

Otero's own irrefragable showing, was used by the men who have wantonly sported with the destinies of their country, like any other commonplace and hackneyed topic of party slang, for the mere end of obtaining possession of the government and getting themselves into office. What the end is, which lies behind this one, (save in the case of a few most honorable exceptions,) is unfortunately but too notorious. Unless public opinion in Mexico be altogether at fault; unless the settled conviction upon this point, universally entertained by all classes of men—by the purest and most upright of her citizens, as well as by the most impure and unprincipled—and habitually referred to by all, as the explanation of all things, rests upon no other foundation than airy dreams;—unless this be the case, this end of all other ends could not fail to be strikingly exemplified by the final history of those “enormous contributions,” for which, as Señor Otero (whilst ardent with his invective against the cupidity and rapacity of the American people) informs us, the “reconquest of Texas” was made the pretext; and by which “the nation (Mexican) was impoverished.” If that history were known, or rather if it were *published*, (for such things are here covered with but a thin veil, when covered at all,) it would, when taken in connexion with Señor Otero's account of the progress of the Texan question, disclose to the amazed world the fact that this war, with its countless train of evils to the parties, and with the incalculable detriment which it brings upon neutrals, is at bottom due to one thing, and to this one thing alone: the reckless ardor with which the factions that unhappy Mexico has so long been a prey to, have habituated themselves to pursue that which, to their philosophy, is the supreme good—to wit, the felicity of engendering and fondling “enormous contributions.”

N. P. T.

[No. 20.]

HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE U. S. ARMY,
Mexico, November 7, 1847.

SIR: Referring to my No. 19, a duplicate of which is herein enclosed, I have the honor now to transmit a copy and translation of the reply of Señor Rosa, under date the 31st ultimo, to my note of the 20th.

Although, as will be perceived, Señor Rosa states that my communication leaves but little hope of the possibility of re-establishing peace, but little, if any, importance is to be attached to expressions of this kind, coming from those who labor under the misfortune of having to conduct the affairs of this country. It is a mere manner of style, which they are compelled to use in self-defence, and which they must employ all the same, whatever may be the dispositions or the intentions really entertained by them. In the present instance the prospect of a treaty is, I know, very good, so far as this depends upon the party by which the present administration has been built up. On this point (that of at once accepting our terms) the tone of the “Razonador,” particularly, (and other

papers also,) is as undisguised as possible, and no less urgent, and it speaks the real sentiments of the peace party; sentiments which will take the shape of acts, if such a thing be within the bounds of possibility. Strong hopes are entertained at this moment that it is so. If it prove otherwise, this will not be owing to any lack of inclination or of exertions on their part, but to the success of the efforts making by the puros to defeat them. These, although absolutely irreconcilable foes to Santa Anna, are now acting in concert with the Santanistas, (as they would act in concert with *any* faction, a union with whom for the occasion might be necessary to promote the object which they now have in view, as a means to the great end that I explained in my No. 18,) forming with them, what, in a letter from Queretaro, under date the 4th instant, contained in to-day's “Monitor,” is called the “Puro-Santanista league,” which opened its batteries against the government on the 4th instant, charging it with remissness in pushing the war. This assault ended with a resolution calling upon the ministry to appear and inform the House what measure it had adopted with reference to the war; which resolution was rejected by a vote of fifty odd against twenty-five. I received, three days since, positive information of there being (by the then latest accounts) forty-four votes which could be counted upon for peace. The alacrity now shown by the members of the puro party in hurrying to the scene of action, indicates that they have become impressed with the necessity of bringing up all their forces. From the leading editorial in the last “Razonador,” which accompanies this, it will be perceived that the object which governs their movements is no longer a secret. Whether the indignation with which the Razonador speaks of it be genuine, is very questionable. At any rate it would, I doubt not, quickly subside, if matters took a turn to render this expedient; that is, if our country gave the word. The letter referred to says, also, that one of the members of Santa Anna's recent cabinet stated that General Mora, one of the commissioners that met me, and now minister of war, *had agreed to make peace*; (meaning on the terms of our projet, and referring to that time.)

The express by which this is to go (a private one) I did not hear of until this evening, and I must now close.

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

N. P. TRIST.

Hon. JAMES BUCHANAN,
Secretary of State.

[Translation.]

QUERETARO, October 31, 1847.

The undersigned, minister of foreign relations of the Mexican republic, has had the honor to receive the note, under date the 20th ultimo, addressed to him by his excellency Nicholas Trist, commis-

missioner of the United States of America, clothed with full powers to conclude a treaty of peace with the said republic. The undersigned has received also the note of his excellency Mr. Trist in reply to that addressed to him, under date the 6th September, by their excellencies the commissioners on the part of Mexico for negotiating a peace.

Although the two documents referred to leave but little hope that peace may be re-established, the undersigned can assure his excellency Mr. Trist that the government of Mexico is animated by the same ardent wish as his excellency for the cessation of a war the calamities of which now bear heavily upon this republic; and the consequences of which will, sooner or later, make themselves felt by the United States of America.

The undersigned will, in consequence, have the honor, in the course of a few days to advise his excellency Mr. Trist of the appointment of commissioners to continue the negotiations for peace, to whom will be given instructions for the previous adjustment of an armistice, which the government of the undersigned believes will conduce greatly to the good result of the said negotiations.

The undersigned offers to his excellency Nicholas Trist the assurance of his very distinguished consideration.

LUIS DE LA ROSA.

[No. 21.]

HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE U. S. ARMY,
Mexico, November 27, 1847.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt, on the 16th instant, by a courier from Vera Cruz, of your despatch of the 25th ultimo, accompanied by the triplicate of that of the 6th of the same month, the original of which was delivered to me on the evening of the next day by Mr. Smyth, the bearer of despatches. The duplicate has not yet come to hand. It probably forms part of the large mail which, agreeably to the intelligence received here, left Vera Cruz in company with General Patterson, who had stopped at Jalapa.

On a future occasion, perhaps, should I ever find time to employ on a theme so insignificant with respect to the public interests, and so unimportant in my own eyes, so far as regards its bearings upon myself personally, I may exercise the privilege of examining the grounds for the censure cast upon my course by the President, and explaining those upon which rests the belief, still entertained by me, that that course was calculated to attain the end contemplated by our government, and was the only one which afforded the slightest possibility of its being attained—the end, I mean, of bringing about a treaty of peace on the basis, in all material respects, of the project intrusted to me. For the present, I will merely call attention to the fact that a mere offer to refer a question to my government constitutes the only ground on which I can be charged with having “gone so far beyond the carefully considered ultimatum to which [I was] limited by my instructions.”

Whether this offer, under the circumstances and prospects of the crisis when it was made, was wise or unwise—I mean with reference to the end desired by our government—is a question which no longer possesses any practical importance; though the time was, when it constituted with me a subject of the most careful and the most anxious deliberation; not because of the personal responsibility attaching to the decision in which that deliberation resulted—for that never occupied my mind for an instant—but because I knew and I felt that upon my own decision depended, according to every human probability, the early cessation of the war, or its indefinite protraction. The alternative presented by the position in which I found myself was, on the one hand, to keep on safe ground so far as I was personally concerned, and destroy the only possible chance for a peace; on the other hand, to assume responsibility, and keep that chance alive, with some prospect at least—and, all things considered, as perhaps I may hereafter take the trouble to show, by no means a prospect to be despised under such circumstances—that the adoption of our projet might come to pass.

Upon referring to your two despatches above referred to, my first thoughts was, immediately to address a note to the Mexican government, advising them of the inutility of pursuing their intention to appoint commissioners to meet me. On reflection, however, the depressing influence which this would exercise upon the peace party, and the exhalation which it would produce among the opposition, being perfectly manifest, I determined to postpone making this communication officially, and meanwhile privately to advise the leading men of the party here and at Queretaro of the instructions which I had received. Their spirits had, for the last few days, been very much raised by the course of events at Queretaro; and one of them (the second of the two heads mentioned in a late despatch) called on me, on the very day after your despatches came to hand, for the purpose of communicating the “good news,” and making known the “brightening prospects.” Upon my saying that it was all too late, and telling what instructions I had received, his countenance fell, and flat despair succeeded to the cheeriness with which he had accosted me. The same depression has been evinced by every one of them that I have conversed with, whilst joy has been the effect with those of the opposite party who have approached me to inquire into the truth of the newspaper statement from the Union. By both parties the peace men were considered as floored; this was the *coup de grace* for them.

Mr. Thornton was to set out (as he did) the next morning for Queretaro; and I availed myself of this, privately to apprise the members of the government of the state of things with reference to which their exertions in favor of peace must now be directed, and to exhort them not to give up, as those here had at first seemed strongly disposed to do, and, as it was believed here, that those at Queretaro would at once do. Fortunately, however, when the news reached there, they had just

taken in a strong dose of confidence—the result of the meeting of the governors—which has served to brace them against its stunning effect. Mr. Thornton left here on the 17th, and was to complete his journey on the evening of the 21st. Before he had reached there, I was privately advised here of the appointment of the commissioners named in the official note from the minister of relations, under date the 22d, herein enclosed, together with a copy of my reply to the same, which was despatched from Queretaro on the morning of that day. Their extreme anxiety on the subject may be judged of from the fact that I have received, already, the same communication in duplicate and triplicate. The peace men did not cease, for several days, to implore me to remain in the country, at least, until Mr. Parrott shall have arrived with the despatches of which report makes him the bearer. To these entreaties, however, I have turned a deaf ear, stating the absolute impossibility that those despatches should bring anything to change my position in the slightest degree. General Scott at once said, that he would despatch a train at any time I might name. And I should have set out before this, but for two considerations: one, that the garrison here is already so small that its duties are exceedingly oppressive to both officers and men, and the matter would be made still worse by the detachment of another escort; the other, that General Scott has been engaged, during the whole time that was not employed in the discharge of his current duties, in drawing up charges against General Pillow and others, which had first to be done before my testimony (that is highly important) could be taken in the case. For these reasons, I determined to postpone my departure until the return of the train under Lieutenant Colonel Johnson, which is expected on the 4th or 5th of next month. Should it be delayed beyond that time, and should any reinforcements have arrived here, or be near, I will set out immediately after. It will take us twelve days, at least, to reach Vera Cruz.

I recommended to the peace men to send immediately, through General Scott, whatever propositions they may have to make, or to despatch one or more commissioners with me. After full conversations on the subject, however, I became thoroughly satisfied of the impracticability of either plan; it would, to a certainty, have the effect of breaking them down. The only possible way in which a treaty can be made is, to have the work done on the spot—negotiation and ratification to take place at one dash. The complexion of the new congress, which is to meet at Queretaro on the 8th of January, is highly favorable. This will be the last chance for a treaty. I would recommend, therefore, the immediate appointment of a commission on our part.

I am, sir, in great haste, and very respectfully, your obedient servant,

N. P. TRIST.

Hon. JAMES BUCHANAN,
Secretary of State.

QUERETARO, November 22, 1847.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith to you, at the request of Señor de la Peña y Peña, Mexican minister of foreign relations, a note addressed to you by his excellency, announcing the nomination, in consequence of the readiness expressed by you to receive them, of commissioners for the purpose of negotiating a treaty of peace with you. I beg leave to express my earnest hope, that the promptness with which this step has been taken by the Mexican government after the election of General Anaya to the presidency, may serve to you as a proof of their sincere and anxious desire for the fulfilment of the great object which the commissioners have in view.

I have the honor to be, sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

EDWARD THORNTON.

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

MEXICO, November 24, 1847.

To his excellency, DON MANUEL DE LA PEÑA Y PEÑA,
Minister of relations of the Mexican government:

The undersigned has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the note, under date the 22d instant, of his excellency Don Manuel de la Peña y Peña, minister of relations of the Mexican government, acquainting him of the appointment of the commissioners therein named, to negotiate for the restoration of peace. The undersigned regrets to say, in reply, that the powers conferred upon him, for that purpose, have been revoked, and that, agreeably to the instructions received by him, he is under the necessity of returning, without delay, to the United States. At the same time, he has been instructed to say, that any communication from the Mexican government, having for its object the opening of negotiations, or the restoration of peace, will be immediately transmitted, by the commanding general of the United States forces in this republic, to Washington, where it will receive the prompt consideration of the President.

The undersigned still cherishes, therefore, the hope that the signature of the treaty, which has been reserved for another hand than his, is destined to take place at an early day. In this hope, he tenders to, &c.

[No. 22.]

HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE U. S. ARMY,
Mexico, December 6, 1847.

SIR: * * * * *

In the letter just referred to, besides the complimentary consideration therein mentioned, (my belief that the appointment of a commission on the part of our government cannot now take place in