us. "But the time for this has gone by; it is no longer practicable; and the work must now commence at the centre."

The organ of this party (of course poor in pecuniary resources) is the "*Razon*," a paper recently established, and edited with great ability. Its tone is very high and philosophic—altogether unsuited to this latitude, except among the very few; although it may, and doubtless will to a great extent, answer the purpose as a means of communication and concert between the men of this school. The influence which they can exercise is not by any means to be estimated by their numbers, for they know how to avail themselves of the spirit of mere faction; and *opposition* being their constant mood, they always constitute a nucleus round which the weaker factions naturally conglomerate, when bent upon breaking down the one which happens to be strongest, or defeating any measure upon which it may be intent. At the present juncture, for instance, when the presidency *ad interim* is known to every one to be with Almonte an object of purely selfish ambition, a very warm courtship is going on between him and the *puros*, and he may possibly receive their support; not that they and he have a single principle or a single aspiration in common, but because they may find it to their account to use him for the occasion to defeat the party in favor of immediate peace.

If the belief in the feasibility of their design could be propagated, the annexationists would, I am perfectly convinced, become in a very short time the predominant party. The best part of the population would rapidly fall into their ranks, and they would very soon carry everything before them. It can scarcely be conceivable by one who does not actually *know* the truth of the matter, (as the opportunities which I happen to enjoy enable me to do,) how rapidly the wish that we may retain the country is extending itself.

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I experienced not a little surprise upon first becoming aware, as I did at Puebla, of the influence produced by this view of the subject upon the *lower* clergy; the lazy, ignorant, and stupid monks, whose views do not extend beyond the round of purely animal enjoyments, of which their lives are made up, and who have in their characters no element whatever for an *esprit du corps*, save the common love of, and greed after, money and property, mixed up with an idol worship fanaticism, (for, with them religion is sheer idolatry and burning of candles,) no less gross and base than their gluttony and lasciviousness. But my surprise has been far greater at learning that the same consideration has produced an equally decisive effect upon that portion of the body who, although they have but little purity to boast of, are nevertheless elevated far above the

common herd in the sentiments and principles by which they are actuated. It shows how strongly impressed their minds must be with the danger of the downfall of the church itself, through the confiscation of the property on which its influence (such as it exists here especially) so materially depends.

* * * * * The case is different, however, with the class who constitute what is called "good society." Even if their feelings of aversion for our race were not sufficient (and they are superabundantly so) to produce this effect, prudence alone would dictate that they should, under existing circumstances, avoid all contact with us. This they do, and it is only from having been favored by accident with channels of communication not suspected by themselves, that I am enabled really to know anything of what is passing in their hearts, and to speak with certainty and positiveness on the subject. I use this tone not hastily or inconsiderately, but in the perfect assurance that it is fully justified by the character of my sources of information. So far as regards them, the relations which they bear to the classes referred to, and the opportunities which those relations afford, are with me a matter of positive knowledge; and I feel perfectly certain of the absence of all motive and all wish to convey to me any impressions but those strictly accordant with the truth of the matter.

This applies to all that I have said, or may hereafter say, (unless I expressly give to it the character of mere rumor, or of inference from newspapers and ordinary sources of information,) in regard to the views and dispositions of the upper classes, whether clergy or laity. In regard to movements and designs on the political stage, my means of knowledge are equally good. With respect to the peace party particularly, I learn from day to day everything that the prime movers in it at Queretaro and elsewhere consider worth communicating to those who are coöperating with them from this point; persons between whom, besides the bond of union consisting of identity of views with respect to the peace question, there exists the closest personal friendship and intimacy. Indeed, I am on this footing with the prime movers at this place of two distinct branches of this party, who, although their efforts tend to the same result as perfectly as if they were one in body and soul, have but little communication with each other, and no personal affection or intimacy; rather the reverse.

* * * * * Information derived from a source entitled to great reliance (not connected with any of the foreign missions or consulates) leads me to believe, very confidently, that the alarm produced among the republicans by the return of Paredes is, for the present at least, entirely unfounded, so far as regards the supposed connexion of that event with the introduction of monarchy, in the person of the Duc de Montpensier. Various fables, which I was at first disposed to attach some credit to, have been current here on this subject; and among them one representing that a paper was in circulation for signature by the land proprietors, in order to fulfil the condition (3,000 signers from that class) upon which, in conjunction with the

requirement that peace should first be made, French intervention has been promised to establish monarchy. This, whatever may be the origin of the story, and whether such a paper has been in circulation or not, (I am strongly disposed to consider as impostors the persons who have pretended to some of our officers that it has been presented to them,) is at bottom a sheer invention. No such promise has been made. On the contrary, although, probably enough, Paredes was flattered and courted by the "citizen king," his project received no countenance from either the French or the English government; both refused to have anything to do with it. Although one of the honestest and bravest men they have ever had, he is a fool and a drunkard—certainly not the sort of person who would be selected by the European courts to carry on an intrigue of this kind, or to play any part whatever in such a game, unless it were that of a marplot, set to work on a false plan, in order that his absurdities might draw off attention from the real intrigue. It has occurred to me that this might possibly be the case in the present instance, although the supposition is certainly a far-fetched one.

* * * * * The anxiety for such a thing is, in many minds, intense and all-engrossing; for it is looked upon as the only possible way of salvation for the country; the only possible means by which the dire necessity can be averted for its abandonment by all who have the ability to get away, let the sacrifice be ever so great.

"Surely it cannot be a matter of indifference to a nation so elevated in the scale of civilization as yours is, that this country should be totally destroyed, and that it should become an utter desolation, as the preparation for your coming here. That it is to become a part of the United States, and this at no remote period, is certain. Why not at once, to-day, instead of ten or twenty years hence? You are here already; why not stay? You have certainly done mischief, and placed the country in a far worse condition than she was before: why not do good, and let this worse condition prove but a step to her regeneration, and to the peace and quiet which it depends entirely upon yourselves at once to give her?"

* * * * * I have been careful not to encourage it; but, on the contrary, to caution the parties against committing themselves, inasmuch as it is altogether uncertain which of the two proposed lines of policy—a continued occupation, or the taking up of a boundary—will be the choice of our country. With respect to the former, I become more and more fully satisfied every day that a force of from 25 to 30,000 men would be fully sufficient; and that the expense could, without difficulty, be met by the revenue produced from the ordinary sources. Apart from the very great difficulties and embarrassments among ourselves which the policy of continued occupation would necessarily give rise to, one serious evil, which could not fail to attend it here, has strongly impressed itself upon my mind: I mean the inoculation of our race with the virus of Spanish corruption in office. I have already seen, among those of us who are here—al-

though they know themselves to be here but for a day, and that the scrutinizing eye of our country is still upon them—proofs of a want of principle, far more than sufficient to show that apt scholars would not be wanting for the school of official morals to which I have referred.

Among the minor incidents of this most wonderful drama is a plan to avail themselves of our presence in this capital, in order to give to the federal district a government founded on republican principles, in place of the old Spanish municipal institutions, under which it has to this day continued to groan.

I will close with a few words on the subject of Santa Anna. Conversation with his familiars, since our entrance into the city, has only served to add to the strength of a conviction previously entertained, and that did not at all require corroboration; which is, that if Santa Anna had been, at the recent juncture, the man he once was, we should before this have had a treaty negotiated, and he would now be firmly fixed in power. But, at the very crisis of his destiny, his heart failed him; and although, to the last moment, urged up to it by some in whom he had great confidence, he could not bring himself to take the plunge into his Rubicon. The design which he had for some time meditated, and had brought himself to believe that he had resolved to carry out, found him, when the hour arrived, irresolute and vascillating; and, instead of taking the question of peace entirely into his own hands, he allowed himself to be carried along, by the flood of circumstances, into staking all upon a battle which every one felt sure that he would lose. His firmness was, to be sure, put to a most severe test: for threatening communications, official and private, were pouring in upon him from all quarters, from the State governments and from individuals. Those, however, who best know him, and who were around him during the crisis, believe that he would have stood firm against all this, but for the influence exercised over him, to the amazement of all, by one man—General Tornel, a person universally contemned, and most justly so.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
N. P. TRIST.

Hon. JAMES BUCHANAN,
Secretary of State.

[No. 19.] HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE U. S. ARMY,
Mexico, October 31, 1847.

SIR: I transmit herewith a copy of a note addressed by me, under date of the 20th instant, to the Minister of Relations, enclosing my reply, under date the 7th September, to the last communication of the Mexican commissioners. A copy of this reply accompanied my No. 16; but, having made some verbal alterations in it previously to transmitting it to the minister, I now send a copy containing those alterations, together with a note which I have been led to add to it in consequence of certain admissions contained in a recent

pamphlet from the pen of Señor Otero, a member of the present Congress, and one of the most able public men of the country. This pamphlet first appeared in the Spanish, and subsequently in English. Upon its first appearance I commenced making translations of certain passages, in the design of sending them to you; but I desisted upon seeing the English version announced. This version, although tolerably well done, proved on examination to be inaccurate in the more important passages: and I then engaged in the task of correcting them in one of the printed copies, before transmitting it. The "American Star" having commenced its publication in its columns, and the probability being that the train for Vera Cruz which is to leave in the morning, and by which this is to go, would not set out until day after to-morrow, I have lent the corrected copy to the publisher of the "Star," in order that he may print from it, and with a view to sending you a fair printed copy, free from the manuscript alterations, which would render its perusal troublesome. The lateness of the hour (I have been so closely engaged all day as not to have recollected it in time) does not permit me now to recover it; and I send, together with a copy of the Spanish original, one of the defective version, which will suffice for a cursory perusal. Comments upon it will be found in the Nos. of the "Razonador" sent by this conveyance.

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My separation from my family has already extended to double the time that was anticipated when I so precipitately left home, and I have the strongest desire to return. Under the circumstances and prospects of *the moment*, it is my duty to remain; but it will very soon be determined whether we are to make a treaty with the present administration; and it will be made very promptly, if made at all. Should the question be referred to that which is to come in under the election now taking place, (as I fear that it will be, though with some hopes of a contrary result,) I cannot possibly continue hanging on here for an indefinite period. The new Congress (the elections for which thus far are very encouraging) is to meet in January; the road will soon be safe, and the season is very propitious for my successor to come, should it be deemed advisable to keep any one here. I trust, therefore, to receive, so soon as a reply to this request can be sent, permission to withdraw at once, should the state of affairs at the time it reaches me be such as to afford no prospect of the subject being acted upon until the new administration comes in. I have never evinced any disregard of the public interests, and this may be safely left to my discretion.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
N. P. TRIST.

Hon. JAMES BUCHANAN,
Secretary of State.

P. S.—Your despatches sent through the War Department by Col. Wilson, (who died at Vera Cruz,) being those of the 13th (a du-