

have reason to believe but too well founded. Justice towards Mr. Polk, and respect for truth, alike require, however, that I should not utter this belief, without at the same time expressing my perfect conviction that the identity referred to extends no further than the point to which it is carried by a blind confidence on the part of the President, in the understanding and the principles of a man who, of all that I have ever known, is the most unworthy of confidence. Beyond this point, the identity goes not. There is not the slightest resemblance between their character in any one respect.

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

N. P. TRIST.

HON. JAMES BUCHANAN,
Secretary of State.

[CONFIDENTIAL.]

MEXICO, December 4, 1847.

MY DEAR MR. ———: This letter will occasion you great surprise, but no greater than I should myself have experienced a few hours ago, had a seer, in whose prophetic powers I put faith, foretold to me that I was to write it. Down to that moment, I have, from the time when I last wrote to you, considered it as a thing fixed and unchangeable—as absolutely fixed as any thing can be—that the treaty of peace, which I yet hoped might take place at an early day, was not to be signed by my hand. True, every time the subject presented itself to my mind, my fears had become greater and greater that the opportunity would be lost. The critical position of the peace party—whose difficulties and whose peril, as we fully know, cannot but augment with every revolving hour, until their object shall have been consummated—had seldom been absent from my thoughts; and every time it occurred to me, I became more and more deeply and anxiously impressed with the probability that, through mere delay, through the mere loss of a few weeks, all their efforts were to prove vain; that the incessant exertions, the indefatigable industry, and the patriotic courage on their part, by which the present state of things has been brought about, were, after all, to result in *nothing*; nay, in something far worse than nothing; their own entire prostration and dissolution, through flat despair and death to the sentiment of peace, in every bosom which has cherished it. Still, although this has constantly been the state of my mind on the subject, I have never, until a few hours ago, for an instant wavered from the determination expressed in my reply to your letter; never once conceived the *possibility* of a change in that determination. So convinced had all become, that it was fixed, beyond the possibility of change, that all entreaties and arguments to move me had long ceased. Nevertheless, it now stands reversed. For good or for evil, this reversal has occurred, and has been made known in the proper quarter. I am now resolved, and committed, to carry home with me a treaty of peace, if the Mexican government feel strong enough to venture upon ma-

king one on the basis, as regards boundary, of the projet originally presented by me, modified according to the memorandum which I subsequently gave to one of the commissioners; that is to say, running up the middle of the Rio Bravo from its mouth to the thirty-second degree of latitude, and thence along that parallel to the Pacific ocean; with free access to and from the ocean, through the gulf of California, from and to our possessions.

If they feel able to make and carry through a treaty on this basis, it would be utterly idle to talk or to think for an instant of any other, and I cannot listen to a single word on the subject; let them say the word, and the treaty shall be made.

If they do not feel thus able, let them surrender at once to the Puros, and dismiss forever all thought of a treaty; for it is the last chance that Mexico can have for one equally favorable to her, or indeed for one which any party in this country can accept. I am fully persuaded that its terms would not, by any means, meet the views *now* entertained by my government. So decided is my belief on this point, that even if I were clothed with discretionary powers to make *any* treaty *which I deemed compatible with those views*, I could not consistently with this limitation offer the terms I now propose; and I should not now make the offer but for my clear and perfect conviction on these three points: *First*, that peace is still the desire of my government: *Secondly*, that if the present opportunity be not seized *at once*, all chance for making a treaty *at all* will be lost for an indefinite period—probably forever: *Thirdly*, that this is the utmost point to which the Mexican government can, by any possibility, venture.

It is my conviction on the second of these points particularly—a conviction which has been becoming clearer and stronger every day for the last fortnight—that causes me to depart from the determination I had taken; a determination which, in any other position than the one wherein this most extraordinary, this altogether unprecedented combination of circumstances, places me with reference to the known wishes of my government and country—places, indeed, that very country itself—it would be so obviously my duty to allow nothing to shake. In my last despatch home I represented the nature of the crisis, and recommended the immediate appointment of a commission. I then hoped that this step might be taken in time. I then considered that whether it should or should not so turn out, and whatever might be the consequences of its turning out otherwise, I had nothing to do but close my eyes to those consequences; for they had passed entirely beyond my control. I did so close my eyes, and I believed for the moment that the subject was dismissed forever from my thoughts. But ever since then, the hope that the step referred to *can* be taken ere it will be too late, has been becoming fainter and fainter every day; and as *it* has thus waned, so have the consequences presented themselves under a more and more threatening and disheartening aspect, as they loomed up through the dim future in their as yet indistinct and ill-defined character, but plainly incalculable immensity.

Thus has the question which your letter had raised in my mind, and which, on concluding my reply, I had considered as dismissed for once and all, again come up, and brought itself home to me. What is my line of duty to my government and my country, in this most extraordinary position in which I find myself? Knowing, as I do, that peace is the earnest wish of both, is it, *can* it be my duty to allow this last chance for peace to be lost, by my conforming to a determination of that government, taken with reference to a supposed state of things in this country entirely the reverse of that which actually exists? Upon full reflection, I have come to the conclusion that my duty is, to pursue the opposite course; and upon this conclusion I have taken my stand. It remains to be seen whether the Mexican government can come up to the mark, and give effect to my resolve. "*Now or never*" is the word; and I need not say to you that this word is uttered in all sincerity, and with as total an absence of all diplomatic reserves behind it as ever occurred in the most solemn vow pronounced by man. I have had no new instructions, no hint of any kind from Washington or elsewhere, in or out of the United States. The case stands in this respect precisely as when we parted.

I am, &c.,

N. P. TRIST.

[No. 23.]

HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE U. S. ARMY,
Mexico, December 20, 1847.

SIR: In my last despatch, under date the 6th instant, the governor of the State of San Luis Potosi is mentioned as dissentient, in the meeting of governors which had recently taken place at Queretaro, from the determination there formed, to support the existing federal government in its peace policy. I had no idea, when thus alluding to this functionary that I was to be indebted to him for so striking a corroboration, as the one herewith transmitted, of the accuracy of what I have there stated with respect to the character and the intentions of that government, regarding the restoration of peace.

I refer to this letter, under date the 24th November, addressed by him (Don Ramon Adame) to Señor de la Peña, as minister of relations, and republished from a Toluca paper, in the enclosed number of the "*Razonador*" of the 18th instant. The pretext for this letter, as will be perceived, is to ask for a copy of the proceedings at the conferences which the writer attended; which request being prefaced by a statement of what had occurred at those conferences, the whole is then published, in furtherance of the designs of his party; designs which have been explained in my previous despatches.

The burden of his complaint, as will be seen, is, that at the very opening of the conferences the government established as a preliminary, that the meeting of the governors had been called solely for the purpose of advisement and information, and not in order

that the course to be pursued by the government should be submitted to their decision, or be controlled by their views. He says: "The cabinet constantly insisted that, even if their votes should be taken, the result was not to be regarded as binding upon the government; and, having previously fortified themselves with extensive reports, they *precipitated the question*, (in utter disregard of the point which had been raised,) by entering upon an exposition of the objections to continuing the war, of the embarrassments of the position of the country, and establishing definitively the necessity of making peace; of making it *in this very negotiation, now pending*, as being the last opportunity, although this opportunity afforded not the means of recovering the hour which has been irreparably lost." He complains that the convocation of the governors had not for its object even so much as to advise with them, inasmuch as the only purpose which it was made to serve, was that "*of establishing in their presence, and without calling on them for an official opinion on the question, the necessity of making peace*. A judgment, on the part of the cabinet, so uniform as this, *decided the question*." He states, also, that "in the course of the debate the ministry had manifested doubts as to *the efficacy of the decrees of the States against an ignominious peace*, and as to *the value of that spirit, with which the country is palpitating, against consenting to conquest, or to a shameful peace*."

Again, he says: "Not only had the cabinet taken from the governors, or nullified, the very function which it had reserved to them, that of *enlightening*; but, satisfied with their own peculiar *data*, protected by those which might be afforded by that communication from Mr. Trist, and fully conscious that neither advice nor *light* was either practicable or desired, they *put forward their own predetermined and no longer doubtful vote in favor of making peace*. This opinion so firm, this conviction so profound, of its necessity, was at the same time attested by the resignation of the ministers of relations and of justice and finance, if any other course was to be given to the negotiation. For myself, I did not choose at that moment to mortify the supreme magistrate, by an observation which went to demonstrate *that a predetermined plan of proceeding so invincible as this, placed him under subjection and deprived him of all liberty to pursue the path of public opinion*."

Such is the account given by this governor of the inflexibility manifested by the present federal government, in their determination to *make peace*; to make peace in the only way in which it was practicable, *by acceding to our terms*. Thus substantial was the ground for the alarm with which the minds of the opponents of peace were filled, at the moment when that alarm was suddenly turned into exultation by the news of my recall; or—to state, without any reference to myself, the cause by which this effect was produced—by the news of the President's determination to *withdraw this mission*. This it is, that did the mischief; for my removal, had the change been limited to this, would have been a mere circumstance. Not that it would have failed to occasion deep sorrow, and even alarm, in every bosom friendly to peace; for I do

know—and so does every foreigner here, and so does every person who knows anything about the matter—that these feelings would have been excited; but they would have been unattended with any important consequence; they might even have exercised a favorable influence, *had my place been instantly refilled*; for then my recall would have amounted only to a manifestation of the displeasure of my government at the spirit of conciliation evinced by me—or at my want of judgment, or whatever else it may be called—and to a proof of the inflexibility of that government, in exacting a literal compliance with whatever it might demand of this country.

The blow then received by the cause of peace has, within a few days, been followed by another, scarcely less severe, from Mr. Clay's Cincinnati speech and resolutions: All remark would be superfluous upon the tendency of these to shake even the firmest and most resolute friends of peace, in the conviction to which their minds had been brought respecting the absolute indispensableness of the sacrifice of territory involved in the acceptance of my offer. This conviction had become perfect, and I entertained no apprehension whatever of its undergoing any change, except by becoming every hour more and more deep and settled. But now, there are manifest indications of its having been shaken; and even if it should recover from this shock, and become as firm as ever—a supposition which defies all probabilities—there would still remain the solid ground, thus furnished by that eminent citizen of our country, for bringing against any treaty which may be presented for ratification, the objection that the sacrifice which it makes is *totally unnecessary*. And should the treaty which I have offered to make be carried through, all those who may have taken part in it will forever remain exposed to the charge of having, without any necessity whatever for parting with any portion of their territory, however small, surrendered *one half of their country*; a charge which, however unfounded it might in reality be, could never be refuted, could never be otherwise than highly plausible, in the presence of such a declaration of views from a statesman of Mr. Clay's wide celebrity and immense influence.

This is the position into which the peace party now finds itself thrown, by a shock proceeding from our country, at the very moment when the object for which they formed themselves and for which they have been toiling, without remission, ever since the dissolution of the government in September last, was about to be consummated. Their sincerity and their steadiness of purpose thus far have placed themselves above question; and the impression upon every mind acquainted with the facts which have been occurring, within the last few weeks particularly, has constantly strengthened, *that peace was at hand*; that, within a very short period after the assembling of the new Congress, early in January, the treaty would be ratified. What are to be the consequences of this fresh blow to the cause, is more than any human being can pretend to tell. Some deem it fatal; others are still sanguine. For myself, I have had some moments of despondence, but they have been transient: I still see good reason to hope on still. At

any rate, the suspense will not be long: ten or twelve days more, and the question is at an end.

The enclosed "Razonador" will be seen to contain also the project of a law presented by Señor Perdigon Garay, a distinguished member of the *puro* party, and the mover of the articles of impeachment against General Mora y Villamil, charging him with treason, which constituted one of the numberless manœuvres for breaking down the peace party. The *declared* object of the proposed law is, "to establish *during the war*, and for the purpose of *repelling the invader*," a certain body of troops, to consist of one man for every two hundred souls, and to be denominated "militia of the confederated States." By any one acquainted with the state of things here, its *real* object is seen, at a glance, to be the highly laudable one of taking advantage of this pretext for embodying and disciplining a body of citizen soldiers, as a security against their own enormously overgrown army of generals, who, so long as the country shall remain at the mercy of their *pronunciamentos*, constitute a fatality, under which every element of good that it contains must continue to be smothered.

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

N. P. TRIST.

HON. JAMES BUCHANAN,
Secretary of State.

P. S.—It is scarcely necessary to say, that the "communication from Mr. Trist," referred to by Señor Adame, (and which he states that the Executive declined to lay before the meeting of governors,) was my note to the Minister of Relations, under date October 20, transmitting my reply to the last communication from the Mexican commissioners.

[No. 24.]

HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE U. S. ARMY,
Mexico, December 26, 1847.

SIR: In the enclosed numbers of the "Monitor Republicano" (a staunch and steady advocate of peace, it is to be borne in mind) of the 23d and 24th instant, will be found an "exposition" from the deputies of the *puro* party, which constitutes the last stand made by them—in the character, I mean, of members of the expiring "sovereign constituent Congress"—against the consummation of the measure upon which the government is known to them, and to every one, and to be intent. Besides the interest attaching to it in this point of view, it is richly deserving attention from all who may be desirous of understanding the real state of this country, with reference to the question of peace: the real state of *the country*, of its *heart and core*, as contradistinguished from the merely superficial appearances presented by the tricks of personal factions, or even by the mere manœuvres and stratagems of parties. For, as I have already had occasion to explain in former despatches, the diversity of sentiment upon which the question of peace now

turns, divides those between whom its decision rests into *parties*, into *national parties*, in the highest and best sense of the term; the consideration by which they are both governed being the good of their country. The one desires *immediate* peace, believing it to be indispensable to the preservation of their nationality. Indeed, they desired it long before matters came to this pass; but now they desire it for this additional and paramount reason. Believing the necessity for peace to be thus peremptory, and convinced that an acquiescence in our demand is the only way to obtain peace, they are ready for the sacrifice, heart-rending as it is to them. The opposite party are no less sensible of the value of peace, and no less decided in their wish for it. But, believing that its restoration under existing circumstances would be fatal to their hopes for the political regeneration of their country, they are immovably fixed in their determination to prevent it if they possibly can, at whatever risk, at whatever cost, and by whatever means. So far as depends upon any efforts which they can make, the war is never to end until it shall have been made conducive to this great object: an object which many of them had in view long before the war commenced; and which, even at that period, directed their course with reference to the causes which gave rise to it. To this policy more than one convert has, I *know*, been made within the last month or two. Indeed, it is rapidly gaining ground from day to day.

From this party proceeds the state paper here referred to. It would be a great error to confound it with the declamatory trash proceeding from Santa Anna, and the like, who, having never any other object in view than the attainment of their own base personal ends, have ever been ready to profess eternal devotion to one set of principles to-day, and to swear perpetual allegiance to the opposite cause on the morrow. This is different stuff, quite. There may be exaggeration in the inflexibility which they ascribe to their own purpose; and there may be—there doubtless are—great diversities of character in the signers, with regard to honesty and purity, as well as to steadfastness of purpose. But, be this as it may, it is no sham, it is a *real* purpose; the purpose, not of a chameleon faction, but of a national party: a purpose, not of mushroom growth, but the matured product of the studies and experience, the convictions and sentiments, pursued and hoarded up and cherished during long lives. It is a genuine part of the genuine and deep-seated patriotism of this unhappy land—a land, some of the sons of which, at least, are worthy of a better lot.

It will be observed, that they stop short of saying upon what terms and conditions they would make peace, except so far as the suggested withdrawal of our troops (which they know to be an impossibility) may be viewed as a condition. They confine themselves to a statement of what they are *opposed* to, of what they will *not* do, of what they will never consent to. They will not consent to the *extinction* of their nationality—they do not say to its *amalgamation*. They will not consent to the *dismemberment* of their country, nor to its *conquest*—they do not say to its *incorporation*

They will not consent to either, *because* either involves the *subjugation* of their race, placing it on the same footing as the barbarous tribes who have melted away before us, and leads directly and inevitably to its *extinction*. All this is perfectly compatible with a strong desire for incorporation with us; or, if this be impracticable, for a close political connexion.

Upon this topic, I will refer, as also highly meriting attention as an indication of what is thought and felt in this country, to the views presented in a communication from a very able hand, under date *Gaudalajura, October 15*, republished in the "Monitor Republicano" of the 8th and 9th of November; to which I called attention at the time of transmitting those papers, marking the article and many of its passages. Under cover of an exceedingly bitter invective against what we *have* done, a view is taken, with great boldness and force, of what we *might* have done, and may yet do, to insure the happiness and win the heart forever, not of Mexico alone, but of the whole of Spanish America. That view, with variations as to matters of detail, is the ultimate view of the "puro party, or *progress party*," as they call themselves in the enclosed "exposition;" which manifesto, as will be perceived, closes with the following reference to their own character, objects and conduct as a party, *previously to this contest*:

"Wherefore, although profoundly affected by the effusion of blood, and the other calamities which attend the struggles of nations, we solemnly proclaim the continuance of the war, because it is the only mode left to us for upholding a just cause, and maintaining the incontestible rights of our country. *Apart from this, fully aware of the incalculable advantages which are secured to mankind by the political and economical principles proclaimed by the wise, we have been constant in defending democratic liberty and the holy cause of civilization, as the means of giving prosperity to our republic, and of exciting in her favor the sympathies of the world. But, calumniated and persecuted by those very men who now proclaim the impotence of our country, after having rejected the means of making her strong, our labors have been to no purpose; and now, we all find ourselves borne down under the sad consequences of the wretched politics of those who have chosen to force us to live in the sixteenth century, whilst surrounded by people who live the life of the nineteenth.*

"*We love our fellow-men, and we have wished to attract them to our native land, that they might here, under the influence of a humanising and generous legislation,*" (referring, of course, to the legislation which they have wished and striven to secure for their country,) "*participate of the wealth we have inherited from our fathers.* But we cannot consent to the endeavor to humble our country, to dismember her territory, in order that she may soon be blotted out from the catalogue of nations. Still less can we consent to the extermination of our race; and, as the preparation for this, to its being covered with opprobrium and ignominy."

This, I repeat, is not to be confounded with the soulless verbiage under which Santa Anna, and characters of his stamp, seek to cover

up the sordid purposes of which alone they are capable. It comes from human hearts. It wells up from the bosoms of men who have told me that, when this war shall cease, whatever territorial arrangements may then be made, they want *no money* from us, because it would serve only to corrupt their politics still further, and render their purification yet more desperate.

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

Hon. JAMES BUCHANAN,
Secretary of State.

[No. 25.] HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE U. S. ARMY,
Mexico, December 29, 1847.

SIR: A short time ago, in my despatch of the 20th instant, I had occasion to mention the unfavorable influence which Mr. Clay's Cincinnati speech and resolutions were exercising here upon the cause of peace. Since then the President's message, brought to this city on the 25th instant, by a special courier from Vera Cruz, has been operating in the same direction, by affording encouragement to the puro party to redouble the desperate efforts they are now making to prevent the impending treaty, which, just three days ago, I heard that some of the party considered inevitable. The arrival of the message at this critical instant may be attended with consequences similar to those produced by the appearance of Bulow and Blucher on the field of Waterloo.

I refer to that part of the message in which the following sentences occur: "*In such event, it may become proper for our commanding generals in the field to give encouragement and assurances of protection to the friends of peace in Mexico, in the establishment and maintenance of a free republican government of their own choice, able and willing to conclude a peace which would be just to them and secure to us the indemnity we demand. This may become the only mode of obtaining such a peace. Should such be the result, the war which Mexico has forced upon us would thus be converted into an enduring blessing to herself. After finding her torn and distracted by factions, and ruled by military usurpers, we should then leave her with a republican government, in the enjoyment of real independence and domestic peace and prosperity, performing all her relative duties in the great family of nations, and promoting her own happiness by wise laws and their faithful execution.*"

The "event" here referred to as the one in which this "encouragement and assurances of protection" are to be given by us is, the failure of "the continued successes of our arms to secure a satisfactory peace." Now, as I have explained in several of my despatches, this failure is the very thing which the puros have been all along, and now are, striving for; and this, not because they are unfriendly to peace, but because they believe that, to prevent it, is the sure way, and the only way, to obtain for their country that

very encouragement and protection the prospect of which is here held out by the President. Their first choice (that of a considerable portion of them at least) would be annexation; but, failing in this, they would most joyfully accept what is here proffered; and, to this extent, thousands would go with them, who are not in favor of annexation, or who are even resolutely opposed to it.

It is exceedingly unfortunate, therefore, that this promise of what they have for years been toiling to bring about, and have recently succeeded in making the object of desire to many who have heretofore had no political sympathies with them, should be made dependent upon the protraction of the war. Thus far the success of their policy could not but be more or less problematical, even to those by whom it was first conceived, and who were indissolubly wedded to it, come weal or come woe; while to less ardent or less resolute minds the consideration always presented itself that, although such a state of things might result from protracting the war, yet, on the other hand, the result might be the subjugation of the country, and the enslavement and extinction of their race. From their tendency to give force to this consideration, and thus to discourage the puros and counteract their proselytism, I have not been sorry, however deeply humiliating it was to my pride of country, to have repeated to me by foreigners of unquestionable veracity, to whom they had been uttered, such remarks as the following, from the lips of one of our officers high in rank, recently arrived here: "*This army has not come to conquer a peace; it has come to conquer the country;*" "*we will make them dine and sup on the horrors of war.*" And when told, "*but at least your government should declare the policy it means to pursue, and let the country know what it is to expect, and what we are to adapt ourselves to,*" he replied, "*O! time enough for that two or three years hence.*"

Whatever the feelings excited in me by such things as these, they had their compensation in the effect they were evidently calculated to have in damping the ardor of the puros, and checking their propagandism. But now, the justness of the policy of this party, in protracting the war, has the seal of absolute certainty stamped upon it.

Fortunately, however, the time left for this to work its inevitable effect is but short. For, according to every probability, a treaty will be signed in the course of a week from this time, and it will obtain ratification very soon after the new Congress shall have formed a quorum; and the indications that this will take place early in January are becoming more and more favorable every day, notwithstanding the inability of the government to command even the small sum required to provide for the travelling expenses of the members, by paying their mileage. A few days ago the puros boldly pronounced a quorum to be impossible; but their confidence on this point has manifestly been falling, from hour to hour. The secret in regard to the treaty has been admirably kept, the persons who actually know anything about the matter being exceedingly few in number. All that the puros possess respecting it consists of their own surmises and convictions, founded on their knowledge of the