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THE DIARY OF JAMES K. POLK

DURING HIS PRESIDENCY, 1845 TO 1849

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IN THE COLLECTIONS OF
THE CHICAGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

EDITED AND ANNOTATED BY
MILO MILTON QUAIFE
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN THE LEWIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

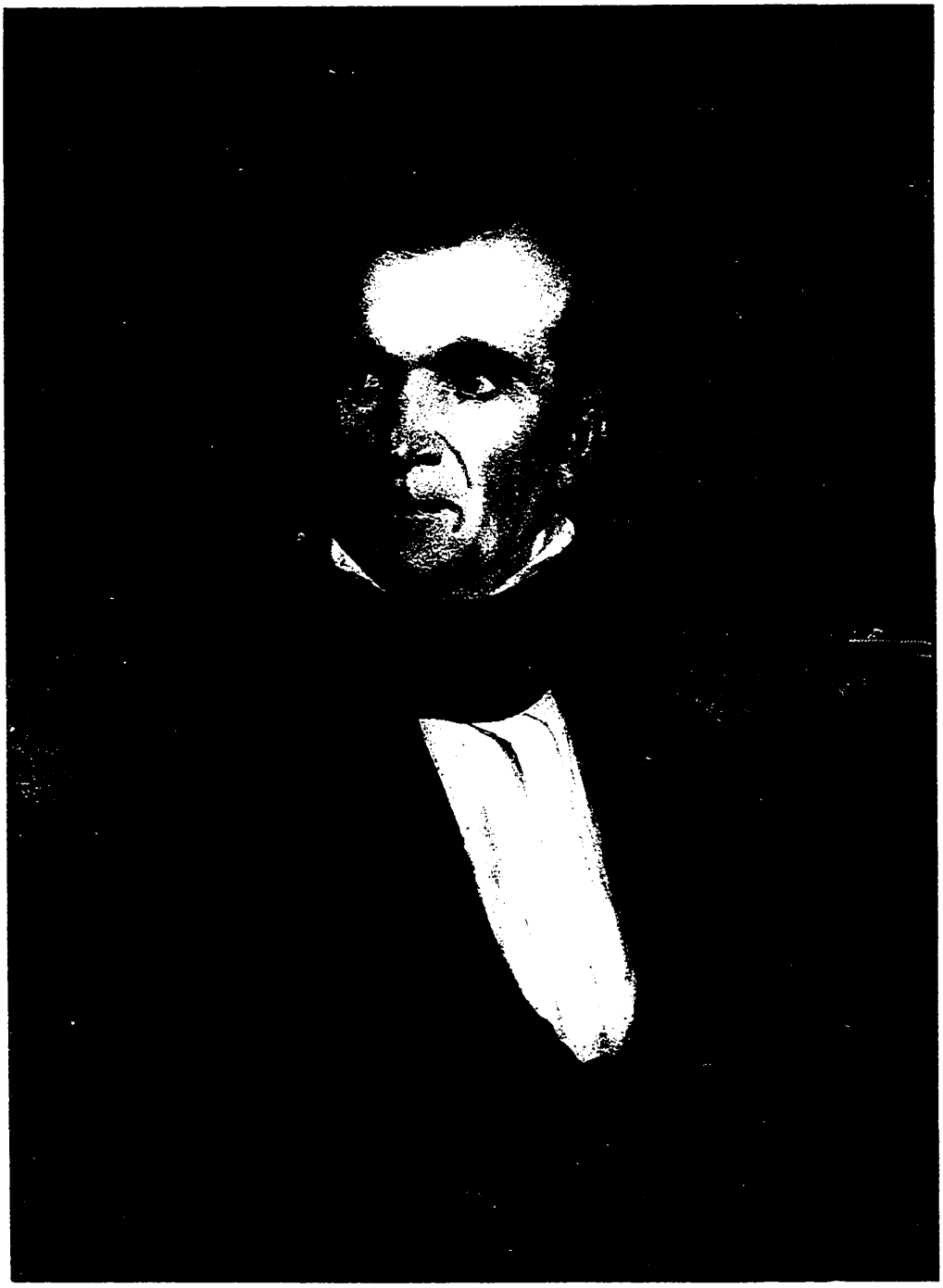
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
ANDREW CUNNINGHAM McLAUGHLIN
HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

IN FOUR VOLUMES

VOL. I.



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JAMES KNOX POLK

From the original painting made in 1846 by G. P. A. Healy in the collection of the Tennessee Historical Society, Nashville, Tenn.

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TO THE MEMORY OF

PROFESSOR CHARLES WESLEY MANN

TO WHOSE SCHOLARLY ENTHUSIASM

THE PUBLICATION OF THIS WORK IS DUE

PREFACE

THE considerations which induced Polk to keep a diary are sufficiently set forth by the President himself in the entry for August 26, 1846.[1] He adhered to the resolution there described to preserve a daily record of the events of his administration with a fidelity which seems at times, in view of all the circumstances, little short of marvelous. The record thus made, covering the period from August 26, 1845, to June 2, 1849, comprises twenty-five closely written volumes of uniform size and style, containing each, with the exception of the last, which is incomplete, from one hundred to two hundred and fifty pages. Together with a mass of letters and miscellaneous papers preserved by the President, the Diary remained in the possession of the Polk family until 1901, when it was purchased by the Chicago Historical Society.

It had been Mrs. Polk's desire that some friendly contemporary of her husband should make use of the papers left by him to write an account of his life and administration, but this wish was never realized. Mr. R. H. Gillet of New York, Register of the Treasury under Polk and author of the *Life and Times of Silas Wright,* declined the task on the ground of the inadequacy of his knowledge of Tennessee politics; and George Bancroft, who, late in life, took up the project, went no farther than to have transcripts made of the Diary and of a considerable number of the letters and miscellaneous pa-

[1] *Diary,* II, 101.

pers placed at his disposal by Mrs. Polk. These transcripts passed at his death to the Lenox Library of New York. But very little use has been made of the Diary itself thus far, although some scholars have consulted the Bancroft transcript.

After the Diary came into the possession of the Chicago Historical Society various obstacles arose to delay its publication until, in the year 1908, the matter was taken in hand by the late Professor Charles W. Mann, of the Lewis Institute of Technology. He devised a plan whereby provision was made for meeting the cost of the enterprise and undertook the work of editing the Diary. To his efforts its publication at this time is primarily due. To this work his time and strength were given unstintingly, and he was stricken down with his last illness while in the Society library engaged upon it. At the time of his death, in May, 1909, he had outlined the task of editing the Diary and had prepared tentative notes for approximately one-third of it. The present editor has adhered to the general plan of the work which he adopted and has made as much use as possible of the notes and other material collected by Professor Mann.

In preparing the Diary for publication the principle has been carefully observed that the printed copy should reproduce literally the original manuscript. Errors of spelling, of grammar, and of composition have therefore been allowed to stand just as the President, who wrote sometimes in haste, sometimes in excitement, often when beset with weariness or illness, made them. In the application of the principle indicated, however, certain problems have arisen, the editor's solution of which should be explained to the reader.

1st. Repetitions of words or phrases, plainly inadvertent and meaningless, sometimes occur in the manu-

script. These have not been reproduced in the printed copy.

2nd. It is often impossible to determine from the manuscript whether or not words were intended to be capitalized. In such cases of doubt Polk's customary usage in similar cases, if known, has been followed; in the absence of any such indication of the writer's probable intention, the correct form has been employed.

3rd. In the case of doubtful words or passages the uncertainty has been indicated by the use of the bracketed interrogation. Where the passage is incomplete or faultily constructed, if the omission could be supplied or the construction readily remedied, this has been placed in brackets. The reader can always see at a glance, however, what has been added to the original manuscript, and may ignore the editorial interpretation if it fails to meet his approval.

4th. The reproduction of errors in spelling can occasion no confusion except, perhaps, in the case of names of persons. As far as it was possible to do so all such names have been verified and the correct spelling employed in the notes and the Index. The reader can ascertain it, when desired, by reference to the Index.

5th. In the manuscript the heading of the daily entries is sometimes abbreviated and the order of the words used is varied from time to time. It seemed desirable to secure uniformity in this respect in the printed book and therefore the heading has in each case been written in full with a uniform order of words employed, regardless of the form of heading used in the manuscript from day to day.

6th. In the matter of punctuation the usage of the manuscript has been followed whether it accords with present practice or not, except in the following cases:

Polk, like many penmen of his time, made a very free use of dashes; ordinarily their presence on the page has no significance, and their reproduction in print would serve only to obscure the meaning and bewilder the reader. They have, therefore, not been reproduced. In similar fashion, Polk habitually underscored nouns, and sometimes phrases; for a similar reason, likewise, no attempt has been made to reproduce the underscoring in the printed book. Likewise the President's style of comma-punctuation differed widely from the present usage; to reproduce it would operate only to obscure the sense of the text; accordingly the manuscript has not been followed in this respect, and the editor is responsible for the comma-punctuation of the printed Diary.

No labor or pains has been spared to secure accuracy, both in the reproduction of the Diary and in the explanatory statements and references given in the notes. The editor is fully conscious, however, of the fact that the attainment of absolute accuracy in the reproduction of so voluminous a work is impossible. For such errors as occur, therefore, he asks the lenient consideration of the reader. Numerous friends, some of whom he has never had the pleasure of meeting, have assisted him, by giving information or otherwise, in the preparation of the Diary for publication. To all of these he wishes to express his obligation and his grateful appreciation of their kindness.

M. M. Q.

CHICAGO,
April 15, 1910.

INTRODUCTION

THERE is an old story which doubtless often comes to the mind of the historical investigator; its moral is offered to him at the hands of the unbeliever; it is the old tale of Walter Raleigh at work on his *History of the World.* Looking out from his window in the tower — if I remember the story aright, and, if I do not, it is no matter because it is a story — he saw two soldiers quarrelling in the court below. Realizing the difficulty of seeing and telling the truth about even a petty event, he turned back to his manuscript in despair. Such times of despondency come, presumably, to every investigator who appreciates the weight of his task, while the general reader of history doubts the capacity of any one to know the past. But there come also times of confidence when one sees that the assurance of the historian is not ill-founded and that his quest for truth is by no means vain. It is plain that of many an epoch one can know much — more, in fact, than did the very men of the time of which one writes. Naturally, we can see past events in proper perspective; we know a period better than the active participants in it because we see its results, and because events disclose their real significance by what they produce, and the product can be seen only by those who come afterward and look back upon the work of generations gone. But more than this is true — even of movements, motive, and incident, we often have a firmer grasp than did the men that were part of what we study.

The Diary of James K. Polk gives peculiar emphasis to the truth of these assertions. There is a great body of material on the period — public documents, newspapers, private correspondence; and we have, too, the recollections of Benton in his *Thirty Years' View* and his interpretation of a period in which he was himself a conspicuous figure; but the reading of such a source as is here put before us shows that public documents may often be misleading, not only to the investigator but to the men of the day, and we see that Benton was sometimes in the dark or was but shrewdly guessing at what we know to be the fact. We now are able to look behind the scenes of the drama of sixty-five years ago, and even into the mind of a man who, despite his real simplicity, must frequently have sorely puzzled the statesmen of his day.

The value of any historical source naturally depends upon its essential character. It is commonly said that unconscious sources are the best; that is to say, not chronicles written with express purpose to hand down opinions and knowledge of events to succeeding generations, but materials prepared without reference to future times, materials from which one can glean facts because they are not obscured by the purpose of the writer or colored by his prejudices. Of course, historical students in viewing a conscious source may find its most valuable evidence in what the writer does not say or in the things of which he is entirely unaware. Diaries intended for the edification of succeeding generations are, I imagine, peculiarly subject to the infirmity of prejudice: to make the worse appear the better reason, to give with assurance the items which one cannot really know, and to ascribe wrong motives to others — these are temptations which human nature finds it difficult to avoid. But any diary, especially one written faithfully for one's own eye without the future

reader continually in mind, artificial though it be, is necessarily of great value in letting us see the man that writes and in giving us a view of passing events as he sees them.

President Polk's Diary does not appear to have been written with the expectation that it would be conned by future historians. It lacks, therefore, affected self-consciousness at least. Probably he intended it to be a reminder of what actually happened, and he expected to use it himself as a basis for some formal narrative of his administration. Though one needs to remember that the writer is a man of strong feeling and even possessed of certain inflexible prejudices, one need not fear that he is posing or that he is intentionally distorting the truth. It is plain that not through the public documents, the customary arid material for historical study, not through the passionate declamation of Congress, but through the quiet, keen words of this silent President, can we get the surest knowledge of the real course of events and of the men who played their parts. Possibly I exaggerate; all documentary material is doubtless needed; but certainly it can be said that we have here a source of unusual clarity and precision and truth, as far as conscious purpose secures truth, for if there be any foundation for the old title of "Polk the Mendacious," there is no reason for thinking that he was mendacious to his journal or carefully deceived himself.

The fact seems to be that Polk was a man peculiarly simple in his make-up. He was, on the whole, straightforward — not frank, or at least not outspoken, though he could speak out with plainness when occasion seemed to demand speech — but he moved straight ahead with unusual directness, following his course unflinchingly, guided by the light of a limited experience and often led by a prejudice or a partisan antipathy which one can fairly

easily detect. By nature he was too simple, too plainly lacking in wide sympathy, too narrow in his emotions, too straightly hemmed in by education and practices of life, to become the prey of conflicting impulses. And this means that he was not consciously devious and hypocritical. Events or conditions, that would have turned aside a man less concentrated in purpose and less contracted in sympathy, were neglected or made to do service for his controlling intentions.

It is impossible here to indicate, in anything like detail, what the Diary divulges concerning the great events of Polk's administration. In manuscript form it has occasionally been used by historians during the last few years, and historical investigators do not yet agree on some of the essentials of the period. It is not unlikely, however, that these printed pages will bring in a new and juster estimate of Polk himself and a fairer view of the four years which, judged by results, are second in importance to few periods in our history. We are likely, I judge, to form a more charitable estimate of his dealings with Mexico and with England, and to acquit him of any pusillanimous bluster and surrender to England while engaged in imperiously giving intentional affront to Mexico. However that may be, for it is not my purpose to write history or correct judgments, this source is now open and all who will may read. The days that saw the war with Mexico, the settlement of the Oregon boundary, the admission of Texas, the acquisition of California and the great Southwest, the beginnings of the acute discussion over slavery in the new territory, the Wilmot Proviso — the days that were filled with facts and opinions of supreme importance in our history can now be seen through the eyes of the stern, rigid, precise, purposeful man in the White House, who, limited as he was

in his outlook upon the world, saw clearly along the line he intended to follow and took a hard, firm grasp of things that were near at hand.

From this Diary we can get an intimate view of the executive office as it was sixty-five years ago. It must be remembered that the White House has practically no archives; even letters and correspondence of great political moment belong to the man, not to the President. A large portion of the executive work has always been done in confidence and seclusion. The deliberations of the President and his advisers are not so secret as those of the English cabinet; but meetings are not open, and the essential connections between the President and Congress, and even those between the President and administrative officers, are largely made by personal interview and by non-public understanding or promise. In these pages we can see how at least one President did his work, how he was interviewed, how he dealt with Congressman and office-holder, and how he treated — most amazing problem of all — the ever busy office-hunter. The Presidential office was still governed by the precedents of Jeffersonian simplicity and democratic unreserve; sight-seers and public ministers, office-seekers and Congressmen, even beggars for alms found their way to the executive presence. And though Polk fretted at the interruptions and at the thoughtless importunity of callers, it does not seem to have occurred to him that he could imitate remotely the exclusive seclusion of a European potentate. That America should be simple and free, that it must avoid the ostentation and reserve of Europe, were ideas — so typical of thought and practice in the first half of the nineteenth century — which firmly held him.

The President's dislike for office-seekers finally amounted to hatred, and yet he was wedded to the spoils

system and did not distinctly see the connection between office-hunting and the system which he followed with such unyielding rigor. There are throughout the whole Diary but few gleams of humor; it is almost as matter-of-fact as a treatise on quaternions. But the office-seeker so disturbed the normal workings of a sober mind that on one occasion at least he came near seeing the humor of a situation; "a gay person of good character, accustomed to good society," who was "rather a pretty woman," implored him to provide with office a clerk, her lover, whom she fain would marry, for "she could not marry her lover while he was a Clerk." One cannot help thinking that Polk saw that the incident had its humorous ingredient, but after narrating the occurrence and stating the appeal, he contents himself with the grave declaration that, "The dispensation of the patronage of the Government will weaken if not break down any administration."

From these pages, too, we obtain as nowhere else a personal and immediate view of the conduct of the Mexican War and even the progress of its campaigns. We need to be on our guard against Polk's unyielding suspicion of the Whigs, whom he called Federalists, charging them in the word with aristocratic narrowness and vicious constitutional theories. But, if we are cautious about accepting his judgments as to Whig generals and leaders, we can gather much knowledge of conditions and of purposes even in the planning of campaigns.

Some idea of the interest and value of the Diary disclosing political conditions and giving evidence of the character of the writer can be gained by reading the entry under the date of March 3, 1849. These pages present a stirring picture of active politics during days of great sectional and partisan excitement. They show, too, some

of the essentials of Polk's character which the narrative does not, probably, throw into false relief. His determination not to sign the appropriation bill if it contained a clause embodying the principle of the Wilmot Proviso shows a strain of determination and decision which appear to be characteristic of the man. Perhaps one is always inclined to think of oneself as firm and consistent, especially when, as in this case, one writes after the crisis is past; but the reader will probably conclude that this quality of decision — or obstinacy — was real and characteristic of the precise, unyielding man who appears from his own account to be so unrelenting and calm during hours of excitement and hurry.

The Diary is so full of interesting material that I find it necessary to struggle against the desire to make many references and long quotations. Fortunately these are quite unnecessary, for the matter is here and the reader can see for himself. I must yield, however, to the temptation to call attention to the passage touching upon appointments to the Supreme Bench. It discloses Polk's dislike of the Whigs and his own belief that he stood for strict construction; and it illustrates most suggestively how the Executive, through his appointments, can form, or seek to form, the character of the Court and determine its standing on constitutional construction. On December 24, 1845, as will be seen from the Diary, he discovers that Buchanan "is in a pet" because the President has not nominated as Justice the man whom the Secretary of State desired. The President's reflections and expressions of opinion are interesting reading. The Court, it appears, must not be allowed "to relapse into the Broad Federal doctrines of Judge Marshall & Judge Story"; every care must be taken to see that men of original, native, and pure Democracy are elevated to this

position of decisive influence. "I have never known an instance of a Federalist," writes Polk, "who had after arriving at the age of 30 professed to change his opinions, who was to be relied on in his constitutional opinions. All of them who have been appointed to the Supreme Court Bench, after having secured a place for life became very soon broadly Federal and latitudinarian in all their decisions involving questions of Constitutional power."

Of men of the time conspicuous in public affairs we find suggestions and helpful information. Again we must admit the continual influence of Polk's own personal attitude and the temperamental tendency to sharp, unsympathetic criticism. And yet we get an opportunity to see men as Polk saw them; probably conversations and opinions are not wrongly reported. Moreover, it must be said, the reader feels compelled to recognize the justice and force of his estimates of character and often to admit that Polk was justified by what he saw in confiding to his Diary many a harsh judgment. If he was at times overcritical, he was penetrating and keen. He entertained no high opinion of Andrew Johnson, then a Democratic Congressman from Polk's own State: "He is very vindictive," says the Diary, "and perverse in his temper and conduct. If he had the manliness or independence to manifest his opposition openly, he knows he could not be again elected by his constituents. I am not aware that I have ever given him cause of offense." Of Buchanan, who is not yet a favorite with writers of history, we are not furnished with an attractive picture. Polk believes him able and strong, but shifty, or at all events not consistent; he appears variable, influenced, as Polk was not, by changing public opinion, and led astray by personal ambitions and desires when the route of travel appeared to stretch straight ahead. It is certainly diffi-

cult to read Polk's comments and the facts he gives without feeling a tendency to surrender to his estimate.

Of Calhoun, too, the view is not agreeable; guard oneself as one will by remembering the nature of Polk's mind and the color of his prejudices, the reader is forced to take his statements into consideration in any estimate of Calhoun's purposes and character. From our present view-point, looking back on the issues of the time, we feel drawn to the President, himself a slaveholder, who could face the grim Calhoun so coolly, could see his duty so clearly, and could be so amazingly uninfluenced by his own economic interest. "I became perfectly satisfied," he says after an interview with the South Carolina Senator in January, 1849, in which they discussed the subject of slavery in California and New Mexico, "that he did not desire that Congress should settle the question at the present Session, and that he desired to influence the South upon the subject, whether from personal or patriotic views it is not difficult to determine. I was firm and decided in my conversation with him, intending to let him understand distinctly that I gave no countenance to any movement which tended to violence or the disunion of the States." Delicate and difficult as the situation was, he looked at the question of disunion and the excitement of pro-slavery and anti-slavery men alike with open eyes, as usual without great and deep human emotion, but, within the range of his vision, with courage and precision. "My opinions," he wrote on December 23, 1848, "as [to] the wickedness of agitating the subject in Congress are well settled, & events may occur which will make it my duty to incur high & vast responsibilities. I will meet them, but am resolved to give no favour to violent or disunion movements, but on the contrary to do everything, consistently with my sense of constitutional duty, to pre-

serve the Union & its harmony." In these and many other passages we see his estimate of Calhoun's character and purposes, and his own attitude toward the Union and slavery agitation.

It is impossible in short space to do more than roughly indicate some qualities of this interesting document. It has already been used, as I have said, by a few historians of the period and from it many important facts have been gleaned. In the future it is likely to be of continual usefulness. Such values as I have attributed to it are, I am sure, not overdrawn. It can be said with some confidence that it is more than a source for the professional historian; much of it will be read with interest by the general reader of history and by the student of American politics and biography.

ANDREW CUNNINGHAM MCLAUGHLIN.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO,
February, 1910.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

IT IS a well recognized truth that the definitive history of an age or a movement cannot be written by contemporary observers. Lapse of time is essential to the attainment of an adequate historical perspective. This truth applies equally to individuals as to epochs. The judgment passed upon one's career by his contemporaries may be completely reversed by the verdict of posterity. The treatment thus far accorded James K. Polk by his countrymen has been curious. In the main he has been remembered only to be reviled, and one may safely assert that the final judgment of history upon his career has not yet been past. Prior to his accession to the presidency he had passed through a long and honorable public career, both in his State and in the Nation, yet he stands forth in history as the first dark horse of American politics. He conducted his administration with force and ability, carrying to completion during its course every item of the comprehensive programme the execution of which he had proposed to himself before his inauguration. He directed a successful foreign war, as a result of which our western boundary was carried from the Rockies to the Pacific. Yet the administration of few of our Presidents has evoked such a storm of hostile criticism as did his, and few, probably, of the occupants of the presidential office have laid down its burdens with so sincere a sense of relief as did Polk. His administration ranks among the most important in our history, and undeniably Polk was the master who

guided its course. But he passed from the presidency to an early grave, and therewith began a period of obscurity which has continued to the present time. He has found no adequate biographer and but few friendly critics, such attention as he has received having been, in the main, from writers imbued with the idea that the Mexican War was one of unjust aggression on the part of the United States, inspired by Polk's malevolence and waged in the interests of the slave-holding South. That this judgment will be materially modified by scholars, now that the passions of two generations ago have subsided, may well be believed. Fortunately Polk himself has provided, in his Diary, a storehouse of valuable material which henceforth may be drawn upon by the historian in forming a just estimate of his career and of the period of which it was a part.

Though reared to manhood amid primitive surroundings in what was virtually a frontier community, Polk [1] came of sterling family stock. His ancestors belonged to the Scotch-Irish element which, originating in Scotland, migrated to Ireland in the early Stuart period. Presbyterians and "Covenanters," they left Ireland in turn to seek in the New World a place where they might shape unhindered congenial religious and political institutions. The founder of the Polk family in America was Robert Polk, who came from Ireland to America toward the middle of the eighteenth century and settled in Somerset County on the eastern shore of Maryland. Some of his descendants remained here, and their representatives were to be found in Maryland at the time of Polk's administration. Others, among them Thomas

[1] I have relied largely upon Jenkins, *Life of James K. Polk,* for the facts relating to the President's family and early personal history.

and Ezekial Polk, followed the tide of Scotch-Irish migration to the west and south until they settled in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. It was this community, made up in large part of men of Puritan stock, which originated the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. Into the question of the authenticity of this document there is here no need to enter; but the existence of the tradition serves to indicate the character of the community which gave it birth. One of the members of this community was Colonel Thomas Polk, who, according to tradition, issued the call for the Mecklenburg Convention, and, together with his brother, Ezekial, took a prominent part in the ensuing deliberations which resulted in the adoption of the Declaration.

Thomas Polk, who, with his brother, took a prominent part in his section in the resulting war of the Revolution, was the great-uncle, and Ezekial Polk the grandfather, of James, the future eleventh President of the United States. In 1794, in Mecklenburg County, occurred the marriage of Samuel Polk, son of Ezekial, to Jane Knox. To them was born, January 2, 1795, a son, to whom was given the name of James Knox Polk, after his maternal grandfather. Samuel Polk was a plain farmer, and in the hope of bettering his material condition he moved, in 1806, to the Tennessee country, becoming one of the pioneer settlers of the Duck River valley, at this time virtually a wilderness. Here was enacted during the next few years the process, so often repeated in American history, of the transformation of the wilderness into a seat of civilization and prosperity. Under the favorable circumstances of this environment Samuel Polk's industry rewarded him in the course of a few years with a competence, and at his death in 1827 he was regarded as one of the substantial men of the community.

Such was the character of the environment in which the son James grew to manhood. Its advantages and its disadvantages were those common to the frontier community. The opportunities for education, for contact with the gentler and more refined aspects of civilization, were meagre; in their absence the frontier boy must find his compensation in the development of those virtues peculiarly fostered by the frontier — habits of independence, initiative, perseverance, and forceful self-reliance. That his youthful training resulted in the acquisition of these qualities Polk's career as President abundantly demonstrate. He shared in the daily toil of the farm, and was the constant companion of his father on the numerous surveying expeditions of the latter. Often for weeks at a time they endured the toils and hardships incident to threading the wilderness, and the exposure to the elements which this manner of living entailed.

Probably no better fortune could have befallen young Polk than this active, out-door boyhood. He was naturally of a studious disposition, fond of mathematics and of reading, and ambitious to learn a profession. His father at first encouraged him to make use of such educational facilities as the new community afforded; but his health, never robust, began to give way, and so a mercantile career was planned for him, as being more suitable to his physical condition. But Polk's aversion to the mercantile life was such that after a few weeks' trial he obtained the parental permission to abandon it. In the Summer of 1813 he resumed his studies. Two years later he entered the University of North Carolina, from which, in the Spring of 1818, he was graduated at the head of his class. The student life of the college was at this time rough and turbulent, and primitive methods of instruction prevailed. Combats between students and de-

fiance of the instructors were by no means unusual. In the midst of such surroundings Polk manifested those traits of character, industry, and devotion to duty which he exhibited throughout his later career. He was punctual and painstaking in the performance of every duty, a hard worker, and an exemplary student. Many years later, in his farewell speech as Speaker of the House of Representatives, Polk stated that during his fourteen years of service in that body he had never absented himself from a session except when compelled thereto by illness.

Returning to Tennessee early in the year 1819, Polk began, in the office of Felix Grundy, to fit himself for a legal career, and two years later he was admitted to the bar. But the profession of the lawyer was closely allied to that of the politician in this period, and in addition to the practice of the law Polk's attention was early turned to politics. Of the thirty years of life that remained to him he was to spend over two-thirds in the public service, in the capacities of legislator, Governor, and President. His rise was rapid both in the legal and in the political field. In 1823 he was elected to the legislature from his home county, having already served as chief clerk of the House of Representatives. His service in these positions attracted the attention and was instrumental in gaining for him the friendship of General Jackson. At the end of two years of service in the State legislature he offered himself to the voters of his District as a candidate for Congress, and the powerful support of Jackson and Grundy was sufficient to insure his election. Polk was always grateful for this support, as well he might be, for the friendship of Jackson was to prove the greatest aid to his future advancement.

Although one of the youngest members of the House

Polk soon rose to a leading position in its ranks. Throughout Jackson's presidency he was one of the administration leaders in the House. In 1830 he stoutly defended the President's veto of the Maysville Road bill, carrying with it the condemnation of the whole issue of internal improvements. Two years later he was transferred to the important committee on Ways and Means and in 1833, as chairman of this committee, he initiated and assumed direction in the House of Jackson's war on the second United States Bank. The prominence which resulted from this leadership and the devotion shown to Jackson were influential factors in Polk's successful candidacy for the Speakership in 1835. He occupied this office for four years when, because of the political situation which had developed in Tennessee, he voluntarily retired from Congress to become the Democratic candidate for Governor of his State.

Polk's career as member and as Speaker of the House had resulted in bringing him forward as the head of the Jackson party in Tennessee, which had been defeated in the presidential election of 1836 and again in the State election of 1837. It was determined by the friends of Jackson that a strong effort should be made in 1839 to regain control of the State, and Polk was selected, because of his position and strength, to lead what was regarded as a forlorn-hope campaign. In spite of the unfavorable conditions under which he entered upon the contest, he was elected Governor by a small majority. He was defeated for reëlection in 1841, however, by reason of the wave of Whiggery which had swept over the country with the presidential campaign of the preceding year. Except for a few short weeks following the close of his presidential term, the four years from 1841 to 1845 comprise the only period, from the time he was

elected to the State legislature in 1823 until his death, when Polk was free from the cares of public office.

The real issue involved in the election of 1844 was that of the annexation of Texas. In few presidential campaigns, probably, has one issue dominated the field more completely than did this one in 1844. Yet it had arisen suddenly, its appearance having been likened by a prominent historian to a bomb which "exploded just in time to take effect on the two great nominating conventions and their platforms." The leading parties, the Whig and the Democratic, were national in their composition, and in the main had divided thus far on purely national issues. The new issue, however, wore a dangerously sectional aspect; and the annexation of Texas proved to be the first step in that process of territorial expansion which, involving as it did the question of the extension of the area of slavery, was to lead directly to the Civil War. The nomination of their respective parties for the presidency had been practically conceded to Clay and Van Buren some time before the appearance of the Texas question. With this event, and with the date for the national conventions close at hand, both of the prospective candidates for the presidency felt impelled to publish their views with reference to the new issue. Their letters, appearing on the same day, agreed also in expressing opposition to immediate annexation. As a consequence, Van Buren lost the nomination and Clay lost the election. The Democratic convention assembled on May 27, one month after the appearance of Van Buren's letter, which had given deep offence in the South. Most of the delegates had been instructed to vote for Van Buren, but many of them were in a mood to disobey their instructions. With the adoption of the two-thirds rule, proposed by the opponents of Van Buren, his pros-

pects for securing the nomination vanished. Although far in the lead he lacked the necessary majority, and as ballot after ballot was taken the number of his supporters steadily dwindled. The pyschological moment had arrived for the introduction of the first "dark horse" on the stage of American politics. On the eighth ballot a new candidate appeared in the person of James K. Polk. On the next, a wild stampede ensued, as a result of which the dark horse received every vote and therewith the nomination. His opponent was the renowned Henry Clay, perhaps the best loved political leader in all American history; while Polk, spite of his long career in State and National politics, seems to have been comparatively unknown to the country at large at the time of his nomination. The Whigs greeted his candidacy with derision, and the query "Who is Polk?"— ofttimes uttered in terms more ribald than refined — became their favorite war-cry. Judged by the result, however, this derision was hardly justified. Whatever Polk lacked in brilliancy was fully compensated by solid staying qualities of another sort, and in the end he was returned victor over his renowned opponent, and in due time transferred his residence to the White House.

It was due in part to good fortune that Polk's presidential term came at a time when several great political issues were pressing for settlement; but it was due chiefly to his ability as an administrator that the close of his term saw them all settled, and that too in the way he desired. Although predictions were freely made, even among Democratic politicians, that Polk would succeed only in making shipwreck of his administration, he signally belied them by giving to the country one of the most forceful administrations in its history. He took up the duties of the presidential office with a careful programme

of what he intended to accomplish. This included the replacing of the protective tariff of 1842 with one for revenue only, the establishment of the independent treasury, the settlement of the Oregon boundary dispute with Great Britain, the annexation of Texas, and the acquisition of California. Every part of this programme was carried to completion before the fourth of March, 1849; and of the master who guided the execution of these policies, George Bancroft, who, as a member of Polk's Cabinet, had excellent reasons for knowing whereof he spoke, has said: "His administration, viewed from the standpoint of results, was perhaps the greatest in our history. . . . He succeeded because he insisted on being its centre and in overruling and guiding all his secretaries to act so as to produce unity and harmony."

The qualities to which Polk owed his success as an administrator are easily discernible. Foremost among them, perhaps, should be mentioned his talent for industry. The Diary gives abundant evidence of this. Throughout his presidential term he toiled incessantly. In the first seventeen months of his term his single absence from Washington consisted of a one-day trip to Mount Vernon. Prior to the ten-day vacation from his duties at Washington taken in the Summer of 1848 he records that in a period of thirteen months he had not been three miles distant from the Capitol; and a perusal of the Diary leads one to agree with him in the assertion that he was the hardest worked man in the country.

To this quality of industry must be added Polk's high reputation for consistency as a party man. Early in his public career he made Thomas Jefferson his political pole-star and throughout his career adhered to the principles of the founder of the Republican party with unswerving

fidelity; and the knowledge of this fidelity operated to strengthen his control over his followers in the years when he was the official head of his party.

Spite of these things Polk's administration would still have failed of success had he been lacking in the qualities of leadership essential to the occupant of the presidential chair. Thoroughly familiar, by reason of his prior experience, with the conduct of affairs in the legislative branch of the government, he achieved results as President, because, as the Diary makes evident, he insisted on being the centre of his administration. He was decidedly the master of his Cabinet, not permitting even the ablest of its members to assume the reins of leadership. Apparently he knew not the meaning of fear, and when once a given policy had been decided upon he set about its execution with a tenacity of purpose that yielded to no obstacle however great it might appear to be.

This singleness of purpose contributed alike to the immediate success of Polk's policies and to the troubles which pressed upon him during the greater part of his administration. Having set before himself the achievement of a definite programme, he pressed forward to the goal, undeterred by, because oblivious of, any possible evil consequences which might result indirectly therefrom. To this narrowness of vision and of purpose is to be ascribed Polk's greatest shortcoming as a statesman. Because of it he totally failed to perceive the relation between his policy of territorial expansion and the rising tide of agitation over slavery. He proceeded with iron resolution in the execution of his programme, unmindful of the mutterings of anti-slavery protest. When he asked Congress for an appropriation of two million dollars, to be devoted, as every one knew, to the acquisition of territory from Mexico, the storm broke. The

Wilmot Proviso was coupled to the bill for the desired appropriation; and therewith began an agitation over the slavery issue which continued without cessation until the Compromise of 1850, and which, long before the termination of Polk's administration, caused him to fear for the stability of the Union. A man of broader vision than Polk possessed might have foreseen that this would be the inevitable result of his policy of territorial expansion; yet he had precipitated this final phase of the slavery dispute all unwittingly. "What connection slavery has to do with the making of peace with Mexico it is impossible to see," is the reiterated plaint of the Diary. The mere schoolboy has no trouble to-day in perceiving the connection.

The momentous years of Polk's administration ran their course, bringing to him the consciousness of duty faithfully performed, and of a successful execution of preconceived policies; but, these things aside, they brought him little of happiness or content. To the cares of office and of incessant toil were added the constant annoyance of office-seekers and the worry which resulted from a state of physical ill-health. At the time of his election to the presidency Polk was younger by several years than any preceding occupant of that office had been, but during his four years' tenure of it he aged greatly in appearance. Observers speak of his "haggard look" and of his "venerable appearance," and when he retired to private life, though only fifty-four years of age, his "flowing gray locks" imparted the appearance of a much older man.

On the expiration of his term of office Polk returned to Tennessee, his journey being a veritable triumphal procession. In anticipation of his return to private life he had purchased the residence in Nashville which had be-

longed to his former legal tutor, Felix Grundy. Here he planned to pass the remainder of his life in dignified retirement after the example which had been set by some of the more notable of his predecessors. But a period was soon put alike to his plans and his life. Much of the homeward journey had been made through a region that was being subjected to the ravages of the cholera. This, in conjunction with the fatigues of the trip and the enervated physical condition of Polk, predisposed him to the attack of a long-standing complaint. A few weeks were spent in the improvement of his estate, when he was seized with an illness which terminated fatally on June 15. Less than four months elapsed, therefore, from the time when he resigned the duties of the presidency until he laid down the cares of life. He was buried in a tomb before the house on the grounds of his estate, where the remains rested until they were removed, a few years since, to the State Capitol, their present resting-place.

M. M. QUAIFE.

with in my absence.

Twelve Months ago this day, a very important conversation took place in Colonel Burr's house myself and Mr Buchanan on the Virginia question. This conversation was of so important a character, that I deemed it proper on the same evening to reduce the substance of it to writing - for the purpose of retaining it more distinctly in my memory. This I did on separate sheets. - It was this circumstance which first suggested to me the idea, of not the necessity of keeping a journal or diary - of events and transactions, which might occur during my Presidency. I resolved to do so, & accordingly procured a blank book for that purpose - on the next day, in which I have every day since made whatever seemed to me of interest. Sometimes I have found myself so much engaged with my public duties, as to

DIARY OF
JAMES K. POLK

VOLUME I.

TUESDAY, *26th August, 1845.*—Memorandum of a conversation in Cabinet, Mr. Mason, the Attorney General, being absent on a visit to Virginia.

The President inquired of Mr. Buchanan at what time his reply to the official note of Mr. Pakenham, the Brittish Minister, on the subject of the pending Oregon negotiation, dated 29th July, 1845, would be ready to be submitted to the Cabinet. Mr. Buchanan replied that when he was sent for by the President to attend the cabinet meeting that morning, he was engaged in preparing his reply, and could finish the first rough draft in ten minutes: except the conclusion, which would contain the final action of the President which was most important.

Other matters then came up for consideration the principal of which related to our army under the command of Gen'l Taylor in Texas, and the proper means of defending that territory against the threatened invasion by Mexico.

The President again called up the Oregon question. He remarked that he had at different times

communicated to the several members of the Cabinet, the settled decision to which his mind had come. He proceeded briefly to repeat his decision, in substance as follows, *viz.*, that Mr. Buchanan's note in reply to Mr. Pakenham should assert and enforce our right to the whole Oregon territory from 42° to 54° 40′ North Latitude; that he should distinctly state that the proposition which had been made to compromise on the 49th paralel of North Latitude had been made, first in deference to what had been done by our predecessors, and second with an anxious desire to preserve peace between the two countries. That this proposition, made as it was for the reasons stated & in a liberal spirit of compromise, had been rejected by the Brittish Minister in language, to say the least of it, scarcely courteous or respectful, and that, too, without submitting any counter proposition on his part, was now withdrawn by the U. States, and should no longer be considered as pending for the consideration of the Brittish Government. The President said in summing [up] the reasons which he assigned for this decision, let the argument of our title to the whole country be full, let the proposition to compromise at latitude 49° be withdrawn, and then let the matter rest, unless the Brittish Minister chose to continue the negotiation. Mr. Buchanan said that he assented to the views of the President so far as the argument of title and withdrawal of our proposition to compromise at 49° were concerned, but that he thought a paragraph [should] be inserted to the effect that any further proposition which the Brittish Minister might submit, would be

deliberately considered by the United States. To this the President objected upon the ground that our proposition for 49° had been rejected flatly, without even a reference by the Brittish Minister to his Government. This had been done in a most unceremonious [manner] and in terms scarcely courteous or respectfully, and we had been in substance told, the Brittish Government will not even consider your proposition and you must make another more consistent with fairness and equity. Now if we withdraw our proposition, as it is agreed we shall, and at the same [time] give a formal invitation to the Brittish Minister to make a proposition on his part, assuring him at the same time that when made it shall be deliberately considered, what will be the inevitable & irresistible inference? Why, that we are prepared to accept terms less favourable to the U. S. than the 49°, for it cannot be expected under such an invitation, that terms less favour[able] to Great Brittain than 49° which she has already [rejected] will be proposed by the Brittish Minister. Any proposition less favourable than 49° the President said he would promptly reject. Why then invite a proposition which cannot for a moment be entertained. Let our proposition be absolutely withdrawn & then let the Brittish Minister take his own course. If he chooses to close the negotiation he can do so. If he chooses to make a proposition he can as well do it without our invitation as with it. Let him take the one course or the other, the U. States will stand in the right in the eyes of the whole civilized world, and if war was the consequence England would be in the wrong. The

President further remarked that he had reflected much on this subject; that it had occupied his thoughts more than any and all others during his administration, and that though he had given his assent to the proposition to compromise at 49°, he must say he did not regret that it had been rejected by the British Minister. We had shown by it our anxious desire to do full justice to Great Brittain and to preserve peace, but it having been rejected he felt no longer bound by it, & would not be now willing to compromise on that boundary. Mr. Buchanan then intimated that if the President's views were carried out, we would have war. To which the President replied, if we do have war it will not be our fault. Mr. Buchanan said that war would probably be the result ultimately, but he expressed the opinion that the people of the U. S. would not be willing to sustain a war for the country North of 49°, and that if we were to have war he would like for it to be for some better cause, for some of our rights of person or property or of National honour violated. The President differed with Mr. B. as to the popular sentiment, and he thought we had the strongest evidence that was to be anywhere seen that the people would be prompt and ready to sustain the Government in the course which he proposed to pursue.

Mr. Buchanan then had allusion to our difficulties with Mexico, and thought his reply to Mr. Pakenham ought to be postponed until we could know whether we would have actual war with that country or not. The President said he saw no necessary connection between the two questions; that the settlement

of the one was not dependent on the other; that we should do our duty towards both Mexico and Great Brittain and firmly maintain our rights, & leave the rest to God and the country. Mr. Buchanan said he thought God would not have much to do in justifying us in a war for the country North of 49°. Mr. Buchanan then suggested that his reply should be postponed until late in September. The President objected to this. He said that a postponement would carry the idea to Great Brittain as well as to our own people, of hesitancy and indecision on our part, which so far as his opinions were concerned would be an erroneous inference. He said Mr. Pakenham's note was delivered on the 29th of July, 1845. Nearly a month had now elapsed, and he thought it proper if not indispensible that the response should be made with the least possible delay. He said it was unnecessary to wait for further information from England, that it was not likely the Brittish Minister would make other communication until the response to Mr. Pakenham's note of July 29th was made; that at all events we had Mr. Pakenham's note before us, and should meet it promptly.

The conversation took a somewhat extended range, viewing the question in the different aspects which it presented, but upon the main points in substance as stated above. The Secretary of the Treasury (Mr. Walker) made some observations in substance sustaining the views taken by the President. The Secretary of War (Mr. Marcy) made a few remarks in the course of the conversation, but expressed no distinct opinion. The Secretary of the Navy (Mr. Ban-

croft) and the Post Master Gen'l (Mr. Johnson) said nothing.

When the Cabinet were about dispersing, the President remarked to Mr. Buchanan that as [soon as] he could be prepared to submit his paper, embracing the views which he (the President) had stated, he desired to have a special meeting of the Cabinet to consider of it, before it was delivered to the Brittish Minister. Mr. Buchanan said he supposed he would be ready to submit it on Thursday, the 28th Aug., 1845, to which the President said, can you not have it ready to-morrow (27th) remarking, I understand that Mr. Pakenham will return from the North to-morrow, and he desired to have it delivered to him as soon as possible; to which Mr. Buchanan assented. The President then gave notice that there would be a special meeting of the Cabinet to-morrow, the 27th Aug., at 12 O'Clock.

The Cabinet then left the room, except the Secretary of the Treasury (Mr. Walker) who remained a few minutes conversing with the President on the subject, and concurring with him fully in all the views he had expressed in Cabinet.

WEDNESDAY, *27th August, 1845.*—A special meeting of the Cabinet was held at twelve O'Clock, Mr. Mason, the atto. Gen'l, being absent. The Secretary of State (Mr. Buchanan) read the letter which he had prepared in answer to the note of the British Minister of the 29th July, 1845, on the Oregon question.[1] When the reading was concluded

[1] For the general history of the Oregon question, see Robert

the President expressed the opinion that it was an able and admirable paper, and that the argument in support of the American title was conclusive and unanswerable. In this opinion all the members of the Cabinet concurred. The Post-Master Gen'l remarked that if he had heard that argument before the compromise at 49° was proposed he would not have agreed to it. Some conversation took place upon the closing paragraphs of the paper by which the proposition of 49° as [a] compromise line was withdrawn. The President requested the Secretary of State to leave that part of the paper with him for examination until the next day. The Secretary of State again expressed the opinion that its delivery to the Brittish Minister should be postponed for some time to come; to which the President ob-

Greenhow, *Memoir on the Northwest Coast of North America,* published as *S. Doc.* 174, 26 Cong. 1 Sess., and, by the same author, *History of Oregon and California,* Boston, 1844; Travers Twiss, *The Oregon Question,* London, 1846; Garrison, *Westward Extension,* in the *American Nation* series, New York, 1906, and Jesse S. Reeves, *American Diplomacy under Tyler and Polk,* Baltimore, 1907. A summary of the negotiations, 1818–1842, is contained in Buchanan's instructions to McLane, Moore, *Works of James Buchanan,* VI., 186–194, and in *S. Doc.* 489, 29 Cong. 1 Sess. The correspondence, 1818–1827, is in *Am. State Papers,* Foreign, V., 553–564, VI., 641–706; 1842–1846, in *British and Foreign State Papers,* XXXIV., 49–145, and *S. Doc.* 1, 29 Cong. 1 Sess., *H. Ex. Docs.* 2, 105, 221, 29 Cong. 1 Sess. Reports of committees, resolutions of State legislatures, and petitions addressed to Congress may be found by consulting the Table of and Annotated Index to the Congressional Series of United States Public Documents.

jected and said he wished it delivered as soon as it could be copied. The Cabinet dispersed.

The same evening the President and Secretary of the Navy rode out on horseback. The Secretary in the course of the ride said he admired the President's firmness on the Oregon question & added: "I will now go with you, I believe you are right."

THURSDAY, *28th August, 1845.*— The President suggested to the Secretary of State some verbal modifications in the closing paragraphs of the Secretary's letter on Oregon in reply to the Brittish Minister, most of which were made. Mr. Buchanan again suggested the propriety of postponing its delivery to the Brittish Minister to a later day, to which the President objected as heretofore. The paragraphs which had been detained for examination by the President, with the verbal amendments, made in Mr. B.'s handwriting at the President's suggestion, were delivered to Mr. B., who said on leaving the President's office that the whole would be copied and ready for delivery by to-morrow at 12 O'Clock.

FRIDAY, *29th August, 1845.*— The President called a special meeting of the Cabinet at 12 O'Clock, all the members present except Mr. Mason. The President brought up for consideration our relations with Mexico,[1] and the threatened invasion of Texas

[1] Upon the general subject of the relations between the United States and Mexico before 1845 see Moore, *History and Digest of the International Arbitrations to which the United States has been a party,* etc., II., 1209–1247, published as *H. Misc. Doc.* 212, 53

with [by] that power. He submitting the following propositions which were unanimously agreed to as follows, *viz.,* If Mexico should declare War or actual hostilities should be commenced by that power, orders to be issued to Gen'l Taylor to attack and drive her back across the Del Norte. Gen'l Taylor shall be instructed that the crossing the Del Norte by a Mexican army in force shall be regarded as an act of War on her part, and in that event Gen'l Taylor to be ordered, if he shall deem it advisable, not to wait to be attacked but to attack her army first. Gen'l Taylor in case of invasion by Mexico to be ordered not only to drive the invading army back to the west of the Del Norte, but to dislodge and drive back in like manner the Mexican post now stationed at Santiago. Gen'l Taylor to be vested with discretionary authority to pursue the Mexican army to the West of the Del Norte, and take Matamoras or any other Spanish Post West of that River, but not to penetrate any great distance into the interior of the Mexican Territory.

Commodore Conner[1] commanding the Home

Cong. 2 Sess. To this may be added *H. Doc.* 139, 24 Cong. 2 Sess., *H. Doc.* 351, 25 Cong. 2 Sess., *S. Doc.* 1, 28 Cong. 1 Sess. Important documents for the period of Polk's administration are *H. Report,* 752, 29 Cong. 1 Sess., *S. Doc.* 1, 29 Cong. 2 Sess., *S. Ex. Doc.* 1, 30 Cong. 1 Sess., *H. Ex. Doc.* 60, 30 Cong. 1 Sess, *S. Ex. Doc.* 52, 30 Cong. 1 Sess. Moore, *Works of James Buchanan,* VI., VII., contain some documents hitherto unpublished or published only in part. Many others may be found by reference to the Table of and Annotated Index to the Congressional Series of United States Public Documents.

[1] David Conner of Pennsylvania, 1792–1856. Extracts from his orders are published in *H. Ex. Doc.* 4, 29 Cong. 2 Sess.

Squadron in the Gulf to be ordered, on hearing that war existed as above described, to Blockade all Mexican ports on the Gulf, to attack and take them if deemed practicable; except of Yucatan and Tobasco,[1] which Departments it is reported refuse to take part in the threatened war against Texas or the U. States. These he is to visit at Campeache and Tobasco, communicate with the inhabitants and inform them that they should not be molested, provided they would agree to take no part in the war.

These orders it was agreed should be prepared by the Secretaries of War and the Navy to be submitted to the Cabinet on to-morrow.

Mr. Buchanan, after agreeing to these propositions, left, and the conversation continued but did not change these results or conclusions.

The President inquired of Mr. Buchanan as he was leaving the room, if Mr. Pakenham,[2] the Brittish Minister, had returned to Washington, to which he replied that he had. The President said that he was glad of it, as he wished Mr. Buchanan's answer to his note of 29th July, '45, delivered to him as soon as possible.

Mr. Buchanan stated to the President in the course of the meeting that he had added two paragraphs to his letter to Mr. Pakenham, since it had been submitted to the President in Cabinet: the

[1] H. H. Bancroft, *History of Mexico,* V., chapters 9, 10.

[2] Sir Richard Pakenham, British Minister to Mexico 1835–1843, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at Washington 1844–1847.

first was, that though the U. S. had refused to yield the free navigation of the Columbia River to Great Brittain, yet they had offered her [a] free port on the extreme Southern point of Vancouver's Island: the second stated the fact, that a recent Globe published in England represented the Northern boundary of the U. S. West of the Rocky Mountains, as extending to the 54° parallel of North Latitude. The President approved both the alterations. They were stated to the President verbally by Mr. B. and were not submitted in writing.

SATURDAY, *30th August, 1845.*—The Cabinet met to-day, the atto. Gen'l still absent. The Secretary of State came in at half-past 12 O'Clock. He stated that he had just delivered his letter in answer to that of the Brittish Minister of the 29th July, 1845, to Mr. Bidwell, the Secretary of the Brittish Legation, Mr. Pakenham, the Brittish Minister, being still absent from Washington. Mr. Buchanan stated that he had informed the President, at the last meeting of the Cabinet, that Mr. Pakenham had returned, but he had ascertained that he had been wrongly informed. He was expected back on to-morrow or next day. He stated that he had informed Mr. Bidwell that he would retain his answer until his return, if Mr. Bidwell desired it, and that Mr. Bidwell replied, if it was ready it could be delivered to him for the Minister, and that it was delivered accordingly. Mr. Buchanan said; "Well, the Deed is done," but [that] he did not think it was the part of wise statesmanship to deliver such a paper in the existing state

of our relations with Mexico. The President said he was glad it was delivered, that it was right in itself and he saw no reason for delaying it because of our relations with Mexico.

A long conversation then took place in Cabinet in relation to instructions proper to be given to Gen'l Taylor commanding our "army of occupation" in Texas, and to Commodore Conner, commanding our Naval forces in the Gulf of Mexico. These being agreed upon, the Secretaries of War and the Navy [retired] to correct or amend the drafts which they presented, to forward them on to-morrow.

SUNDAY *night, 31st August, 1845.*—Col. Eldridge, late Chief Clerk of the Department of State in Texas, was despatched as an express messenger with orders from the War and Navy Departments to Gen'l Taylor in Texas and Commodore Conner in the Gulf of Mexico. These orders had been resolved upon in Cabinet meeting on Saturday, 30th Aug't, but could not be prepared and a suitable messenger could not be procured to bear them until Sunday evening. Duplicate copies of the same orders were forwarded by mail to Pensacola & New Orleans addressed to Naval & Military officers at those stations.

MONDAY, *1st September, 1845.*—Senator Bagby [1] of Alabama called to-day and held a long conversation with the President. The President asked his

[1] Arthur Pendleton Bagby, 1794–1858, Senator from Alabama 1841–1848.

opinion as to the necessity or propriety of calling Congress, in the event of a Declaration of War or an invasion of Texas by Mexico. Mr. Bagby gave it as his clear opinion that Congress should not be called, and assigned his reasons at some length. Mr. Bagby took occasion at the close of the conversation to express his approbation of the course of the administration, and to declare his intention to give to it a zealous and hearty support.

Mr. Senator Archer[1] of Va. called the same day and paid his respects to the President in his office. The subject of the existing relations with Mexico was spoken of. Mr. Archer expressed the opinion that Mexico would neither declare war nor invade Texas. The Military and Naval preparations which had been made by the administration were spoken [of] and Mr. Archer concurred in an opinion, expressed by the President, that the appearance of our land and naval forces on the borders of Mexico & in the Gulf would probably deter and prevent Mexico from either declaring war or invading Texas. Mr. Archer expressed no disapprobation of these military and Naval preparations, but [spoke] of them in a manner to leave the unquestionable inference that he approved the steps which had been taken in this respect.

TUESDAY, *2nd September, 1845*.—A regular meeting of the Cabinet was held to-day, all the members present except the Attorney General. The Sec-

[1] William S. Archer, 1789–1855, Senator from Virginia 1841–1847.

retary of War stated that the U. S. troops which had been ordered from the Eastern Posts for Texas had arrived at New York on Saturday, [the] 30th Aug't, and were detained at that City waiting for the store ship Lexington to be ready to sail.

The President inquired of the Secretary of the Navy what detained the Lexington, and why she had not gone to sea; remarking [to him] at the same time that the Secretary had stated on Saturday last, that she was ready for sea. The Secretary stated that the officer ordered to take command of her had not reported himself; that the order was sent to him by mail a distance of some 30 miles in Virginia, where he was understood to be; and that, fearing it might not reach [him], orders had been sent to New York, to the commanding officer there not to detain the Lexington an hour after the arrival of the troops who were to go on board of her, but to order some officer at New York to take command of her & sail. The President then directed that a letter should be written to New York ordering that she should be put under the command of a proper officer & that she should sail with the troops without a moment's delay. The President further directed the Secretary to take immediate steps to ascertain the causes of delay and whose fault it was, and that if it was ascertained that any officer had disobeyed the previous [order] or been guilty of unreasonable delay in executing it that he be immediately arrested, and tried by a Court Martial. The President remarked that the country had been so long at peace, and that many of the officers of the Navy and Army

had, he apprehended, become so fond of their ease & personal comfort that it was necessary that they should be taught their duty by enforcing the most rigid discipline.

The President brought up for consideration to-day the question, in the event Mexico should issue letters of marque, in what manner foreign vessels or foreign commanders & crews, other than those of Mexico, when taken on the high seas sailing under the Mexican flag and acting under letters of marque from Mexico, were to be treated. It was stated that the French, and perhaps other nations, under like circumstances would treat them as pirates and execute them summarily. After discussing the question, it was decided that under our laws persons so taken on board privateers should be sent to the U. S. for trial.

WEDNESDAY, *3rd September, 1845*.—The Secretary of the Navy reported that he had information from New York that the ship Lexington would leave that port with U. S. troops on board for Gen'l Taylor's camp at Corpus Christi in Texas, on Tuesday morning, the 2nd Inst., at daylight.

Had many visitors to-day, mostly office seekers. Among them was a man named Emanuel Fisher, who had repeatedly called on me before to be appointed keeper of a Light House on the Lakes and had been as repeatedly referred to the Secretary of the Treasury, who was charged by the law with the appointment of such officers. On being informed again that I would not interfere in such appoint-

ments, but would leave them to the Secretary of the Treasury, where the law had placed them, he acted and spoke rudely & insolently; when I told him I did not desire to be insulted in my own office, and he retired. For a more detailed statement of the case of this man, I refer to my endorsement of this date on a letter which he handed to me, written by him, and which I have directed to be placed on my files. Several persons were in the office at the time and among them Gov. Pierce M. Butler of S. C. I think, but am not certain, that Mr. Thistle, late timber agent in Florida, and an elderly man from Norfolk seeking a lieutenancy for his son in the Revenue service were also in the office.

Gov. Pierce M. Butler,[1] late Cherokee Agent, called again at eight O'Clock P. M. and expressed himself [as] entirely satisfied, that I had appointed Col. James McKissick of Arkansas as cherokee agent in his place, at the expiration of his term.

Jonathan D. Stephenson of New York called in the course of the day and expressed himself satisfied with the appointment of Michael Hoffman as Naval Officer at New York, a place which he had sought and for which he had been strongly recommended.

I expressed to Gov. Butler and Mr. Stephenson my satisfaction that their conduct was in honorable contrast with many other disappointed office seekers, who, when they had failed to succeed, became excited and dissatisfied with the administration.

[1] Pierce M. Butler, 1798–1847, Colonel of the Palmetto Regiment of South Carolina in the Mexican War, killed at Cherubusco.

THURSDAY, *4th September, 1845.*— Nothing worthy of note transpired to-day.

FRIDAY, *5th September, 1845.*— Do.

SATURDAY, *6th September, 1845.*—A regular meeting of the Cabinet was held to-day, all the members present except the Attorney General.

The President laid before the Cabinet a letter [of] appointment from the President of Texas (by Mr. Allen, Secretary of State of Texas) to Mr. Lee [1] as acting Chargé d'affaires of Texas to the U. States. He also laid before the Cabinet the instructions of the President of Texas to Mr. Lee which had been furnished by Mr. Lee to Mr. Buchanan. Before these papers were read Mr. Buchanan was called to the State Department to see Mr. Rhett [2] of S. C. (who was in waiting for him as he was informed by a messenger) to deliver to him despatches of which he was the bearer from Mr. McLane,[3] the U. S. Minister at London. During Mr. Buchanan's absence of half an hour the President read to the Cabinet Mr. Lee's letter of appointment, and instructions. The President expressed his opinion to be against receiving Mr. Lee in his diplomatic character, and the Cabinet were engaged in conversation on the subject when Mr. Buchanan returned. The President informed Mr. Buchanan that the papers

[1] W. D. Lee, Moore, *Buchanan,* VI., 254.

[2] Robert Barnwell Rhett, 1800–1866, member of Congress from South Carolina 1837–1849.

[3] Louis McLane of Delaware, 1786–1857, minister to England 1829–1831, and 1845–1846.

had been read to the Cabinet. Mr. Buchanan had, on presenting Mr. Lee's application to the President to be accredited as Chargé d'affaires of Texas to the United States two days ago, intimated the opinion that Texas was so far to be regarded as an independent Nation as to make it proper to receive Mr. Lee as her accredited Minister to this Government. The President in a short note to Mr. Buchanan had expressed a different opinion. The President repeated that opinion in substance as follows. He said after what had transpired he could not regard Texas as a foreign State. Texas by her Congress and Convention [1] had, in the most solemn forms, accepted the terms of annexation offered to her by the U. States; that from that moment the compact of Union between Texas & the U. States was complete, and that he considered Texas as being now virtually a part of our own country. We had so treated Texas by sending our squadron to the Gulf and our army to her Western border, to defend her territory & people against the threatened Mexican invasion. If we now receive a foreign Minister from Texas, we recognize her as a foreign State, and it would be difficult to justify the sending our army into her territory to defend her, claiming it to be a part of our own

[1] The Congress of Texas met in special session, June 16, 1845, for the consideration of the joint resolution of annexation, adopted by the U. S. Congress. The Convention of Texas passed an ordinance accepting the joint resolution, July 4, and completed the constitution of the State of Texas, August 27, 1845. The ordinance and constitution were ratified by a popular election October 13, 1845.

country. The President asked Mr. Buchanan if we received and accredited this Minister, if we could make a Treaty with him. To which Mr. B. replied we could, but it could only last until the act of Congress was passed admitting Texas as one of the States of the Union. The President remarked, if we received this Minister, we must to all intents and purposes admit that Texas was a foreign State, and so regarding her, if we could make a Treaty for a limited time with her there would be nothing to restrain us from making any other Treaty with her; and that, in either case, it would be wholly inconsistent with the ground which the Cabinet had unanimously taken when it was ordered to send our army into Texas to defend her, regarding her as a part of our own country & the faith of the country pledged to protect and defend her. All the Cabinet concurred with the President in these views; the Secretary of War expressing himself strongly on the subject. Mr. Buchanan said although his opinion was unchanged he would not insist upon it. A conversation of some length took place, when it was agreed that the Minister (Mr. Lee) could not be received & accredited as chargé d'affaires. The President, with the concurrence of the Cabinet, directed that Mr. Buchanan should address a letter to Mr. Lee, in courteous & friendly terms, explaining to him why he could not be recognized in the official character of chargé de affaires but that the Government would confer with him as the agent of Texas, as they would with the agent of one of the States of the Union having business at Washington; that any information he

desired to communicate would be received, and in turn any information deemed important to Texas or relating to annexation would be communicated to him.

SUNDAY, *7th September, 1845.*—Mrs. Polk and the President attended the first Presbyterian church. On returning from church about one O'Clock P. M. received a note from Mr. Buchanan, covering a rough sketch of a letter to Mr. Lee of Texas, informing him that he would not be received and accredited as chargé d'affaires. Wrote a note to Mr. Buchanan suggesting two alterations in his proposed note to Mr. Lee. (See Mr. B.'s note & the President's reply.) Attended the first Presbyterian church with Mrs. Polk at 4 O'Clock P. M. when the Sacrament of the Lord's supper was administered.

At 8½ O'Clock P. M. Gen'l R. Jones,[1] adjutant General of the army, called with dispatches received by a messenger to-night from Gen'l Taylor, commanding the "army of occupation" in Texas, of date the 26th Aug't, 1845, as also communications from Gen'l Taylor of prior date.

MONDAY, *8th September, 1845.*—A Delegation of Five Indians from the six nations of N. York had an audience with the President & presented their grievances, accompanied by an application for 600 [members] of these tribes to migrate West of the

[1] Roger Jones of Virginia, entered the army as Captain of Artillery 1812, Colonel and Adjutant-General 1825, Major-General 1848.

Mississippi. The President held a talk with them through their Interpreter, a part of them only speaking English. The President promised them to read their papers, and appointed to-morrow at 2 O'Clock P. M. to see them again and give them an answer.

TUESDAY, *9th September, 1845.*—The Cabinet met to-day, the attorney General being still absent. The rough rice question,[1] or the violation by Great Brittain of the commercial Treaty between that country & the U. States by levying and collecting higher and other duties on rough Rice imported from the U. S. into Great Brittain, than on the like article imported from the Western coast of Africa, was considered. The Cabinet were unanimously of opinion that the Treaty had been violated. It was stated by the Secretary of State that the excess of duties thus collected was ascertained to be between £88,000 and £89,000 sterling. It appeared that Great Brittain claimed indemnity for an alleged violation of the same treaty by the U. S. by the 25th Section of the Tariff act of 1842; in this, that a discrimination was made in favour of goods shipped prior to 1st Sept., 1845, from places East of the Cape of Goodhope, and beyond Cape Horn, over the like articles shipped from Great Brittain prior to the same day. After discussion the Cabinet was of opinion that the tariff act of 1842 was a violation of the Treaty in this respect; and it was referred to the Secretary of the Treasury to ascertain & report the

[1] Moore, *Buchanan,* VI., 317–318. *H. Ex. Doc.* 169, 29 Cong. 1 Sess. 5. *S. Doc.* 1, 29 Cong. 1 Sess. 220–222, 231–234.

amt. of excess which had been collected. It was understood that when the amt. was ascertained, Mr. McLane, our Minister at London, should be instructed to adjust the claims on both Sides if practicable.

The Secretary of State laid before the President a letter addressed to the President by the King of the Sandwich Islands, complaining of the conduct of Mr. Brown, the U. S. Commissioner accredited at his Court, and requesting that he might be recalled.

WEDNESDAY, *10th September, 1845.*— The President signed a letter addressed to the King[1] of the Sandwich Islands, in answer to one addressed to him by the King, informing him that Mr. Brown had been recalled, and Mr. Anthony Ten Eyck appointed commissioner in his place. He informed the King that he had authorized Mr. Ten Eyck to make a commercial Treaty with his Government.

Had another interview with the Delegation from the six Nations of Indians in New York, in which it was agreed that [if] as many as 250 [members] of their tribes would agree to emigrate to their country West of [the] Missouri this Fall, the U. S. would remove them. It was agreed, also, that a Treaty should be held with the Oneidas (who were represented in the delegation) of Greenbay, for a cession of their lands to the U. States, with the view to their emigration to the same country West of the Missouri. After the talk was over Kusick, a Tuscarora Chief, pre-

[1] Kamehameha III., 1833–1854. For Ten Eyck's instructions see Moore, *Buchanan,* VI., 255.

sented a bead bag from his wife to Mrs. Polk, and a small bead pocket-book to the President. The Chiefs by their request were conducted to Mrs. Polk's parlour and introduced [to] her. They appeared to be much gratified at the manner in which their business had been settled. In their talk they addressed the President as their Great Father, and Mrs. Polk as their Great Mother.

Mr. O'Sullivan,[1] Editor of the *Democratic Review* & [the] New York *News,* called to-day in company with Mr. Buchanan at the President's office. Mr. O'Sullivan read a paper, the object of which was to form a central committee at Washington, to raise by subscription a sum of $100,000 or more for the erection of a monument to the memory of Gen'l Jackson. It was proposed that this committee should consist of the President, the Vice President, the members of the Cabinet, and certain citizens who were named, numbering in all fifteen. The President approved the object and said he would most cheerfully contribute the maximum sum allowed to be subscribed by any one individual, which was $100. Mr. Buchanan approved the proposition, and it was suggested that the gentlemen named should meet to confer on the subject at 2½ o'clock P. M. this day, and as the President could not with propriety attend a meeting elsewhere, that the meeting be [held] at his office. This was agreed to, about 11 o'clock A. M. Afterwards Mr. Bancroft, Mr. Marcy, and Judge Mason, happening at the Presi-

[1] John L. O'Sullivan. Valentine, *Manual of the Common Council,* etc., 1845–1846, 241–243.

dent's office on other business, the subject was mentioned. Judge Mason stated some reasons why the President & his Cabinet should not be prominent in the matter, one of which was that it might be attributed to a desire on their part to appropriate the great popularity of Gen'l Jackson, for the benefit of the administration and for party purposes. In this view Mr. Bancroft and Mr. Marcy concurred, as did the President.

At the hour appointed, *viz.*, 2½ o'clock, P. M., the following persons convened at the President's office, *viz.*, Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Walker, Mr. Marcy, Mr. Cave Johnson, Mr. Mason, Mr. O'Sullivan, Mr. Amos Kendall, Mr. Thomas Ritchie, Mr. Asbury Dickens, Secretary of the Senate, and Mr. B. B. French, Clerk of the Ho. Repts.; when the paper was again read by Mr. O'Sullivan. The objections already detailed by Judge Mason were repeated by him more at length. Mr. Marcy & Mr. Walker concurred in them. Mr. Buchanan thought there was nothing in the objection, and said, as he was much engaged, he could sign the paper and retire. He did not, however, sign it. The President stated that the subject was new to him when first mentioned by Mr. O'Sullivan this morning, that he was at the time much engaged, and had not reflected on the subject. He said that the objections stated subsequently had much weight in them, and that if there were doubts or division of opinion as to the propriety of his being by his own voluntary act at the head of the proposed committee, it was

the part of prudence on his part not to occupy that position. He suggested that the citizens of the D. C. might, if they chose, organize such a committee, and he hoped [that they] would do so, and in that event, in his character as a private citizen, he would most cheerfully contribute the largest sum permitted to be subscribed by any one citizen. After some further conversation this course was understood to be agreed upon. Mr. Dickens said he would contribute, but did not desire to be one of the committee. The Gentlemen then dispersed.

THURSDAY, *11th September, 1845.*— Held another talk with the Delegation of New York Indians, the Secretary of War and Commissioner of Indian affairs being present. It was agreed to remove such of them as desired to emigrate, provided that the number was 250 or greater. The President informed them that he would appoint Dr. Hogeboom, who resided near them, as the agent to conduct the emigrating party, if he would accept. One of the chiefs (Kusick) said he knew him, and they all expressed themselves satisfied with him. The President informed them that he would appoint Gov. Dodge[1] of Wisconsin, to make a treaty with the Oneidas at Green Bay, with a view to purchase their lands and remove them also to the country West of [the] Missouri. With this they were well pleased.

[1] Henry Dodge, 1782–1867. Territorial delegate to Congress from Wisconsin 1841–1846; Territorial Governor 1846–1848, Senator from Wisconsin 1848–1857.

It was what they desired. The President told them that they would be furnished with $100. to pay their expenses to Washington. They expressed great gratification at the manner their business had been done, and their wishes gratified.

Before leaving they visited Mrs. Polk in her parlour, when she presented to Kusick a shawl for his wife and a gold breast pin for himself, in return for the bead bag and purse which he had presented to her on a former visit to the President's office on business.

Saw the Secretary of War and commissioner of Indian affairs, when it was concluded to associate M. G. Lewis of Tenn. with Gov. Butler of S. C. as joint commissioners to visit the Comanche and other wild Indian tribes on the Western border of the U. S., with a view to hold a talk with them, make them some small presents, and if possible secure their friendship. This was deemed important at this time, especially if Mexico should declare war against the U. S. or invade Texas. The President afterwards saw Gov. Butler & Maj'r Lewis, and held a conversation with them on the subject of their mission.

The President, in company with Judge Mason and the President's nephew and ward, Master Marshall T. Polk, visited Georgetown College,[1] where the President had determined to place M. T. Polk at school. The President paid to Mr. Mullody, the President of the college, $150 to pay his tuition, board, books, &c. for the next session, which was to commence on Monday, the 15th Sept., 1845.

[1] Founded by Bishop John Carroll of Maryland in 1789; opened in 1792; incorporated as Georgetown University, 1815.

FRIDAY, *12th September, 1845.*— At 10 O'Clock A. M. the Secretary of State presented to the President, Cavalliero Gaspar José Lisboa,[1] as Envoy Extraordinary & Minister Plenipotentiary of Brazil to the United States. Mr. Lisboa delivered to the President his credentials from the Emperor[2] of Brazil, and made an address to the President giving assurances of the friendly disposition of his Sovereign's Government towards the U. States.

The President replied to Mr. Lisboa that he was pleased to learn that his Government had advanced him to the rank which he so well merited of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States. The President informed Mr. Lisboa that during his residence here for several years past as chargé d'affaires of his Government, he had become personally and favourably known to the members of the administration, and he was sure that no selection could have been made which would have been more agreeable and acceptable to them.

The President requested Mr. Lisboa to express to his sovereign the gratification which it afforded the President to receive Mr. Lisboa in his character of Envoy Extraordinary & Minister Plenipotentiary, and to assure him of the anxious desire of the United States that the relations of amity and peace now subsisting between the two countries may be long continued.

[1] The Chevalier Gaspar José de Lisboa, Minister resident of Brazil at Washington, 1841–1845; Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, 1845–1847.

[2] Pedro II., Emperor of Brazil 1841–1889.

The "Old Defenders of Baltimore,"[1] men who were engaged in the defence of that city on the 12th Sept., 1814, called at the President's Mansion to pay their respects. The President, accompanied by his Cabinet and the Hon. Mr. Levy[2] of the Senate of the U. S., received them in the circular parlour. An address on their behalf was delivered to the President by Mr. Pressman, in which touching allusion was made to the battle at Baltimore on the 12th Sept., 1814. The President made in substance the following response: He said he was most happy that he had the honour to salute the "Old Defenders of Baltimore." For their noble defence of the Monumental City they were entitled to the nation's gratitude. The patriotic demonstrations which their presence, on this the anniversary of that memorable occasion, was [were] well calculated to inspire, gave assurance that whenever their country called the citizen soldier would be ready to vindicate her honour and defend her rights against foreign aggression. The bulwark of our country's safety was to be found in the virtue, the intelligence, and patriotism of the great body of her citizens, who, though their habits, their pursuits, and their wishes were those of peace, would be ever ready at a mo-

[1] "Old Defenders of Baltimore," a patriotic society organized to commemorate the defence of Baltimore in the War of 1812. Between two and three hundred members visited President Polk on this occasion.

[2] David Levy, Senator from Florida 1845–1851, and 1855–1861; better known by the name of Yulee, which he adopted about 1845.

ment's warning, when their country required it, to put on the habiliments of war.

The venerable Mr. Stapleton, Vice President of the association of old defenders of Baltimore, then addressed the President at some length, to which the President responded. Mr. Stapleton is a venerable gentleman of seventy or more years. In the concluding part of his address to the President, after having reviewed the principle [principal] incidents connected with the defence of Baltimore in 1814, remarked in an elegant & impressive manner that the fire was still left in the bosom[s] of the old men, the defenders of Baltimore now present, and if occasion required it, they were again ready to defend their homes & their firesides. The President replied, commending the noble example of these old patriots to the imitation of the younger men, expressing the confident opinion that in the event the country was again involved in war, not only thousands but tens of thousands would be ready to rush to her standard, not only to defend their homes and firesides, but our distant frontiers. He expressed the hope that there might be a long continuance of peace, but said in view of the menaces of war which had recently attracted the public attention, he had deemed it to be his duty to be prepared for it, with an efficient force on the border, ready to repel any invader.

SATURDAY, *13th September, 1845*.—The Cabinet met to-day, all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury, who had left this morning on a visit to his family at Bordenton, New Jersey.

No question of importance came up. Some questions of detail, of business, were spoken of and disposed of.

The President held a long conversation with the Secretary of War & The Hon. Mr. Levy, U. S. Senator from Florida, in relation to the manner of making payment to certain militia forces in Florida, provided for by the act of 3rd March, 1845. The claims embraced in that act had been audited and adjusted by the accounting officers of the Treasury. The Secretary of War had decided to send a Paymaster of the army to Florida, to pay off to each officer & soldier the amount due each, as ascertained & audited at the Treasury. Mr. Levy earnestly & vehemently objected to this mode of payment, and insisted that the whole sum due to all of them should be paid in gross to Mr. Parsons who, he stated, had powers of attorney from the officers and men to receive what was due to them. The gross sum being large, probably exceeding $200,000, the Secretary of War was of opinion that the payments should be made directly & individually to the officers & men who performed [the service], and thereby prevent any possibility of fraudulent transfers of their claims, which may have been made on inadequate consideration. A long discussion took place, in which, among other things, the Secretary of War stated he had received letters from two of [the] ex-Governors of Florida (Gov. Call & Gov. Branch) expressing the opinion that the payments should be made to the men in Florida, and not to an agent at Washington. The Secretary said that he should cer-

tainly make the payments in Florida, and not to an agent here, unless the President should overrule him in this determination. The President said he concurred in opinion with the Secretary, and should not overrule him, expressing his own opinion that the payments should be made to the officers and men directly & not to an agent. Mr. Levy left, somewhat excited and much dissatisfied at the decision. He called again at 8 O'Clock P. M., & seemed to be calm and expressed himself not [to] have changed his opinion, but seemed to be better satisfied than at the former interview.

Judge Mason and the Postmaster [General] being with the President in his office to-day after the Cabinet adjourned, Judge Mason informed the President that Gov. Pierce M. Butler of S. C. had mentioned to him that morning that Baily Peyton [1] was in the City, and that Mr. Peyton had expressed to him a desire to call and pay his respects to the President, but that he was restrained from doing so, not knowing how the President would receive [him]. Gov. Butler [had said], as Judge Mason stated, that Mr. Peyton said he had never had any personal difficulty or misunderstanding with the President, that in politics he had differed with him, that in the political discussions in Tennessee he had used strong language towards him, but not stronger than was usual towards political opponents in that State. The President said that Mr. Peyton had stated the rela-

[1] Bailie Peyton of Tennessee, 1803–1878, became a resident of New Orleans in 1837, served on General Worth's staff during the Mexican War.

tions between them as he understood [them]. He said that for several years past he had had no personal intercourse with Mr. Peyton in consequence of the violence of party feeling which had seperated them, but that he had no personal unkind feeling towards Mr. Peyton, and that if he called upon him he would receive and treat him courteously & respectfully. Judge Mason and Mr. Johnson agreed with the President that this would be proper. Judge Mason said he would so inform Gov. Butler.

SUNDAY, *14th September, 1845.*—The President and Mrs. Polk attended the first Presbyterian church to-day.

MONDAY, *15th September, 1845.*—The Secretary of War [called] in company with Gen'l Tomson, the Paymaster Gen'l, & Major T. P. Andrews of the Army, to consult further on the mode of paying the Florida militia. The Paymaster stated the great difficulty of paying these troops at their homes in Florida, dispersed as they were over the whole State, and some of them having removed to Texas and elsewhere. He stated that it was the constant practice of the Department to pay to agents under Powers of atto[rney] properly authenticated. The Secretary of War, after a very full conversation on the subject, said that his principal object in desiring that a paymaster should go to Florida, was to prevent the possibility of frauds being practised on the soldiers, but that as it was usual to pay to agents, and as Mr. Senator Levy gave assurances that Mr. Parsons, the

agent, was an honest [man] and have [had been] in no way ingaged in speculating on these claims, he was disposed to yield his first opinion and suffer the payments to be made here according to the former usage of the Department, as he had learned it from the Paymaster General. The Secretary then said that he would cause the rolls to be prepared and delivered to the Paymaster Gen'l, who would make the payments according to law and former usage.

TUESDAY, *16th September, 1845.*— The Cabinet met to-day, all the members present. Despatche[s] were read from Dr. Parrott,[1] the confidential agent of the U. S. in Mexico, giving an account of another threatened Revolution, & of the refusal of Paredes[2] to march his army to Texas. Dr. Parrott's latest despatch was of date 29th August, 1845. He gives it as his opinion that there will be no declaration of war against the U. S. and no invasion of Texas; that the Government will be kept employed to keep down another revolution which was threatened. He is also of opinion that the Government is desirous to re-establish Diplomatic relations with the U. States, and that a Minister from the U. S. would be received. In these opinions Mr. Black,[3]

[1] William S. Parrott, appointed special agent to restore diplomatic relations with Mexico, commissioned secretary of legation November 20, 1845.

[2] Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga, 1797–1849, commander of the Army of the North at the beginning of the Mexican War; leader of the rebellion at San Luis Potosi, 1845; elected provisional President of Mexico, January 2, 1846; overthrown and banished, 1847.

[3] John Black, of New York.

the U. S. consul at Mexico, of date 23rd Aug't, and Mr. Dimond,[1] U. S. Consul at Vera Cruz, of date 30th Aug't concurred. After much consultation it was agreed unanimously that it was expedient to re-open Diplomatic relations with Mexico; but that it was to be kept a profound secret that such a step was contemplated, for the reason mainly that if it was known in advance in the U. S. that a Minister had been sent to Mexico, it would, of course, be known to the Brittish, French, & other Foreign Ministers at Washington, who might take measures to thwart or defeat the objects of the mission. The President, in consultation with the Cabinet, agreed that the Hon. John Slidell[2] of New Orleans, who spoke the Spanish language and was otherwise well qualified, should be tendered the mission. It was agreed that Mr. Slidell, if he accepted, should leave Pensacola in a National Armed vessel & proceed to Vera Cruz, without disclosing or making known his official character. One great object of the Mission, as stated by the President, would be to adjust a permanent boundary between Mexico and the U. States, and that in doing this the Minister would be instructed to purchase for a pecuniary consideration Upper California and New Mexico. He said that a better boundary would be the Del Norte from its mouth to the Passo,[3] in latitude about 32° North, and

[1] F. M. Dimond, of Rhode Island.

[2] John Slidell, 1793–1871, member of Congress from Louisiana 1843–1845, minister to Mexico 1845. He was not received by Mexico and resigned in 1847.

[3] El Paso, the pass south of the Franklin Mountains in latitude about 31° 45′.

thence West to the Pacific Ocean, Mexico ceding to the U. S. all the country East and North of these lines. The President said that for such a boundary the amt. of pecuniary consideration to be paid would be of small importance. He supposed it might be had for fifteen or twenty millions, but he was ready to pay forty millions for it, if it could not be had for less. In these views the Cabinet agreed with the President unanimously.

WEDNESDAY, *17th September, 1845.*— The President called a special meeting of the Cabinet at 12 O'Clock this day; all the members present. His object was to consult further on the subject of the proposed mission to Mexico. From publications in the New Orleans papers, which had been brought to his notice by Mr. Buchanan since the meeting on yesterday, it appeared that the President of Mexico as late as the 21st August, had issued a circular to the army, through his Secretary of War, breathing a war spirit, and that Gen'l Bustamante [1] had been appointed commander-in-chief of the Mexican army. From these it was left uncertain whether Dr. Parrott and the U. S. consuls at Mexico & Vera Cruz may not have been mistaken in regard to the willingness of Mexico to receive a minister from the U. States, and the President [said] his object in calling the Cabinet [meeting] to-day was to consider whether we should not delay sending a minister until the next arrival from Vera Cruz, which might be expected in a few days by one of our armed vessels, and which

[1] Anastasio Bustamante, President of Mexico 1837–1841.

might bring more definite & certain intelligence of the dispositions of Mexico. This suggestion was agreed to by the Cabinet unanimously, as the more prudent course, and especially to guard against the danger of having our minister rejected or not received by Mexico. It was then, on the President's suggestion, agreed that a letter should be addressed by the Secretary of State to Mr. Black, U. S. Consul at Mexico, authorizing him to ascertain officially from the Mexican Government whether a Minister would be received, and to communicate the answer with all despatch to our consul at Vera Cruz and also to the Government here. It was agreed that this letter should be sent to Pensacola, & thence conveyed by a Government Vessel to Vera Cruz. It was agreed that the President should write a confidential letter to Mr. Slidell, notifying him of the President's intention to appoint him and requesting him to be prepared on a day's notice to depart, on receiving information that he was desired to do so, from Washington. It was understood that if the next arrival from Mexico made it reasonably certain that Mexico would receive a Minister, that he would be appointed & proceed at once, without waiting the answer of our consul at Mexico. The Cabinet adjourned. In the course of the evening the President wrote the confidential letter to Mr. Slidell, & Mr. Buchanan the letter to the consul at Mexico, as had been agreed on.

THURSDAY, *18th September, 1845.*— Had many calls to-day: some on business, some seeking office,

and others on visits of ceremony. Nothing worthy of note transpired.

FRIDAY, *19th September, 1845.*— Had a number of visitors to-day as usual, some of them on business, others seeking office, and others called to pay their respects.

SATURDAY, *20th September, 1845.*— The Cabinet met to-day, it being the regular day of meeting, all the members present. Nothing of importance occurred. The President announced his intention to appoint the Hon. Levi Woodbury [1] to be Judge of the Supreme Court of the U. States in place of Judge Story, deceased. All the members of the Cabinet cordially approved the appointment.

Andrew J. Donelson,[2] Esq'r, late Chargé d'Affaires to Texas, visited the President to-day and spent some time in conversation with the President & Cabinet on Texan & Mexican affairs. Mr. D. was in feeble health, & on the President's invitation took a room in the President's mansion.

SUNDAY, *21st September, 1845.*— The President & Mrs. Polk attended the 1st Presbyterian Church to-day.

Mr. Donelson was quite ill to-day; was confined

[1] Levi Woodbury, 1789–1851, Senator from New Hampshire 1841–1845, Associate Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court 1845–1851.

[2] Andrew Jackson Donelson, 1800–1871, *chargé d'affaires* to Texas 1844–1845, minister to Berlin and the German Confederation 1846–1849.

to his chamber all day; sent for Dr. Miller in the afternoon, who prescribed for him.

About 1½ O'Clock P. M., and shortly after the President & his family had returned from church, a servant brought to the President the card of the Hon. Mr. Jenifer,[1] late Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Austria, accompanied by a message that Mr. Jenifer & another Gentleman were at the door & desired to pay their respects to the President. The President instructed the servant to say to the gentlemen that he declined seeing company on the sabbath, but that he would be pleased to see them on to-morrow. The servant reported that the gentlemen retired apparently satisfied.

MONDAY, *22nd September, 1845.*— Had many visitors to-day, ladies & gentlemen; among them Mr. Jenifer, late Minister of the U. States to Austria; & Mr. Hannegan,[2] U. S. Senator from Indiana. Transacted much official business with the Secretary of War, Attorney General, Postmaster General, & Secretary of State. With the Secretary of State the instructions to be given to a minister to Mexico were discussed and agreed upon. The President directed Mr. Buchanan to prepare a letter of recall to Mr. Todd,[3] U. S. Minister at St. Peters-

[1] Daniel Jenifer of Maryland, minister to Austria 1841–1845.

[2] Edward A. Hannegan, Senator from Indiana 1843–1849; a vehement advocate of the extreme claim of the United States to Oregon.

[3] Charles S. Todd of Kentucky, minister to Russia 1841–1846.

burg, and to instruct him to leave the records of the Legation with John Randolph Clay, the Secretary of Legation, who would act as chargé until a minister was appointed. The President directed notice to be given Mr. Wheaton,[1] U. S. Minister at Berlin, that he would have leave to return soon as it was the President's intention to appoint another minister to that Court.

TUESDAY, *23rd September, 1845.*—The Cabinet met to-day, this being the regular day of meeting, all the members present except the Secretary of the Navy, who left Washington on saturday morning last, on a visit of inspection to the Squadron and Navy yard near Norfolk, Virginia.

Mr. Ritchie[2] mentioned to me to-day that from some conversations which he had had with Mr. Buchanan and his friends he thought he desired to be appointed to the vacant Judgeship on the Bench of the Supreme Court of the United States. Mr. Ritchie thought that if so advised by his friends he would accept it, and would prefer it to his present position of Secretary of State.

WEDNESDAY, *24th September, 1845.*— Had a long conversation with Mr. Buchanan to-day in

[1] Henry Wheaton of Rhode Island, 1785–1848; reporter of the U. S. Supreme Court, 1816–1827; minister to Prussia, 1835–1846.

[2] Thomas Ritchie, 1778–1854, editor of the Richmond *Enquirer;* associated with J. P. Heiss of the Nashville *Union* as editor-in-chief of the Washington *Union,* the official organ of Polk's administration. For an account of the change of the "government press," see Niles' *Register,* LXVIII., 153–154.

relation to our Foreign affairs, particularly on the Oregon question and our relations with Brazil. Had a number of visitors to-day, but not so many as usual.

Major A. J. Donelson, who had been confined to a sick room since saturday last, was up to-day and able to be at Dinner. A curiously wrought Hickory walking cane was presented to me to-day from Mr. Hennick of Baltimore, through McClintock Young, Esq'r, Ch. Clerk of the Treasury Department. In a note accompanying the cane it is stated that it was cut near the spot where Gen'l Ross fell in the attack by the Brittish army on Baltimore in 1814.

THURSDAY, *25th September, 1845.*— Nothing worthy of notice occurred to-day. Had fewer calls, & more time to attend to correspondence & business, than usual.

Mr. Kaufman,[1] appointed Chargé d'affaires from Texas, and Mr. Lee, his Secretary of Legation, Mr. Senator Hannegan of Indiana, Maj'r A. J. Donelson, & Mr. Buchanan dined with the President to-day.

Directed the Secretary of State to recall Mr. Todd, U. S. Minister to Russia; and to write a letter to Mr. Wheaton, U. S. Minister to Prussia, that he would be re-called during the next Session of the Senate and a successor appointed, but giving him an opportunity to resign if he chose to do so.

[1] David Spangler Kaufman, member of Congress from Texas 1846–1851.

FRIDAY, *26th September, 1845.*—Transacted official business to-day with the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, and [the] Commissioner of the General Land office. Saw but few other persons to-day.

Mr. Buchanan submitted a letter to Mr. Wheaton, U. S. minister to Prussia, as directed on yesterday, and left a copy of the same with the President.

Intelligence was received to-day that the convention of Texas had formed a State constitution and had adjourned on the 28th August, 1845.

SATURDAY, *27th September, 1845.*—A regular meeting of the Cabinet was held to-day, all the members present, the Secretary of the Navy having returned on yesterday from a visit of inspection to the Squadron and Navy Yard at Norfolk, Va.

The President brought to the notice of the Cabinet the proceedings of the Court Martial in the trial of Capt. Philip F. Voorhies[1] on charges preferred against him by the Secretary of the Navy. The Court Martial had at first pronounced a sentence of suspension for eighteen months against Capt. Voorhies. The Secretary of the Navy had reconvened the Court, on the ground that the punishment of suspension for 18 months was not adequate to the offences of which he had been found guilty. The Court, on reconsideration of their sentence, sentenced him to be dismissed from the Navy of the U. States, but unanimously recommended

[1] Moore, *Digest of International Law,* I., 178–182, and Niles' *Register,* LXVIII., 227.

him to the mercy of the Executive. The President stated that after a careful examination of the record, embracing all the facts as proved on the trial, and in view of the recommendation of the Court to the mercy of the Executive, he thought the sentence of dismissal too severe. He read a paper which he had prepared, to the effect that he would mitigate the punishment from dismissal from the Navy to suspension from duty without pay or emolument for the term of five years from this date. To this the Secretary of the Navy earnestly objected, & insisted that the sentence of dismissal ought to be approved. A discussion took place between the President and Secretary on the subject, in which they differed in opinion. The President remarked that it was an important matter, as affecting the public service as well as the rights of this officer, and he would be pleased to have the opinion of the Cabinet, and, if convinced of error, he was ready to abandon his opinion as indicated in the paper which he had read.

Portions of the testimony were then read, when Mr. Buchanan gave his views and expressed an opinion agreeing with the President. Mr. Walker, Sec. of the Treasury, and Mr. Marcy, Sec. of War, at first inclined to agree with Mr. Bancroft, Sec. of the Navy, in favour of approving the sentence of dismissal, but finally acquiesced in the President's views. Mr. Mason, the Atto. Gen'l, agreed with the President. Mr. Johnson, the P. M. Gen'l, was silent. The President said he approved what the Secretary of the Navy had done in the case, and in recon-

vening the Court, and that in mitigating the punishment as he proposed he by no means intended any disapprobation of the conduct of the Secretary. The President determined to mitigate the sentence as stated. The Secretary of the Navy said that though differing with the President in opinion, he would cheerfully carry the mitigated sentence into execution. The President then said that he would in a day or two transcribe the mitigated sentence on the record of proceedings of the Court martial.

The President signed to-day the letter of recall of Mr. Todd, the U. S. Envoy to Russia. The Secretary of State desired the President to issue a commission to John Randolph Clay, the Secretary of Legation to St. Petersburg, as chargé d'affaires, that he might be entitled to the salary as such, until a minister was appointed to succeed Mr. Todd. This the President declined to do.

About 4 O'Clock P. M. to-day J. Knox Walker, the President's Private Secretary, brought to the President a note from Cyril V. Gray, the letter writer or correspondent of the Charleston *Mercury,* to Mr. Ritchie, Editor of the *Union,* transmitting to Mr. Ritchie a communication signed " Correspondent of the Charleston *Mercury,*" charging that Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, was the author of the President's letter[1] on the tariff to Mr. Kane of Phil., written in June, 1844. The President immediately pronounced the charge to be false; and

[1] Dated June 19, 1844, to John K. Kane, of Philadelphia. Jenkins, *Life of James K. Polk,* 80–82, Niles' *Register* LXVI., 294.

requested J. Knox Walker to go immediately to the Treasury Dep't and request Mr. Secretary Walker to come to his office. Before the Secretary arrived Maj'r A. J. Donelson came in, to whom the President [read] the communication of Mr. Gray, which communication he (Mr. Gray) demanded of Mr. Ritchie should be published in the *Union*. The Sec. of the Treasury & the President's Private Secretary came in, when the President read Mr. Gray's communication, when he & Mr. Walker, Sec. of the Treasury, both pronounced the whole statement to be false. Mr. Ritchie was sent for. The President prepared an authorized contradiction of the whole statement, which was read over in presence of Mr. Walker, Sec. of the Treasury, Mr. Ritchie, & J. Knox Walker, Maj'r Donelson having left the room during its preperation. J. Knox Walker copied it, and it was agreed that it should be published in the *Union* of to-night.

The President & Mrs. Polk rode to Georgetown College about 5 O'Clock P. M. to see Marshall T. Polk, jr.; found him very well & well satisfied.

SUNDAY, *28th September, 1845*.—The President & Mrs. Polk attended the first Presbyterian Church to-day; Maj'r A. J. Donelson accompanied them to church. The Rev. Mr. Post of Charleston, S. C., performed service.

MONDAY, *29th September, 1845*.— Had a large number of visitors to-day, ladies and gentlemen, at my office; among them several office seekers as usual.

I consulted Mr. Medill,[1] Ass't P. M. Gen'l, and Ex-Senator Tappan[2] of Ohio to-day, concerning the propriety of tendering the office of commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Hon. Thomas L. Homer of Ohio, in the event that office was made vacant by the appointment of T. Hartley Crawford,[3] the incumbent, to a Judgeship in the District of Columbia. I consulted Mr. Medill in my office in the forenoon, and Mr. Tappan in the evening in presence of Cave Johnson, the P. M. Gen'l. Both Mr. Medill and Judge Tappan advised his appointment.

At 8 O'Clock P. M. Mr. Buchanan called and held a conversation with me in relation to a rumour which had been in circulation, that he was to be, or desired to be, appointed a Judge of the Supreme Court of the U. States in place of Judge Baldwin[4] deceased. He said he had not put the rumour in circulation or given any countenance to it. He stated it was true that he had long desired to have a seat on the Bench of the Supreme [Court], that he had once or twice had the opportunity to obtain the appointment, but not under circumstances that he was willing to accept it. He said that having [heard] that such a rumor was abroad and that others had mentioned it to me, he thought it proper to come

[1] William Medill, of Ohio.

[2] Benjamin Tappan, 1773–1857, Senator from Ohio 1839–1845.

[3] T. Hartley Crawford, 1786–1863, Judge of the criminal court of the District of Columbia 1845–1863.

[4] Henry Baldwin of Connecticut, 1780–1844; appointed Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court, 1830.

and have a frank conversation with me on the subject. He said that he had become satisfied that he could not have any influence in controlling the course of the Democratic portion of the Pennsylvania delegation in the next Congress on the subject of the tariff; that from what he could learn the whole Pennsylvania delegation would oppose any reduction of the tariff act of 1842, so as to bring it to the revenue principles avowed in my Kane letter and Inaugural address, principles which he heartily and fully approved. He said if he remained in the Cabinet, the opposition of the Democratic members from Pennsylvania to a reduction of the tariff to the revenue standard would be calculated to cast distrust over the sincerity of the administration in proposing such a reduction. He said his own position would be an awkward one. For these reasons he might desire at the meeting of Congress to relieve the administration from imputation of want of sincerity on the subject of the tariff, by being transferred from the Department of State to the Supreme Court Bench. He said he would not conceal the fact that the appointment of Judge of the Supreme Court was one which he had for many years preferred to any [other] under the Government; but that if when Congress met there should be war with Mexico or imminent danger of war with Mexico, or with England, in either of these events the question of reducing the tariff must necessarily be postponed. In the event of War or danger of war he would be willing and desirous to remain in his present position of Secretary of State, and perhaps

at some future period an opportunity might be afforded him to go on the Bench.

The President expressed himself as being entirely satisfied with Mr. Buchanan as Secretary of State, and spoke of the great difficulty he would have in supplying his place in that office if he was transferred to the Bench. After a conversation of some length on the subject, in which the best feeling prevailed and was mutually expressed, the President said it was not necessary to decide or act now, to which Mr. Buchanan replied, certainly not. It was finally concluded that they would both think of the matter and see what developments would occur before the meeting of Congress, and especially what the State of our Foreign relations would be at that time.

It was manifest from the whole tenour of the conversation that Mr. Buchanan was very desirous to go on the Bench, though he expressed entire satisfaction with the President and with the course of his administration.

Shortly after Mr. Buchanan retired Mr. Bancroft came in, and Mr. Donelson came in shortly afterwards. A conversation occurred in relation to Gen'l Jackson's papers [1] and his biography. Maj'r Donelson and the President expressed their earnest desire that Mr. Bancroft should have charge of his papers and write his life. Mr. Bancroft was willing to do so. Maj'r Donelson said he had seen Mr. F. P. Blair, to whom the papers were entrusted by Gen'l Jackson's will, and that Mr. Blair desired

[1] C. H. Lincoln. *Some Manuscripts of Early Presidents, Literary Collector,* May, 1904.

to pass the papers over to Mr. Bancroft that he might prepare his biography.

TUESDAY, *30th September, 1845*.—The Secretary of State left Washington this morning on a visit to his residence in Pennsylvania. The Cabinet met to-day, all the members present except the Secretary of State and the Post Master General, the latter being detained at his office, transacting business which could not be delayed. The President called the attention of the members of the Cabinet to the importance of having their annual Reports, preparatory to the meeting of Congress, prepared at the earliest practicable day, so that they might be submitted to him for his examination. He stated to them that he wished the estimates to be submitted to Congress of appropriations of the next fiscal year, to be made on the most economical scale, and to be as small as the public service would permit. He told them that they must give vigilant attention to the estimates and Reports prepared by the several Heads of Bureau, remarking that as a general rule the Bureau officers were favourable to large expenditures, and in some instances included objects which were unconstitutional, especially in regard to internal improvements. A full conversation was held on the subject of the tariff, and the principles which should be embraced in the Report of the Secretary of the Treasury and in the President's message.

The President reminded the Cabinet that the monthly Reports of their several Departments in reference to the manner in which their clerks had

performed their duty, in pursuance of his circular of the 11th April, 1845, had not been made to him for the last two months, and requested that the reports for this month (September) should be made. They expressed themselves surprised at the omission, and said the reports in arrear, as well as that for September, should be made. The reports from the General Post Office have been regularly made every month, but from no other Department.

WEDNESDAY, *1st October, 1845.*—The President attended the commencement of the Columbian College [1] to-day at the Baptist church on 10th Street. He was accompanied from the President's mansion by the Secretary of War & the attorney General. The Secretary of the Treasury came into the church during the exercises.

Returned to the President's Mansion about 2 O'Clock, & had comparatively few visitors to-day.

THURSDAY, *2nd October, 1845.*— Had visitors to-day as usual, some seeking office, some on business, & others to pay their respects.

FRIDAY, *3rd October, 1845.*— Had the usual round of visitors to-day. Mr. John K. Kane of Philadelphia dined with the President to-day.

SATURDAY, *4th October, 1845.*—This was the regular day of the meeting of the Cabinet. The Secre-

[1] Incorporated as Columbian College, 1821; as Columbian University, 1873.

tary of State was absent from Washington on a visit to Pennsylvania, and the Secretary of the Navy did not attend. The Secretary of War remained but a few minutes, when a messenger informed him that Mrs. M. had just arrived at Washington, when he retired. The other members of the Cabinet remained for two or three hours, conversing on various public subjects, but no business of importance was transacted, & nothing worthy of notice occurred.

Mrs. J. Knox Walker & her children, accompanied by her Grandfather, Mr. Tabb, returned today from a visit to Lynchburg, Va., where they had been since early in August.

SUNDAY, *5th October, 1845.*—Attended the first Presbyterian church to-day with Mrs. Polk and Mr. Tabb of Lynchburg, Virginia.

MONDAY, *6th October, 1845.*— Had visitors today as usual; and among them the Hon. Wm. Cast Johnson of Md., Hon. Joseph Johnson of Va., & the Hon. Mr. McCrate,[1] the two latter members of the next Congress, called.

Transacted business as usual, but nothing of importance occurred.

TUESDAY, *7th October, 1845.*—The Cabinet held their regular meeting to-day. The Secretary of State was absent on a visit to Pennsylvania, & the Secretary of the Navy on a visit to Boston, where he was called suddenly on saturday last in consequence of

[1] John D. McCrate, Representative from Maine 1845–1847.

information received of the illness of one of his children. The other members of the Cabinet conversed on several public matters, and transacted public business.

After the Cabinet adjourned, Ex-Governor Francis Thomas of Maryland called according to previous appointment, the Attorney General (Mr. Mason) still remaining. Gov. Thomas applied to the President to order a *nolle prosequi,* in the case of an indictment pending against him in the Circuit Court of the U. States for the District of Columbia, in which Col. Benton was prosecutor. Gov. Thomas made a lengthy statement of the facts & circumstances of the case, and assigned the reasons why he thought the President should interpose and stop the prosecution. The President promptly declined to do so. He informed Gov. Thomas that he did not consider that he possessed any such power; that the Judiciary & the Executive were independent and coördinate Departments, and that he had never known such a power exerted by the Executive of any State, and that he had never heard of it having been exercised by the President of the U. States. Gov. Thomas insisted that the power existed and had been often exercised by the Governor of Maryland. The President replied that the practice in Maryland might be an exception to the General rule; & inquired of Gov. Thomas what power he would have to enforce such an order, if he were to issue it? The Judges of the Court in this District would not be bound to obey him, and if they disobeyed him he would have no power to impose obedience; that

according to the law as he understood it, the Court was the exclusive judge of the propriety of permitting or ordering a *nolle prosequi* in any case pending before them, and without the assent of the Court it could not be done. Gov. Thomas said if the President would entertain the question, he would make a written application and produce authorities to establish the existence of the power. The President replied that it was unnecessary to do so, as his mind was made up on the subject; that he had never examined the merits of the case, and must leave the decision of the case exclusively to the Court, without any interference on his part. Gov. Thomas made a long statement of the facts, and dwelt on the hardship of the case, alledging that in this criminal proceeding he could not command the attendance of witnesses residing out of this District, and under the issue joined could not give in evidence facts material to his defence, and therefore it was, that he appealed to the President to exert the power which, he insisted, he possessed, to arrest the proceedings. The President made no reply except to reiterate his decision. Gov. Thomas then asked the President if he had any objection to his using the fact that he had made this application to him, if he should hereafter think proper to do so. The President replied that of course he could have no objection to his doing so, if he chose.

Judge Mason, the Attorney General, was present during the whole conversation, and expressed his opinion on the law of the case, in which he concurred in the views expressed by the President.

Gov. Thomas retired; when Judge Mason inquired of the President, if he did not think he was deranged. The President said he seemed to talk rationally but was manifestly under great feeling.

Mr. Dallas, the Vice-President of the U. States, called, and having reached Washington to-day, and being compelled to return to Philadelphia by the cars of this evening, he dined with the President at 4 O'Clock P. M.

Maj'r A. J. Donelson returned from the North to-day, and took lodgings at the President's mansion. He dined with the President also. After dinner Mr. Dallas left for Philadelphia.

WEDNESDAY, *8th October, 1845.*— Had more visitors to-day than usual; but nothing of importance transpired. Had a small dinner party consisting of Hon. Mr. Holmes of Charleston, S. C., Hon. Mr. Weller, Hon. Mr. Parrish, and Mr. McCormick of Ohio, Judge Shields, Com. of the Land Office, Judge Mason, the Atto. Gen'l, & A. J. Donelson, Esq'r.

THURSDAY, *9th October, 1845.*—Transacted business & received visitors as usual to-day, but nothing of importance occurred.

FRIDAY, *10th October, 1845.*— Closed my doors to-day until evening to enable me to transact business of importance on my table, and saw no one but some of the Heads of Department & a few gentlemen whom they introduced. Mr. Buchanan re-

turned to-day from his visit to Pennsylvania & called about 1 P. M. At 1 P. M. I received Mr. Pakenham, the Brittish Minister, who appeared in full Court dress and delivered to me a letter from Victoria, Queen of Great Brittain, addressed to the President of the U. States, on the occasion of Mr. Everett's withdrawal as the U. S. minister at her Court. It was a letter complimentary to Mr. Everett, & expressing a desire that the relations of peace & good understanding might continue to exist between the two countries. Mr. Pakenham in delivering it expressed the same sentiment, which was reciprocated by the President.

SATURDAY, *11th October, 1845*.—This was the regular day for the meeting of the Cabinet. The only members who attended were the Secretary of State, of War, and of the Treasury. The Secretary of the Navy was still absent on a visit to his family in Massachusetts. Mr. Mason, the acting Secretary of the Navy, and the Post Master General came in after the other members of the Cabinet had retired. The Secretary of the Navy (Mr. Mason) stated that they had been at the Navy Depart[ment], inspecting the opening of the bids for the construction of the Navy Yard at Memphis. He stated that the Post Master General had attended by request.

The President then read to Mr. Mason and Mr. Johnson a paper containing the rough draft of what he had written the day before, containing the substance of his views on the tariff, which he intended to present to Congress in his message. They both

expressed their approbation of the views contained in the paper. After they retired Mr. Ritchie came in, and the paper was read to him; he also expressed his approbation as far as he understood it at a single reading, but intimated that he would desire a careful examination of it, before he would be prepared to give it his unqualified assent.

The Hon. Mr. Woodworth,[1] a Representative in Congress from New York, & Gov. Marcy dined with the President to-day.

SUNDAY, *12th October, 1845.*—Attended the first Presbyterian church to-day with Mrs. Polk and Mrs. J. Knox Walker and M. T. Polk, who had come on a visit from the Georgetown college.

After night and between 7 and 8 O'Clock, Mr. Buchanan called in, and held a conversation with the President in relation to the State of our Foreign affairs. Among other things he stated that before he left Washington on his late visit to Pennsylvania, he had, with the President's permission, submitted confidentially to Col. Benton all the correspondence which had taken place on the Oregon question, except the instructions to Mr. McLane, and that Col. Benton approved what had been done on the part of the U. States, & seemed to be gratified at the confidence which had been reposed in him. Mr. [Buchanan], as he stated, had suggested to him that the President, he had no doubt, would be pleased to converse with him on the subject, and said to him

[1] W. W. Woodworth, Representative from New York 1845–1847.

at the same time that the correspondence had been shown to him by the President's authority. Col. Benton replied that he would be glad to see the President on the subject, that he had nothing to do, and the President was, he knew, much engaged, and intimated that he would call on the President at any time the President might inform him he desired to see him.

MONDAY, *13th October, 1845.*— Had more office seekers to-day than for many days past, but appointed none of them.

Maj'r A. J. Donelson of Tennessee, who had on the President's invitation taken his lodgings at the President's Mansion during his stay in Washington, left at 10 O'Clock P. M. for his home in Tennessee.

This evening Miss Johanna Rucker (Mrs. Polk's niece) arrived in Washington from Tennessee.

TUESDAY, *14th October, 1845.*— The Cabinet met to-day, all the members present. The Secretary of War & the attorney General retired early in the day, having business which called them away. Various public matters were discussed. After the Cabinet retired Gen'l James Hamilton, Jr., of S. C. called and [held] a conversation on Texan and Mexican affairs. He expressed an entire concurrence of views with the President in relation to these subjects.

The Hon. Nath'l P. Tallmadge,[1] who had been

[1] Nathaniel Pitcher Tallmadge, 1795–1869, Senator from New York 1833–1844; appointed Territorial Governor of Wisconsin 1844, removed 1846.

recently removed by the President as Governor of Wisconsin, called and held a long and friendly conversation with the President. He said he did not come to complain of his removal, but desired to state some facts and explain his position. He then gave a history of his political course, his seperation from Mr. Van Buren's administration on the Independent Treasury question, his appointment without solicitation on his part as Governor of Wisconsin, and that he was now and had always been in principle a Democrat. He stated, among other things, that when he took his ground against the Independent Treasury scheme, he consulted with Gov. Marcy, who was then Governor of New York, who concurred with him in opinion, but that the Governor afterwards endorsed the scheme in his message to the Legislature of New York, and that he was left by many of those leading Democrats in N. York who had at first approved his course, to stand alone. He said he was afterwards elected to the Senate by the Whigs & conservatives, but that he had never professed to be a Whig and was not in fact so, and that he had given great offence to many Whigs by refusing to take the name and call himself a Whig. He said his removal was unexpected, but he did not blame the President, who had no doubt acted upon the best information before him. He said that the paper signed by the members of the Legislative Assembly of Wisconsin in favour of the restoration of Gov. Dodge, upon which he supposed the President had mainly acted, did not express the views of many who had signed it, and said that a member named Strong and

two or three others were all who really wished his removal, and that the paper so signed had been concealed from some of his leading Democratic friends in the Legislature, who had no knowledge of its existence. He said since his removal he had told all his friends that the President was not to blame, & that he had no doubt he had been influenced in his course from a desire to do what he considered justice to Gov. Dodge by restoring [him] to the office from which he had been improperly removed. The President said to him that in this he was right; that the view he had taken of the case was this: Gov. Dodge was a Pioneer in the West and an old Indian fighter, a man of high character, and the half-brother of the late Senator, Dr. Lynn of Mo., who had been removed from the office of Governor by the late administration and Mr. Dotey appointed on political grounds solely; that from the papers before him, including the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly, it appeared to be the popular sentiment of the Democracy in Wisconsin that justice should be done him by restoring him to the office from which he had been removed without cause. The President added that he [had] not acted from any feeling of hostility to Gov. Tallmadge. He said also that the people of the Territories had made serious objections to the practice of appointing persons from the states to offices within their boundaries, and that he had said to the Delegates in Congress that he would not do so, but would when he could find proper men, appoint citizens of the Territories to the offices within their limits. The President made no observations on that

part of Mr. Tallmadge's conversation which related to his (Mr. T.'s) course on the Independent Treasury, or his political course, but confined himself to the reasons stated which had satisfied him that it was proper to remove him and restore Gov. Dodge. The President stated that Gov. Dodge had himself acted modestly in the matter; that he desired to be restored, but had said nothing to him to the disparagement of Gov. Tallmadge. The whole conversation was in a friendly strain, and Gov. Tallmadge left expressing himself well satisfied with the interview. The President also expressed his gratification that it had occurred.

In the evening, it being the President's reception evening, Gov. Tallmadge was present for an hour or more. A number of ladies & gentlemen were present. Among others Gov. Marcy came in, and the President said to him, Gov. Tallmadge is in the room, whereupon he turned off, advanced to Gov. Tallmadge and accosted him. The President did not observe that they held much conversation during the evening.

WEDNESDAY, *15th October, 1845.*— Saw company from 12 to 1½ O'Clock P. M. to-day. Nothing of interest occurred.

THURSDAY, *16th October, 1845.*—Saw company at 12 O'Clock to-day. Among others who called was Mr. Vespasian Ellis, late Chargé d'affaires to Venezuela. Mr. Ellis had been appointed by Mr. Tyler, but his nomination was pending before the Senate and was unacted on at the close of Mr. Tyler's term.

Early in March I nominated Hon. Benj'n F. Shields of Alabama in his place, who was confirmed by the Senate. Mr. Ellis entered into a long conversation. I stated to him the circumstances under which he was superseded, and he expressed no dissatisfaction, but intimated that he was mortified at having to leave this mission so soon. He gave a long history of his political course, which I do not undertake to detail. Among other things he said he had been an Independent man in politics all his life; that he was a Republican, but had sometimes differed with his party and seperated from them; that he had been in the Legislature of Va. from Accomack Co.; that he had been a Jackson man, but left him when he published his Proclamation and took ground against S. C.; that he had supported Harrison & Tyler in 1840; that he was opposed to a Bank & he believed they were both so; that he had afterwards established a paper at St. Louis, Mo., and advocated Mr. Tyler's nomination & election; that he was in the Tyler Convention at Baltimore, but afterwards supported my election; avowed great hostility to Col. Benton; and concluded by desiring to know whether he could probably obtain an appointment, as I understood him. I replied that I had no places now to fill & could give no assurances or pledges. He impressed me with the belief that he was a man of some talents, but not a person whom I should be likely to appoint to office.

FRIDAY, *17th October, 1845.*— Kept my doors closed to-day, and was engaged in writing off a rough

draft of parts of my message to be delivered to Congress at their meeting in December. Saw no one except members of the Cabinet and officers of the Government on official business, except Mr. Andrews, late consul to Buenos Ayres, & Hon. Mr. Ellis, late member of Congress from N. York, who were introduced by Mr. Buchanan.

SATURDAY, *18th October, 1845.*—The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present. Several public subjects were discussed and acted on.

About 2 O'Clock a military company from Fredericksburg, Va., accompanied by a company from Alexandria, and one from Washington, called at the President's Mansion and paid their respects. They were received in the Circular parlour in the presence of the Cabinet. The Company from Fredericksburg were personally & individually introduced to the President.

SUNDAY, *19th October, 1845.*—Attended the first Presbyterian church to-day with Mrs. Polk and our niece, Miss Johanna Rucker.

MONDAY, *20th October, 1845.*—Had an unusually large number of visitors to-day, most of them on visits of ceremony, and many office seekers, most of whom had repeatedly called on me before.

At 12 O'Clock I received, in pursuance of a previous appointment, a large number (say from 30 to 40) of ministers of the Gospel and lay members of the

Lutheran Church, who had been in attendance on a synod of their body in Washington.

Gave to Mr. Buchanan to-day, the first draft of the paragraphs of my message to Congress relating to Texas and Oregon, for his examination, and for any suggestions he might choose to make.

TUESDAY, *21st October, 1845.*—The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day, all the members present. An important despatch under date of Oct. 3rd, 1845, was read from Mr. McLane, U. S. Minister to London. Mr. McLane gave an account of an interview which he had held with Lord Aberdeen at the Foreign office on the subject of the Oregon negotiation. Lord Aberdeen expressed his regret (as stated in Mr. McLane's despatch) that Mr. Pakenham had rejected the American proposition of compromise. He condemned Mr. Pakenham's course and intimated the willingness on the part of the British Government to agree to a modified proposition, and desired to be informed whether the President of the U. S. would negotiate further on the subject, after he had withdrawn the American proposition. Mr. Buchanan expressed an opinion, formed on the tenour of Mr. McLane's despatch, that the Brittish Government would be willing and desirous to resume the nego[tia]tion by making another proposition on their part. He said he had no doubt Mr. Pakenham had received instructions from his Government by the same vessel that brought Mr. McLane's despatch, that he thought it probable he would call upon him in a day or two to converse on the subject, and if he

did so, he desired to know precisely what he should say to him. He would probably desire to know whether the U. S. would receive another proposition, and to ascertain what modification of the American proposition would be accepted by us. The President said our course was a plain one. We had made a proposition which had been rejected, in terms not very courteous. The Brittish had afterwards been informed, in the note of Mr. Buchanan of the 30th of August, that our proposition was withdrawn and no longer to be considered as pending. In the close of that note, the door of further negotiation was left open. If the Brittish Minister, therefore, called on Mr. Buchanan, and made the inquiries suggestion [suggested], all that could be said to him was, that if he had any further proposition to make on his part, it would be received and considered. This was all that could with propriety be said to him. No intimation should be given to him of what the views or intentions of the administration were, & [but] leave him to take his own course. The President said it was manifest that the tone of the Brittish Government was considerably lowered on the subject. Mr. Buchanan said that if we stopped the negotiation where it was, it would inevitably lead to war. The President replied that he was well satisfied with the ground we occupied on the subject. The President went on at some length to state, as he had done on former occasions, the reasons which had induced him, in deference to the acts of his predecessors and the commitments of the Government, reluctantly to yield his assent to the proposition which had been made and

rejected, and that he was now satisfied with the position in which the matter stood. He said if the same proposition were now made, by the Brittish Minister (on the Pres't having once discharged his duty) he would not accept it. He said the Brittish Minister would not, he was sure, make any new proposition which we could accept; that when his proposition was received (if he made one) he would either reject it, or submit it to the Senate for their advice before he acted on [it], according to its character. Mr. Buchanan asked if he might say, in the conversation which he anticipated Mr. Pakenham would seek with him, that if he made a proposition of a character to justify it, the President would submit it to the Senate for their previous advice before he acted on it. The President replied, that would be improper; the Brittish Minister had no right to know our councils or intentions. It was enough to let him understand, if he asked for information, that *we* had not closed the door to a continuance of the negotiation, and he might continue it, if he chose, but give him no assurances or intimation of what our course would be.

Mr. Buchanan thought we ought not to precipitate a crisis between the two countries, and that by delay we might secure the Oregon territory, but by strong measures hastily taken, we would have war and might lose it. The President said he was satisfied with the state of the negotiation as it stood; and went on to state what he proposed to communicate to Congress in his first Message. He would maintain all our rights, would take bold and strong ground,

and reaffirm Mr. Monroe's ground against permitting any European power to plant or establish any new colony on the North American Continent.

WEDNESDAY, *22nd October, 1845*.—Gave orders to the porter this morning that I desired to see no company. The reason of this order was, though not stated to the porter, that I desired to devote the day to the preperation of my message to Congress. In this I was disappointed, as I had but little time to write. The Secretaries of War, of State, & the Navy and other officers of Government called at different times of the day on official business and to introduce their friends. Gov. Branch of N. C., but recently of Florida, called and spent some time. He expressed his approbation of the course of the administration as far as it had progressed; he was in a fine humour, and was particularly delighted that Wm. B. Lewis and Thomas L. Smith had been removed from office.

After night Mr. Buchanan called and stated that Mr. Pakenham had called on him at his House, and had some conversation with him on the Oregon question, and that 10 O'Clock A. M. to-morrow was appointed for an official interview at the State Department. Mr. B. thought Mr. P. was deeply concerned on the subject, and the awkwardness of the position of his Government since the proposition of this Government had been withdrawn.

Mr. Buchanan returned to me to-day the first draft of my message relating to Texas, with a view on the same subject somewhat condensed, but not dif-

fering in sentiment from my draft given to him on monday last, for his examination.

Read to Mr. Ritchie to-day what I had written for the message on the subject of Oregon. He said it was bold ground, but he thought he would approve it.

THURSDAY, *23rd October, 1845.*— Saw company to-day from 12 to 2 O'Clock P. M. Had a [the] usual number of visitors, some office seekers, some begging money, and others to pay their respects.

Mr. Buchanan called and reported that he had held a conversation of two hours in length with Mr. Pakenham at the State department on the subject of the Oregon negotiation. Mr. P. regretted that the American proposition had been withdrawn, as it might have formed the basis of further negotiation. Much conversation, Mr. B. reported to me, occurred on that point, which resulted in a declaration by Mr. B. that what had occurred could not be changed. Mr. Pakenham said that a protocol might be signed which would open the negotiation again, though he did not propose this formally. Mr. B. told him that if the Brittish Government thought proper to make another proposition it would be respectfully considered, and this was the extent to which he went. Mr. P.'s difficulty seemed to be, how to make a proposition, as long as the American proposition remained withdrawn. Mr. B. reported that Mr. P. seemed to be troubled, but talked pleasantly and seemed to leave the Department reluctantly. It was understood before

Mr. P. retired that they were to have another conference on the subject. Mr. B. said the conversation was a very long and rather a diffuse one, and he could not pretend to report it in detail.

I told Mr. Buchanan that in the present state of the negotiation the Brittish Government must move first; & that, if they made a new proposition, it would depend on its character whether it was rejected, or whether I would take the advice of the Senate before it was responded to; & that I had no belief the Brittish Government would make a proposition which we could accept.

FRIDAY, *24th October, 1845.*— Received to-day a letter from Andrew Jackson, jr., enclosing to me a letter [1] from Gen'l Andrew Jackson written on the 6th June, 1845, two days before his death, and the last letter which he ever wrote. This letter breathes the most ardent friendship for me personally and for the success of my administration. It is marked "confidential," and communicates information touching the official conduct of a person high in office, in reference to which Gen'l J. in his dying moments thought it proper to put me on my guard. As it is highly confidential, its contents will never be disclosed by me or with my permission. It will be preserved as a highly prized memorial of the friendship of the dying patriot, a friendship which had never for a moment been broken, from my early youth until the day of his death. Andrew Jackson, jr., in his letter enclosing [it] to me, explains the

[1] Schouler, *Historical Briefs,* 132.

circumstances under which it had been accidentally mislaid among other papers on his table in his dying room, and had not been discovered until recently before he enclosed it to me. The latter letter I will also preserve.

Mr. Buchanan having some days ago, with my approbation, submitted confidentially to Col. Thos. H. Benton the official correspondence between the Secretary of State and Mr. Pakenham, the Brittish Minister,— the correspondence which had taken place in the pending negotiation between the two Governments on the subject of Oregon, and being informed by Mr. Buchanan that Col. Benton approved of what had been done on the part of this Government, and that upon a suggestion made to him by Mr. B. that he had no doubt I would be pleased to see and converse with him on the subject, Mr. Benton replied to him that he would be pleased to do so at any time the President was at leisure, that he, Col. Benton, was always at leisure but knew that I was much engaged; I this morning requested my Private Secretary to call on Col. Benton and say to him that I would be pleased to see him. This I did at Mr. Buchanan's suggestion made to me two or three days ago. My Private Secretary returned about 12 O'Clock & informed me that Col. Benton would call on me at 1 O'Clock P. M. today. He accordingly called at that hour. His manner and conversation were altogether pleasant and friendly, and such as they had always been in former years when I was in Congress with him.

After a few minutes of desultory conversation on commonplace subjects I adverted to the fact, that [the] correspondence in relation to Oregon had been submitted to him with my approbation and that I desired to have a conversation with him on the subject, and to have his views if he had no objection to give them.

He entered into the conversation very cheerfully. I told him that there was no probability that [the] subject could [be] adjusted by a negotiation, and that it was a matter of the gravest importance what course the Government should take at the meeting of Congress. He remarked that he approved what had been done on the part of the U. S., and that he had told Mr. Buchanan last spring that he would support the settlement of the question at the parallel of 49° of North Latitude. I told him that I had reluctantly yielded my assent to make the proposition for that parallel, which had been made and rejected by the Brittish Minister, and that I had done so alone in deference to what had been done by preceding administrations, and the commitments of the Government which they had made; and that, feeling bound by their acts, I had not felt at liberty abruptly to break off the negotiation. I told him that the proposition having been rejected by the Brittish Minister, I was now disposed to assert our extreme right to the whole country; that from the information I had I thought the Brittish Government desired that I should renew the proposition which they had rejected and which had been subsequently withdrawn. The conversation continued, and without recording

it at length as it occurred, we agreed in the following views, *viz,:*

1st. That the 12 months notice for the abrogation of the Convention of 1827 should be given.

2nd. That our laws & jurisdiction should be extended over our citizens in Oregon, to the same extent that the Brittish laws had been extended over Brittish subjects by the act [1] of Parliament of 1821.

3rd. That block-houses or stockade forts should be erected on the route from U. S. to Oregon, and that two or three Regiments of mounted riflemen should be raised, for the protection of emigrants on their route to Oregon.

4th. That our Indian policy should be extended to Oregon.

All these things, we agreed, could be done without a violation on our part of the Convention of 1827, and without giving just cause of offence to Great Brittain. I remarked that I was in favour of making grants of land to the emigrants, but I had some doubts whether this could be done until after the expiration of the year's notice, without a violation of the Treaty of 1827. Of this Col. Benton also had some doubts, and did not seem to be clear.

I told Col. Benton that I was strongly inclined to reaffirm Mr. Monroe's doctrine against permitting foreign colonization, at least so far as this Continent was concerned. At this point, without denying the general proposition, Col. Benton remarked that Great Brittain possessed the same kind of title to Frazer's River, by discovery, exploration, and settle-

[1] 1 & 2 George IV., c 66.

ment that the U. S. did to the Columbia River. I remarked that we claimed it under the Spanish title, to which Col. B. said the Spaniards had occupied and had a good title to Vancouver's Island, but had known nothing of the existence of such a river as Frazer's River; that we were entitled to the coast under the Spanish title. To this I said it would depend on the public law of nations, how far the discovery and possession of the coast would give Spain a title to the adjoining country in the interior.

The conversation then turned on California, on which I remarked that Great Brittain had her eye on that country and intended to possess it if she could, but that the people of the U. S. would not willingly permit California to pass into the possession of any new colony planted by Great Brittain or any foreign monarchy, and that in reasserting Mr. Monroe's doctrine, I had California & the fine bay of San Francisco as much in view as Oregon. Col. Benton agreed that no Foreign Power ought to be permitted to colonize California, any more than they would be to colonize Cuba. As long as Cuba remained in the possession of the present Government we would not object, but if a powerful foreign power was about to possess it, we would not permit it. On the same footing we would place California.

Col. B. in the course of the conversation stated the fact that the Brittish Hudson's Bay Company had now 20 Forts on Frazier's River.

Some conversation occurred concerning Capt. Fremont's expedition,[1] and his intention to visit Cal-

[1] Niles' *Register,* LXXI.

ifornia before his return. Col. B. expressed the opinion that Americans would settle on the Sacraminto River and ultimately hold the country. The conversation on the subject of Foreign Colonization closed by a general remark that no new Foreign Colony could be permitted on any part of the North American Continent, on which there seemed to be an agreement. Col. B. made no dissent to the proposition, but I was left in doubt whether he intended to include in it the country on Frazer's River, now occupied by Brittish posts, but I inclined to the opinion that he did not intend that the principle should apply to the country watered by that River & North of 49° of North Latitude.

The conversation closed very pleasantly. The first rough draft of my message to Congress on the Oregon question, which I had finished to-day, lay on my table when Col. B. came into my office, but I did not state the fact to him. It embraced, written out, the views the substance of which I expressed in the conversation I have detailed with Col. Benton.

On Col. Benton's leaving I expressed my satisfaction at having had the interview with him.

Gave a letter of introduction to-day to Samuel B. Chase of Rochester, New York, to President Jones of Texas. Mr. C. came introduced to me by Gov. Wright, Lieut.-Governor Gardner, and other distinguished citizens of N. York.

SATURDAY, *25th October, 1845*.—The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day, all the members present.

I read to the Cabinet the rough draft of what I proposed to say in my message to Congress on the subject of Oregon. A conversation took place on the subject, from which I perceived no difference of opinion on any material point.

I called the attention of the Cabinet to the importance of having their annual Reports prepared and laid before me by the 15th of November, or sooner if they could do so, and informed them that I wished to examine them fully and minutely before they were communicated to Congress.

SUNDAY, *26th October, 1845.*—Attended the first Presbyterian church to-day with Mrs. Polk & Miss Rucker.

MONDAY, *27th October, 1845.*— Handed to Judge Mason, the Atto. Gen'l, for his examination the passages which I had prepared for my message to Congress on the subjects of the Tariff and the Constitutional Treasury.

Mr. T. W. Ward of Boston called on me to-day. He told me that he was the agent of Baring Brothers & Co. in London; that he [was] my political friend & the friend of my administration. From his conversation I soon discovered that the object of his visit was to obtain information in relation to the intentions of the Government of the U. S. on the Oregon question. I remained silent whilst he continued to speak at some length on that subject. He spoke of the prosperous condition [of the two countries, and] of the great interest which both nations had in pre-

serving peace. He said the Barings & Co. were largely engaged in business all over the world and it was of great interest to them to [know] whether there was [to be] peace or war. He said he had constantly assured them that there was no danger of war, but that he had heard in New York, as coming directly from Washington, that I had determined to claim the whole [of] Oregon territory, & [he] intimated, without saying so in direct terms, if that was the case that there was danger of war. He said he did not expect me to communicate to him any thing which was improper, but that perhaps I [would] feel at liberty to say in General terms that the existing relations of peace would not be changed, that he might know how to make his commercial arrangements. He said his mercantile friends had often consulted him of late to know whether it would be safe to enter into commercial arrangements which it would be unsafe to enter into if there was a probability of war between the U. S. & Great Brittain about the Oregon question. After he had made his statement I said to him, in substance, that our general policy had always been peace; I said also that when I commenced my administration I found the Oregon negotiation pending, that I had given my attention to the subject, and that all it would be proper for me to say was that the negotiation was still pending. I declined giving any opinion of its probable result. I said to him that no one but myself & my Cabinet could know what had occurred or what was likely to occur, & that until the negotiation was terminated it would be

contrary to all the usages of Diplomacy for either party to communicate what had transpired. I said in conclusion that if Lord Aberdeen were to disclose to the public what had transpired, in the present stage of the negotiation, I would think very strange of it. He learned nothing, and after apologizing for making the inquiry he retired. The conversation took place about 2 O'Clock P. M. Whilst I was at dinner about 4 O'Clock Mr. Buchanan sent in to me by my porter an official note from Mr. Pakenham on the subject of Oregon dated 25th Inst. which Mr. Buchanan had not received when he called at my office at half past 12 O'Clock to-day.

I have a strong suspicion that Mr. Ward called at the instance of Baring Brothers & Co., and that Mr. Pakenham was advised of his call, & probably held back his note of the 25th Inst. until after he learned the result of Mr. Ward's interview with me.

TUESDAY, *28th October, 1845.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present except the Secretary of the Navy, who was absent on a visit to a sick child at Philadelphia.

The only subject of interest discussed was what was the proper answer to the note of the Brittish Minister of the 25th Inst. delivered to Mr. Buchanan on the 27th. Mr. Buchanan read a draft of an answer which he had prepared. Several suggestions of amendment and alteration were made by the members of the Cabinet and myself. Mr. Buchanan was desirous to leave the door open for further negotiation; the draft of his note was conciliatory and,

as I thought, conceded too much. Mr. Buchanan repeated what he had often before said, that he was willing to settle the question [at] 49° degrees of North Latitude yielding the Cap[e?] of Vancouver's Island to Great Brittain but not the free navigation of the Columbia River. My own view as expressed was, that our proposition of 49° had been rejected and had been subsequently withdrawn by us; that it would not be renewed, and that no other proposition would be made by us; that if Great Brittain chose to make a proposition we would, of course, consider it; but that I was satisfied that no proposition would be made by Great Brittain which we could accept. I said further that we could say nothing which would have the appearance of inviting Great Brittain to make another proposition, but that she should be left to act voluntarily & make a proposition or not as her Minister chose. This was the substance of what occurred. It was agreed that the answer to Mr. Pakenham's [note] was very important, that every part of it should be well considered and, there being some difference of opinion and some difficulty in framing the proper answer so as to present my views, I remarked that I would take Mr. Buchanan's draft of the answer, and that we would sleep on the subject; and at my suggestion it was agreed that the Cabinet would meet again to consider the subject on to-morrow morning at 9 O'Clock.

All the members of the Cabinet retired except the Secretary of the Treasury, who remained to explain to me some promotions and appointments which

were about to be made in the Revenue Cutter service. These explanations were made, & the Secretary having brought over the Commissions with him I signed them. As Mr. Walker was about retiring I invited him to call again at 6 O'Clock to consider with me of the draft of the answer to Mr. Pakenham's note. At six O'Clock he called accordingly, when we took the subject up & discussed it; he suggested amendments and I suggested others of Mr. Buchanan's draft of the answer. We both reduced our respective suggestions to writing. Before finishing I was called to the parlour to see company, this being reception evening at the President's Mansion. Shortly afterwards Mr. Walker came into the parlour. After the company retired we returned to my office, and agreed in the amendments which should be proposed to Mr. Buchanan's draft. Mr. Walker retired at about 10 O'Clock P. M.

Dr. Wm. C. Tate of N. C. was among the visitors who were present in the parlour this evening. He is the Step-father of my nephew, Marshall T. Polk, jr., having married my brother's widow.

WEDNESDAY, *29th October, 1845.*— I rose early as is my habit & after taking my morning's walk made a new draft of the amendments which I thought proper to be made to the draft of Mr. Buchanan['s answer] to Mr. Pakenham's note of the 25th Instant. The Cabinet assembled at 9 O'Clock A. M., the hour which was appointed on yesterday, the Secretary of the Navy being still ab-

sent. I submitted the proposed modifications, which were discussed and with some modifications agreed to. Mr. Buchanan made a new draft conformably to them. I declined in the answer to renew the proposition which had been rejected, or to make any new proposition, but left the Brittish Minister to take his own course. I declined to invite him to make any proposition, or to give any intimation what our decision on any proposition he might make would be. For a more full understanding of the character of Mr. Pakenham's note of the 25th Instant, and of the answer which was prepared to it, I refer to copies which I will place on my files, and also to a private letter which I wrote today to Mr. McLane, U. S. Minister at London. After the answer had been agreed [to] & copied by Mr. Buchanan, he, Mr. B., remarked that Mr. Pakenham might desire to consider his note unofficial and withdraw it, when he held a conference with him, which he proposed to do immediately. To which I replied that he must decide whether his note was to be regarded as official or not, before he could see our answer or know its contents. Mr. Buchanan insisted with some earnestness that our answer should be read by him to Mr. Pakenham, and that Mr. P. might then be at liberty to consider his note and the answer official or not, and said if this was not done his honor would be affected, as Mr. Pakenham, when he parted with him on the 27th, the day he handed him the note, had remarked that his note of the 25th might be regarded as official or not, and that he, Mr. Buchanan, had mentioned

this fact to me. I replied he had mentioned it incidentally, but that, as I had understood him, we were to decide whether we chose to consider it official or not. That for myself I had been considering it as official, as I supposed we all had, at two Cabinet meetings in [which] we had been preparing the answer. Mr. Buchanan still insisted that the answer should be read to Mr. Pakenham, and that he, Mr. P., might then be at liberty to withdraw his note or not as he pleased. I positively refused and told Mr. Buchanan with earnestness and emphasis that I would not permit our views as contained in the answer to be read to Mr. P. or the substance in any way made known to him, unless he first decided that his note of the 25th was official and was to go on the files of the Department, that if he so decided Mr. Buchanan would deliver our answer to him, otherwise he would with-hold [it] and not give him any statement of its contents. I repeated to Mr. Buchanan that when he met Mr. Pakenham, as he said he expected to do at the State Department immediately, he would inform him distinctly that he must decide whether he wished his note of the 25th [to] be official or not; if he decided it was official then he would deliver the answer to him; but that if he said it was unofficial that he would inform him that I had no answer to give or any information to impart to him on the subject. Mr. Buchanan said he would follow my directions. He did so, however, most reluctantly, as was manifest from his manner & the objections he urged to such a course. I said again, if Mr. Pakenham has any further com-

munication to make on the subject of Oregon, let him make it officially, and then we will answer it; but that I would not permit him to write a note, and after he [had] heard our answer to it withdraw his note & consider all that had occurred, both note and answer, to be unofficial & not to go on the record; that I would not exhibit our hand to him in any such way. Mr. Buchanan retired. Before the conversation about delivering the answer or not delivering [it], or reading it, occurred, the Secretary of War had retired to his office, having left my office while Mr. Buchanan was preparing the answer as corrected & agreed to. This conversation took place in the presence of the Sec. of the Treasury, the P. M. Gen'l, the Atto.-Gen'l, & my private secretary, J. Knox Walker.

Mr. Buchanan retired and returned in about an hour, and reported to me that he had met Mr. Pakenham at the State Department and made known to him my decision that he must elect whether his note of the 25th was official before any answer would be given; that if he decided it was official, he had prepared an answer by my direction which he was ready to deliver to him, but that if he elected that it was unofficial and was not to go on record he could not deliver the answer to him. Mr. B. said to me that Mr. Pakenham paused and seemed to be in doubt what to do, and made some remark of his anxiety to see some way to continue the negotiation; Mr. Buchanan said he remarked to him that he could not expect us to abandon the ground we had taken in the negotiation; whereupon Mr.

Pakenham withdrew his note of the 25th Instant, and then the interview ended. I said to Mr. Buchanan it was his remark that had induced him to take that course, and that it would have been better if he had said nothing and left him to decide for himself. Mr. Buchanan then proposed (this being the last day that letters could go from Washington in time to go to London by the Steamer of the 1st proximo) to write a private letter to Mr. McLane, our Minister at London, and enclose to him a copy of Mr. Pakenham's note of the 25th which was now withdrawn, & of the answer to it which had been prepared but not delivered. He afterwards did so & read to me his letter.[1] I also wrote to Mr. McLane an unofficial letter & kept a copy.

It was manifest to me in the whole discussions in Cabinet on yesterday & to-day, that Mr. Buchanan disapproved the course which he saw I inclined to take, and that he was laboring to prevent it. Indeed he said in the discussion on yesterday that he differed with all the Cabinet, and that he was anxious to settle the question, that he wished to leave the door for a further proposition open, but that [if] I was resolved to accept nothing less than what had been offered by us and rejected, that ended the matter. He said repeatedly during the preparation of the letter that as it would express my view [and] that of the rest of the Cabinet, he would word it precisely as I directed, & he copied accordingly from my manuscript amendments to his first draft,

[1] Buchanan to McLane, Oct. 28, 1845, Moore, *Buchanan,* VI, 285.

in drawing off the answer as finally agreed. I think it unfortunate that he made any remark to Mr. Pakenham which indicated to him what my settled decision was, as I think Mr. Pakenham's note & the answer should have been official. Mr. B.'s remark, I have no doubt, prevented this from being, and induced Mr. P. to withdraw his note. The result of the whole is that after two Cabinet meetings and much anxious discussion the matter ended where it began.

THURSDAY, *30th October, 1845.*— I directed my Private Secretary to call on Mr. Buchanan for copies of Mr. Pakenham's note of the 25th Inst. on the subject of the Oregon negotiation which he withdrew on yesterday, having declined to have it considered official; and a copy of the answer to it, which had been agreed to in Cabinet on yesterday & which I directed not to be delivered to Mr. Pakenham or its contents made known to him unless he decided that his note of the 25th was official. I directed my Private Secretary to procure also a copy of Mr. Buchanan's private letter to Mr. McLane, U. S. Minister to London, written on the afternoon of yesterday. My Private Secretary procured these copies, or rather made them himself as directed. They will be carefully preserved by me for future reference, as they may hereafter become important. The answer which was prepared to Mr. Pakenham's note of the 25th Inst., contains the decision to which I have irrevocably come in the Oregon

question, and its preservation is especially important.[1]

Mr. Buchanan did not call to-day, which was not usual with him, as with rare exceptions he was in the habit of calling every day. He sent over to me a number of foreign despatches brought by the Steamer which arrived at New York on yesterday, and among them a private letter from Mr. McLane on the Oregon question.

At 12 O'Clock today I received in my office the Chiefs of the Pottawatimie Tribe of Indians, who were on a visit to Washington on the business of their Nation. There were seven or eight of them painted & in full Indian costume; others were in citizen's dress. They held a talk with me through an Interpreter in the presence of the Secretary of War, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and many other persons, who had been attracted to the President's Mansion by their approach. They retired apparently well satisfied at the manner [in which] I received them and [with] what I said to them. They were informed that the Secretary of War would confer further with them on the subject of their business.

I held a confidential conversation with Lieut. Gillespie[2] of the Marine Corps, about 8 O'Clock P. M., on the subject of a secret mission on which he was

[1] This document is now a part of the collection of Polk papers belonging to the Chicago Historical Society.

[2] Archibald H. Gillespie, First Lieutenant U. S. A., 1838; resigned 1854.

about to go to California. His secret instructions & the letter to Mr. Larkin,[1] U. S. Consul at Monterey, in the Department of State, will explain the object of his mission.

Emanuel Fisher, the man who behaved rudely in my office on the 2nd of September last,[2] made his appearance in my office to-day. He said he wished to make an apology for the manner in which he had acted. I told him it was passed [past] and I cared nothing about it; and was willing to forget it. He then begged me for money. I declined to give him any.

FRIDAY, *31st October, 1845.*— I saw no persons on visits of ceremony in my office to-day, and but few on business; until evening, when I saw company in the parlour. I was engaged during the greater part of the day in preparing the draft of my message to Congress.

SATURDAY, *1st November, 1845.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present.

After conversing on other public subjects I read to the Cabinet what I had written for my message to Congress, on the subject of the Tariff, and the establishment of a Constitutional Treasury, and the separation of the moneys of the public from banks.

[1] The letter to Larkin is printed in Moore, *Buchanan,* VI, 275.

[2] The visit referred to was made September 3; see Diary entry for that day.

There was a concurrence in my views on these subjects by all the members of the Cabinet, except Mr. Buchanan on one point in referen[ce] to the Tariff. That point was this. I had recommended, among other things in the paper which I read, the abolition of the Minimum principle and specific duties and the substitution in their place of ad valorem duties. Mr. Buchanan approved of the abolition of the Minimum principle, and generally of the ad valorem principle, but thought there were some articles such as iron, coal, sugar, and a few others, which could be weighed or measured, on which his opinion was there should be a specific duty. If my views were so modified as to accept these few articles, but retaining the ad valorem principle as a general rule, he was satisfied with what I proposed to insert in the Message on the subject of the Tariff. The subject was discussed at some length by different members of the Cabinet and myself, and was postponed for further consideration at a future meeting.

I gave to Mr. Buchanan the manuscript of what I had written for the message on the subject of Oregon, and requested him to examine it, as soon as his leisure would permit, and make to me any suggestions which might occur to him on the subject. I informed the Cabinet that I desired to have the annual Reports from the several Departments laid before me on or before the 15th Inst., that I might have time to examine them, and have my Message completed some days before the meeting of Congress.

SUNDAY, *2nd November, 1845.*— Attended the Methodist church (called the Foundary church)[1] today, in company with my Private Secretary, J. Knox Walker. It was an inclement day, there being rain from an early hour in the morning; & Mrs. Polk and the ladies of my household did not attend church today. Mrs. Polk being a member of the Presbyterian Church I generally attend that Church with her, though my opinions and predilections are in favour of the Methodist Church.

This was my birth-day, being fifty years old, having been born according to the family Register in the family Bible, corroborated by the account given me by my mother, on the 2nd of November, 1795.

The text today was from the Acts of the Apostles, Ch. 15, v. 31 — "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by the man whom he hath ordained." It was Communion day in the church, and the sermon was solemn and forcible. It awakened the reflection that I had lived fifty years, and that before fifty years more would expire, I would be sleeping with the generations which have gone before me. I thought of the vanity of this world's honours, how little they would profit me half a century hence, and that it was time for me to be "putting my House in Order."

[1] The Foundry Methodist Church at the corner of 14th and G streets. The edifice has since given place to a business block.

MONDAY, *3rd November, 1845.*— Mj'r Noland,[1] Commissioner of Public Buildings, called this morning, and related to me a conversation which he had lately held with Francis P. Blair,[2] late editor of the *Globe.* He (Noland) said he had been told that Mr. Blair had advised me to remove him from office; that he called on Blair on the subject, who denied it, but said I had sent for him some time ago and made some inquiry of him about several offices in this District, and among them the U. S. Attorney, the Marshall, Keeper of the Penitentiary, Commissioner of Public Buildings, &c., but that he had declined giving me any opinion. Noland said that Blair informed him he did not intend to put himself under any obligation to me by recommending any one for office; Noland said Blair was soured towards me (to use his own expression) and informed him that I had offered him, Blair, the Mission to Spain, & that he had declined it. I told Mr. Noland that there was a mistake about my having offered to Mr. Blair the Mission to Spain; that I had never held a word's conversation with him on the subject; that I had been informed by Mr. Buchanan

[1] Major William Noland. For the facts about his removal from office see Diary entry for Sept. 4, 1846.

[2] Francis Preston Blair of Virginia, 1791–1876, best known as the editor of the *Globe,* the official organ of the Democratic party during the administrations of Jackson, Van Buren, Harrison, and Tyler. The reasons for his forced retirement from this position at the hands of Polk have been variously stated. For Polk's own account see Diary entry for April 25, 1846.

that he had held some conversation with Blair, but that the Mission to Spain had not been offered to him by my authority. I told Noland that I had understood Blair had expressed friendship for me and that I was surprised to hear from [him] that Blair was soured & unfriendly. Here the conversation with Mr. Noland ceased and he retired.

The facts about the Mission to Spain are these. Sometime after Mr. Blair retired from the *Globe* and Mr. Ritchie had taken charge of it, and when Mr. Blair having retired professing [good] feeling & friendship for the administration, and had made a manly publication to that effect in the *Globe* before he retired, Mr. Buchanan held a conversation with me in relation to the good feeling with which we both supposed Blair had retired, that he deserved credit for it, &c. Mr. Buchanan suggested that he would be a suitable person to fill the Mission, and he thought he would be pleased with it. I concurred with Mr. Buchanan that he was well qualified, and intimated a willingness, if on further consideration it should be deemed proper, to appoint him to that station if he desired. I did not authorize Mr. Buchanan to offer the Mission to him, and he did not so understand me, as he afterwards informed me. Sometime afterwards Mr. Buchanan told me he had rec'd [?] a note from Blair declining the Mission to Spain, & I think read the note [to] me. Mr. Buchanan expressed surprise at receiving the note, as he had not been authorized by me to offer him the Mission, and had not in fact offered it to him. He said he had held some conversation with

Blair and asked him how he would like it, but that he did not offer it to him, and that Blair had wholly misunderstood. He said, however, it was not worth while to correct his (Blair's) misapprehension of what he had said, especially as he declined it. I record these facts now to prevent misapprehension hereafter, and especially in consequence of the conversation held by Blair with Noland, as detailed to me by Noland.

So far as Noland's office is concerned [?] Blair did tell me, while I was at Mr. Latimer's about the 1st of July, when the President's Mansion was undergoing repairs, that Noland had no claim to retain his office, and he recommended Dr. Gunton of this City [as] a proper person to be appointed in his place. He also recommended Mr. Cattman for Warden of the Penitentiary, who was appointed. Nothing of importance occu[r]red today. I had some visitors, but not as many as usual. I devoted most of my time to official business, and the preparation of my message to Congress.

TUESDAY, *4th November, 1845.*—The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present. Various public subjects were considered, but nothing necessary to record occurred.

Mr. Buchanan returned to me to-day my draft of my message to Congress on the subject of Oregon, with a condensed draft of his own modifying and softening the tone of mine. I prefer the bold ground which I have taken in my draft, but will further examine the subject before I revise my own draft.

WEDNESDAY, *5th November, 1845.*— Saw but few persons to-day. The Secretary of State introduced Christopher Hughes late Chargé d'Affaires to the Netherlands and Dabn[e]y S. Carr, Esq.,[1] Minister Resident at Constantinople, who was on a visit to the U. States on leave of absence. I suppose they called to pay their respects. After the ordinary salutations, however, they engaged in conversation between themselves about the fine arts, Power's Eve, Fisherman Boy, and Greek Slave;[2] and about the distinguished persons they had seen abroad. They seemed to be well satisfied with themselves, and it was very clear that they had a good opinion of themselves. Their conduct was scarcely respectful to me, though I suppose they did not intend to be disrespectful. Altogether their deportment was highly impolite. They said not a word in reference to their respective Missions, or public affairs abroad, and were so busily engaged in their conversation with each other that they gave me no opportunity to make a single inquiry. The Secretary of State sat entirely silent and scarcely spoke a word during their visit.

THURSDAY, *6th November, 1845.*— Saw Mr. Buchanan and referred in conversation with him to the conduct of Messrs. Hughes & Carr, on their visit to me on yesterday, and inquired of him if he ob-

[1] Dabney S. Carr, U. S. minister to Turkey, 1843–1849.

[2] Hiram Powers, the sculptor, 1805–1873. His most famous work is the "Greek Slave" produced in 1843, now in the Corcoran gallery at Washington. Other popular pieces are his statue of "Eve Tempted" and "The Fisher Boy."

served it. He said he did, and he thought they had acted very impolitely, but he had no idea that they intended it. I gave him my opinion of their vain conduct, in which he entirely concurred. I remarked that they had been long enough abroad to have their heads turned, that I had been, up to the visit, a good friend of Mr. Carr, but that I thought it was almost time for him to remain at home, and let some other take his place.

At 10 O'Clock to-night Mr. Bancroft, the Secretary of the Navy, called with dispatches from Commodore Conner commanding the Home Squadron in the Gulf of Mexico,[1] to the effect that the Government of Mexico were willing to renew diplomatic relations, & to receive a Minister from the U. States.

FRIDAY, *7th November, 1845.*— Saw the Secretary of State, and held a conversation with him on the subject of our Mexican Relations. He agreed with me that a Minister should be appointed to Mexico, and proceed to the Mexican Capital without delay; and that it was of great importance that his appointment should not be made public, so as to enable the Representatives of Foreign Governments and the English and French Ministers to exert an influence to embarrass or thwart the attainment of the objects of his Mission. We agreed upon the character of the instructions to be given to him on the subjects of boundary and the claims of our citizens on Mexico. Mr. Buchanan left with the understanding that he would

[1] David Conner, 1792–1856, commanded the U. S. squadron in the Gulf of Mexico in 1845 and 1846.

have the instructions [ready] to be submitted to the Cabinet on to-morrow. This he could readily do, having some weeks ago, when such a step was contemplated, made a rough draft of part of the instructions.

SATURDAY, *8th November, 1845.*—The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day, all the members present. Mr. [Buchanan] submitted to the Cabinet the instructions which he had prepared for the Minister to be appointed to Mexico. They were discussed, amended, and agreed to unanimously. It was agreed that the contemplated appointment of a Minister should be kept secret for the present, for the reasons assigned in my journal of yesterday. Mr. Trist,[1] the Chief Clerk of the Department of State, was the only person to whom it was to be communicated. In the afternoon Mr. Trist and my Private Secretary, at the office of the latter, commenced copying the instructions[2] and preparing other copies of despatches for the Minister.

Miss Elizabeth Armstrong,[3] who had been to Liverpool with her father, came to the President's Mansion, and remained as an inmate of the family during her stay in Washington.

[1] Nicholas Philip Trist of Virginia, Chief Clerk of the Department of State 1845–1848, special commissioner to Mexico in 1848 where he negotiated the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

[2] Printed in Moore, *Buchanan,* VI, 294; also in *S. Ex. Doc.* 52, 30 Cong. 1 Sess. 71.

[3] Daughter of General Robert Armstrong of Tennessee, consul at Liverpool 1845–1852.

SUNDAY, *9th November, 1845.*— Attended the Presbyterian church to-day, with Mrs. Polk, Miss Rucker, and Miss Armstrong.

Dr. Parrott, Confidential Agent of this Government in Mexico for several months past, arrived in Washington by evening Boat, Mr. Buchanan called over to inform me. I did not see Dr. Parrott. He was the bearer of the original note of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Mexico to the American Consul at Mexico, agreeing to receive a Minister from the United States.

MONDAY, *10th November, 1845.*— Saw and had a full conversation with Dr. Parrott, who had been in Mexico as a Confidential Agent of the U. S. for some months, and who arrived at Washington last night. He confirmed the opinion I had entertained that Mexico was anxious to settle the pending difficulties between the two countries, including those of boundary. I informed Dr. Parrott that I wished him to return to Mexico as Secretary of Legation to the Minister whom I intended to appoint this day, and told him the Hon. John Slidell of New Orleans was the person I intended to appoint as Minister. He was not anxious to accept the office of Secretary of Legation, but agreed to do so, and said he would be ready to leave in about ten days. At 10 O'Clock P. M., the instructions and all the documents referred to being copied, I signed the Commission of the Hon. John Slidell as Envoy Extraordinary & Minister Plenipotentiary to Mexico. It was countersigned by the Secretary of State at my office; and the pack-

age containing it with the instructions and other papers, was delivered to Lieut. Lanier of the Navy, who was instructed to proceed with it to Pensacola and deliver it to Commodore Conner, or the Commandant of the Station to whom it was enclosed. Lieut. Lanier did not know what the package contained. The Secretary of the Navy was present, and forwarded a despatch from his Department to the Commander of the Squadron on Station at Pensacola. Mr. Trist and my Private Secretary were the only persons except the Cabinet who knew of these proceedings. I wrote to Mr. Slidell on the 7th Inst. to proceed to Pensacola, to which point his commission and instructions would be forwarded to him. (See my letter to him and also one of this date, & also several others of prior date in my letter book).

TUESDAY, *11th November, 1845.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting today, all the members present. I read to the Cabinet the passages of my Message which I had prepared relating to Mexico. The Secretary of the Treasury read to the Cabinet that portion of his Annual Report to Congress on the finances, which related to the tariff & a reduction of duties. Mr. Buchanan expressed his objections to the doctrine which it contained. He remarked that it was a strong free trade document, and was in its doctrine opposed to his whole course on the subject during his whole public life. He objected especially to that part of it which recommended the abolition of specific duties and the substitution of ad valorem duties in their stead. The opinions of the members

of the Cabinet were not taken formally, as the Secretary of the Treasury said he merely read it consultatively; an informal conversation took place in reference to different parts of it.

Other public subjects were considered, chiefly relating to Foreign Affairs.

WEDNESDAY, *12th November, 1845.*— Nothing worthy to be recorded occurred to-day. I did not see company, but was engaged in preparing my message to Congress.

A few persons were admitted into my office on their special request.

THURSDAY, *13th November, 1845.*— I did not see company today, but was occupied in preparing my message to Congress.

A few persons were admitted on their special request; among the[m] C. P. Van Ness, late Collector at New York,[1] who made known to me his desire to be appointed Minister to Spain or to Mexico.

FRIDAY, *14th November, 1845.*— Saw but few persons to-day; was engaged chiefly in preparing my message.

SATURDAY, *15th November, 1845.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present. I read to the Cabinet that portion of my Message which I had completed, *viz.:* the Introduction, [that part] relating to Texas, Mexico, Oregon, an

[1] Cornelius Peter Van Ness, 1782–1852, minister to Spain 1829–1837, Collector of the Port of New York 1844–1845.

increase of the Navy, graduation of the public lands and pre-emptions to settlers on the same, the Tariff, the Constitutional Treasury; and a paragraph at the conclusion announcing the death of Gen'l Jackson. I invited suggestions from the Cabinet. Some were made, but chiefly of verbal alterations not affecting substance. The balance of the message I informed the Cabinet I would prepare within a very short time and submit to them. Had a Dinner party to-day, consisting of over thirty persons.

SUNDAY, *16th November, 1845.*— Attended Doctor Lowrie's (Presbyterian) church today, with Mrs. Polk, Mr. Buchanan (Secretary of State), and my nephew, Marshall T. Polk, jr., who had leave of absence to-day from Georgetown College.

MONDAY, *17th November, 1845.*— Mr. Senator Allen of Ohio [1] called in the forenoon and again in the evening. I held a long conversation with him about public affairs, stated to him in confidence what had occurred in the Oregon Negotiation, and what recommendations I would make in the message. He approved my course. We conversed on other public subjects & my action upon them since the 4th of March last. He approved what had been done. He was in fine spirits, and will, I have no doubt, give an ardent support to the administration.

[1] William Allen, 1806–1879, Senator from Ohio 1837–1849; elected Governor of Ohio in 1873 and defeated for reëlection by Rutherford B. Hayes on the Greenback issue.

My Private Secretary commenced copying my message to-day.

I did not see many persons to-day.

TUESDAY, *18th November, 1845.*—The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present. Various public subjects, but chiefly those to be embraced in the Annual Executive Reports to be communicated to Congress, were discussed.

After the Cabinet dispersed I was occupied in preparing additional paragraphs for the message, and correcting & revising those which I had already written.

WEDNESDAY, *19th November, 1845.*—Was occupied to-day with the message and concluded it, with the exception of a [some] passages to be inserted when the statistical information to which they will relate is furnished to me by the Executive Departments.

Mr. Buchanan called in the evening with additional instructions which he had prepared for Mr. Slidell, the Minister appointed to Mexico on the 10th Inst., which I approved.

Mr. Buchanan then informed me that he had made up his mind not to ask the vacant judgeship on the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States, but to remain in the Cabinet. I told him I was gratified to hear it, as I was entirely satisfied with him and would have parted with him reluctantly. Though Mr. Buchanan differs with me on some

points, on the Oregon question and on the tariff, yet he had not in consequence of such difference embarrassed me but had shown a willingness to carry out my views instead of his own, and I was desirous to retain him in the Cabinet. Mr. Buchanan, after announcing his determination to remain in the Cabinet, stated that he preferred a place on the Supreme Bench to any other under the Government; that he would rather be Chief Justice of that Court than President of the U. S. He said he did not desire to be President and never had; and now that he remained in the Cabinet he did not wish it, but would do all in his power to prevent his friends in Pennsylvania from presenting his name for that office, and he said I must not consider that any movement which might take place connecting his name with the Presidency by the people in Pennsylvania or elsewhere had his approbation. On the contrary he said he would suppress anything of the kind if he could. I told him he knew my position; that I retired at the end of my present term; that I would take no part in selecting the candidate of my party to succeed me, but would leave that to my political friends; I stated further my belief that no man would ever be elected President who was prominently before the Public for that office for two or three years or a longer time before the nomination. I instanced to him the case of Mr. Crawford, Clay, and others, and told him that I had confidence in his declarations that he did not desire the office, but if he did it would be his true policy to prevent his friends from bringing his name forward a long time in advance.

Mr. Buchanan had some days [ago] (on Saturday last) enquired of me if he were not appointed to the present vacancy on the Bench and any other should occur during my term, whether I would feel at liberty to appoint him, or whether I would confine myself in the selection to the Circuit in which the vacancy might occur. He referred to this again in the conversation to-day. I told him I would not feel bound to confine myself to the Circuit, and unless strong circumstances existed to prevent it I would feel inclined to gratify him, if when the contingency occurred he still desired it. I remarked that in the event of a vacancy in the Virginia Circuit I would feel bound to appoint Judge Mason, the Atto. Gen'l of the U. States; but that in regard to any other Circuit I would be at perfect liberty to make the selection within or without the Circuit. Mr. B. retired, as far as I could discover well satisfied. I made no promise to appoint Mr. B. further than is above stated.

THURSDAY, *20th November, 1845.*— Mr. Buchanan spent the greater part of to-day at my office, examining the parts of my message which I had prepared relating to Texas, Mexico, and Oregon. He made several suggestions of amendment, which were merely verbal, not affecting substance, some of which I adopted and others I did not. Upon the Mexican and Oregon parts of it, but especially the latter, he proposed modifications softening and modifying the tone of the language employed, and making the paper less firm and bold than I had prepared [proposed?].

To these suggestions I did not yield. He left his memoranda in pencil on the manuscript.

To-day I signed a commission for William S. Parrott as Secretary of Legation to Mexico. It was prepared by Mr. Trist, Ch. Clk. of the State Department, and was known to no other officer of the Government except the Cabinet. It was not made public, for the reasons stated in this diary of the 10th Instant for withholding from the public the appointment of the Hon. John Slidell as Minister to Mexico. Mr. Parrott is to leave by the Southern Boat to-night for Pensacola, on his way to Mexico. He is the bearer of further instructions to Mr. Slidell.

FRIDAY, *21st November, 1845.*— Saw but few persons to-day; was much engaged in my office. Held another talk with the Pottawatamie Chiefs; learned from them that they had been unable to agree with the U. S. Commissioners appointed to treat with [them]. The Commissioners were Gen'l Gibson and Maj'r T. P. Andrews. They said that the Commissioners had shut the door on them. I told them that from what I had learned I thought there had not been a proper understanding on their part of the propositions made by the Commissioners, and that to enable them to hold another talk if they wished it, the door would be opened again. With this they appeared to be pleased, and Monday the 24th Inst. was appointed for them to meet the Commissioners again.

SATURDAY, *22nd November, 1845.*— Was much engaged in my office today, and saw but few persons.

Gave a Diplomatic Dinner at 5 O'Clock P. M. today, to which all the Diplomatic Corps & my Cabinet, with the ladies of their families, were invited. The Dinner passed off pleasantly.

SUNDAY, *23rd November, 1845.*— Attended the Rev. Mr. Knox's church (Presbyterian) with Mrs. Polk today.

Rec'd a letter from the Hon. John Slidell by the evening mail, acknowledging the Receipt of my letters of the 6th and 7th Inst., and stating that he would leave New Orleans on the 17th Inst. for Pensacola, on his Mission to Mexico.

MONDAY, *24th November, 1845.*— Received some company today, and among others eight or ten members of Congress, who called to pay their respects.

Transacted official business and saw several public officers on business. Among them the Commissioners appointed to treat with the Pottawatamie Indians, accompanied by the Secretary of War and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, called and held a conversation con[cern?]ing the pending treaty with that tribe.

TUESDAY, *25th November, 1845.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present. My message to Congress at the approaching session was read at my request by Mr. Bancroft.

Various amendments were suggested, but none of them of much importance, except in relation to the Oregon question. Mr. Buchanan had previously read the message and made various suggestions in pencil of modification[s], most of which on a re-examination had been rejected by me, because they were in a much milder and less bold [tone] towards Great Brittain than my original draft. Some of the suggestions made today were acted on, but no material alteration of my draft was made.

Mr. Buchanan seemed to be depressed in spirits, and, as I thought, greatly concerned lest the controversy about Oregon might lead to War. The Cabinet remained in session discussing the various topics of the message until 3½ O'Clock P. M. and adjourned to meet to-morrow. But few alterations except such as were merely verbal were made; indeed none were made affecting principle.

WEDNESDAY, *26th November, 1845.*— The Cabinet held a special meeting today, according to the adjournment on yesterday; all the members present. The consideration of the Message was resumed. I had in the meantime carefully revised it and made some modifications of its phraseology, which met the concurrence of the Cabinet. A few other suggestions were made and considered; when it was finally decided that the Message as it stood should be copied and in that form communicated to Congress. I accordingly placed it in the hands of Maj'r H. C. Williams, a confidential clerk belonging to the War Department, who was assigned the room adjoining my

office, to make a fair copy for Congress. The Cabinet adjourned about 2½ O'Clock P. M.

In the evening W. V. Voorhies, a clerk in the General Post-office, was placed in the room with H. C. Williams to make a second copy of my Message for Congress; both Mr. Williams and Mr. Voorhies were charged to secrecy as to the contents of the Message, as they were employed in copying it.

THURSDAY, *27th November, 1845.*— Saw a number of members of Congress to-day who called to pay their respects. The Secretary of the Navy read to me the concluding part of his Annual Report in the presence of Mr. Ritchie, having read the preceeding part to me two or three days ago.

About 9 O'Clock to-night Mr. Robert McLane[1] of Baltimore called on me in my office, & stated that he had come from Baltimore to Washington in the cars this evening in company with John Van Buren (son of the late President). He related to me a conversation which had taken place between them, which he said had occupied more than an hour. I shall not attempt to give it in detail. Among other things he said that Mr. Van Buren expressed the belief that I was bestowing the patronage and administering the Government with a view to be a candidate for a second term. On being asked to point out the evidence of this he did not do so, but thought Gov. Wright and the party in N. York had not been well treated. Mr. McLane said he told him that as far as he had ob-

[1] Representative from Maryland 1845–1851; son of Louis McLane, minister to England 1845–1846.

served in Maryland, & he believed it was the case elsewhere,I had bestowed the patronage of the Government to all branches of the Democratic party impartially, and that I had certainly acquired great strength among the masses by the course I had pursued. Mr. Van Buren then expressed the opinion that Mr. Buchanan, Secretary of State, or Mr. Walker, Secretary of the Treasury, were aspirants to the Presidency. He spoke in very unfriendly terms of Gov. Marcy (the Secretary of War) and from the whole conversation as related to me by Mr. McLane it is very clear that Mr. John [Van] Buren is bitterly opposed to my administration. Mr. McLane thinks his visit to Washington is to ascertain the tone of public sentiment towards the administration. My own opinion is, that if he finds the administration strong among the members of Congress, he and his friends in New York will not venture to make open opposition to it, but my firm conviction is that neither he nor his special friends in New York are friendly to it. The truth is they are looking to the next Presidential election, and nothing could satisfy them unless I were to identify myself with them, and proscribe all other branches of the Democratic party. I will do, as I have done, Mr. Martin Van Buren's friends full justice in the bestowal of public patronage, but I cannot proscribe all others of the Democratic party in order to gain their good will. I will adhere sternly to my principles without identifying myself with any faction or clique of the Democratic party.[1]

[1] Polk and Van Buren were close political friends until the

FRIDAY, *28th November, 1845.*— Saw a large number of members of Congress to-day who called to pay their respects. Saw also quite a number of office seekers, to whom I gave no encouragement, not having time to give my attention to such matters. Among other visitors to-day was Mr. John Van Buren of New York. (See diary of yesterday.) He was polite and apparently friendly. I was courteous towards him but not familiar, treating him with the respect due to all gentlemen who call on me to pay their respects. What conversation occurred was of a general character, in the course of which I enquired for the health of his father, and for Gov. Wright. Mr. Kendall [1] and other company coming in, he retired after making a short visit.

About 8 O'Clock this evening Vice-President Dallas [2] called by appointment. I read to him that

appointment of Marcy as Secretary of War by the former at the beginning of his administration. The Democratic party in New York was divided into two factions which later came to be known as the Hunkers and the Barnburners. Marcy was identified with the former faction while Van Buren and Silas Wright were the leaders of the latter. Polk's efforts to hold aloof from the quarrels of these factions proved unavailing, and from his appointment of Marcy as Secretary of War dates the gradual alienation of Van Buren and his followers from Polk's administration.

[1] Amos Kendall, 1789–1869; close friend of Jackson and member of his "Kitchen Cabinet"; Postmaster General 1835–1840; noted for his ability as a political writer and for his benefactions.

[2] George Mifflin Dallas of Philadelphia, 1792–1864; rival of Buchanan for the leadership of the Democratic party in Pennsylvania; Vice-President 1845–1849, minister to England 1856–1861.

portion of my Message which relates to Oregon, the Tariff, and Constitutional Treasury. I informed him what had been done in reference to Mexico. He expressed himself not only satisfied but highly delighted with my course on Oregon an[d] in relation to Mexico, and approved in unqualified terms what had been done in reference to these powers. He approved also my views on the tariff and Constitutional Treasury. Just before leaving he remarked to me, you have made me very happy to-night, I will go home and sleep sound.

Another copy of a part of the message I handed to Mr. Ritchie, who occupied an adjoining room and read it to-night. This copy embraced all the message except a few paragraphs near the conclusion. Mr. R. was well pleased with it, but made some notes making suggestions of verbal and immaterial alterations.

Mr. Ritchie did not know that Mr. Dallas saw a copy in another room on the same evening, nor did Mr. Dallas know that Mr. Ritchie had seen it.

SATURDAY, *29th November, 1845.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present. I read to the Cabinet three additional paragraphs which I informed them I thought should be inserted in different parts of the message. Two of them related to Oregon and one of them to the Constitutional Treasury. They were each an additional sentence to what I had before written and read to the Cabinet. In speaking of the Oregon question, Mr. Buchanan remarked that he thought from what

he had heard from the members of Congress who had spoken to him, that they would be favourable to a settlement of the question on the parallel of 49° of North Latitude. I told him that his channels of information were very different from mine; that there [was] not one in ten of the members whom I had seen who were not roused on the Oregon question and were going the whole length. Mr. B. expressed the opinion with some earnestness that the country would not justify a war for the country North of 49°, and that my greatest danger would be that I would be attacked for holding a warlike tone. I told him that my greatest danger was that I would be attacked for having yielded to what had been done by my predecessors and in deference alone, as he knew, to their acts and commitments, [and for having] agreed to offer the compromise of 49°. I told him that if that proposition had been accepted by the Brittish Minister my course would have met with great opposition, and in my opinion would have gone far to overthrow the administration; that, had it been accepted, as we came in on Texas the probability was we would have gone out on Oregon. I told him we had done our duty by offering 49°, and that I did not regret that it had been rejected by the Brittish Minister.

Judge Mason mentioned to me aside in the Cabinet room, that he feared Mr. Buchanan [had] been talking freely with members of Congress in favour of a settlement at 49°. The truth is Mr. Buchanan has from the beginning been, as I think, too timid and too fearful of War on the Oregon question, and has been most anxious to settle the question by yielding

and making greater concessions than I am willing to make.

Mr. Senator Allen called this morning & read confidentially my message, and heartily approved it throughout.

It is reported to me that the Democratic members of the House of Representatives held a caucus at the Hall of the House to-night, and that 104 members were in attendance. As many Democratic members had not reached Washington, they adjourned to meet again on Monday at 9 O'Clock A. M. at which time they proposed to nominate a Speaker and other officers of the House.

SUNDAY, *30th November, 1845.*— Attended the first Presbyterian church to-day in company with Mrs. Polk.

MONDAY, *1st December, 1845.*— The 1st Session of the 29th Congress convened today. My Private Secretary informed me at ½ past 12 O'Clock, that the caucus of Democratic members held this morning had nominated the Hon. John W. Davis [1] of Indiana, as their candidate for Speaker by a vote of more than two-thirds of all the members present. On receiving this information I had no reason to doubt, but that both Houses would be organized today. Under this belief I gave a copy of my Message to John P. Heiss, Esq'r, one of the editors of the *Union,* with strict injunctions to let no copy or part of a copy

[1] Representative from Indiana 1835–1837, 1839–1841, and 1843–1847. Speaker of the House in the 29th Congress.

go out of his office until after it was delivered to Congress on tomorrow. It was given to Mr. Heiss in the strictest confidence, as I learned had been usual with my predecessors, so that it might be printed and ready for distribution as soon as it was delivered to the two Houses of Congress on tomorrow. I told Mr. Heiss that if anything should unexpectedly occur to prevent the organization of Congress today, or the delivery of the Message on tomorrow, he was held responsible to keep its contents entirely secret from every human being until it was delivered to Congress. He promised me to do so.

At 2 O'Clock P. M. I was informed that the House of Representatives had elected the Hon. John W. Davis of Indiana their Speaker.

TUESDAY, *2nd December, 1845.*— At half past 12 O'Clock P. M. today a joint Committee of the two Houses of Congress waited on me and informed me that their respective Houses had organized and were ready to receive any communication which I might have to make. I returned for answer that I would make to the two Houses of Congress a communication in writing forthwith. The Committee having retired my Private Secretary left my office with the Message [1] & delivered it at 1 O'Clock P. M.

In the evening a number of members of Congress called, all of whom expressed their approbation of the Message in strong & decided terms; among them was Gen'l Cass,[2] who expressed his entire concur-

[1] Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents,* IV, 385.

[2] Lewis Cass, 1782–1866, Senator from Michigan and leader of

rence in every part of the Message. He was delighted with that part of it relating to Oregon, Mexico, & Texas; and in reference to that part relating to the Tariff he said to me, "You have struck out the true doctrine, you have cut the Gordian Knot." Mr. Holmes[1] of S. C. called, he said, to return to me his thanks for the doctrines of the Message, and especially in reference to the tariff, and said that he was authorized by Mr. McDuffie[2] to express his hearty approval of it, and especially in reference to the tariff, and that if his health had permitted he would have called in person to have expressed the same thing to me. Mr. Wilmot[3] of Pennsylvania expressed his approval of the whole message & added, the doctrines on the tariff were the true doctrines & he would support them. Mr. Cameron[4] of Pennsylvania (of the Senate) pleasantly said, "We Pennsylvanians may scratch a little about the tariff but we will not quarrel about it"; & added "we are well pleased with all the rest of

the administration party in the Senate 1844–1848. He resigned his seat in the Senate to become the Democratic Presidential nominee in 1848.

[1] Isaac Edward Holmes, 1796–1867, Representative from South Carolina 1839–1857.

[2] George McDuffie, 1788–1851, Senator from South Carolina 1843–1846.

[3] David Wilmot, 1814–1868, Representative from Pennsylvania 1845–1851, author of the famous "Wilmot Proviso" in 1846.

[4] Simon Cameron, 1799–1889, Senator from Pennsylvania 1845–1849, 1857–1861, and 1867–1877; Secretary of War under Lincoln in 1861.

the message." Several other members expressed unqualified approbation of the message.

WEDNESDAY, *3rd December, 1845*.— Many members of Congress called today; the Democratic members all expressing in strong terms their approbation of the message. Ex-Speaker Hunter[1] of Va. called in company with Mr. Seddon[2] of Va., Mr. Sims[3] of S. C. [and] Mr. Black[4] of S. C., and thanked me for the doctrines of the message. Several other persons besides those named were in my office at the time. Mr. Black of S. C. said he was the bearer of a message from Mr. Senator McDuffie of S. C. who was confined to his room by indisposition. He was authorized by Mr. McDuffie to say that he highly approved my message and thanked me for it; that he would draw the sword and fight in support of the doctrines of the message; with the tariff doctrines of the message he was entirely satisfied. These gentlemen and many others who called assured me that there was a universal approval among all the Democratic members and that the Whigs gen-

[1] Robert M. T. Hunter, 1809–1887, Representative from Virginia 1837–1843, and 1845–1847, Speaker of the House 1839–1841, Senator 1847–1861; later became Confederate Secretary of State.

[2] James Alexander Seddon, Representative from Virginia 1845–1847, and 1849–1851, and fourth Confederate Secretary of War.

[3] Alexander Dromgoole Sims, 1803–1848, Representative from South Carolina from 1845 until his death in 1848.

[4] James A. Black, 1793–1848, Representative from South Carolina from 1843 until his death in April, 1848.

erally had but little to say on the subject, some of them expressing approbation in relation to Oregon.

Hopkins L. Turney, U. S. Senator from Tennessee, called on me this morning. I received him courteously and in a friendly manner. His manner and conversation were of a pleasant and friendly character. After the salutations of meeting and some general conversation had taken place, I told him I had known him a long time, and intended to talk frankly with him, to which he signified his assent. I told him that I regretted the division and excitement among the Democratic party at Nashville in the Senatorial election, and that I had been greatly surprised to learn that my name had been mixed up with that election, and that I had been charged with interfering or dictating in that election. I told him it was wholly a mistake to suppose that I had taken any part in it; I told him that I had been much gratified at the result of the Tennessee election in August; that after it was ascertained that the Democratic party had a majority in the Legislature, I took it for granted that a Democratic Senator would be elected; that I saw in the newspapers and learned from my friends that the names of eight or ten prominent Democrats were mentioned for the station; and among them were the names of Coe, Dunlap, Huntsman, Fitzgerald, Turley, Judge Wm. T. Brown, Trousdale, Nicholson, & himself. I told him that they had all been my personal and political friends, and that I could not with any propriety take any part between them. I told him that I had so declared in conversation

with Cave Johnson before the Legislature met, and that I had not written a line or spoken a word to any one in the State on the subject. Mr. Turney commenced explaining his course, and spoke of a letter which he had written to me before the meeting of the Legislature which I had not answered. I told him that Mr. Nicholson [1] had written to me also before I received his letter, and that I had received some other letters on the subject, and that I had answered none of them because I had resolved to stand aloof from the contest, and let my political friends at Nashville make their own selection in their own way, without any interference on my part. Mr. T. went on with his statement in a very conciliatory tone, from which it was manifest he desired to be on friendly terms, but before he had finished company came into the office & the conversation stopped. I asked Mr. Turney to walk into my Private Secretary's office, intending to resume the conversation as soon as the company retired. He did so & remained some time, when finding that other company had come in & were likely to occupy my time longer than he would probably desire to remain, I stepped into my Secretary's office & asked him if he could return about dark this evening. He said he could & retired.

About 6 O'Clock P. M. Mr. Turney returned and the conversation related above was resumed. He stated that his letter to me was written while he was

[1] Alfred Osborn Pope Nicholson, Senator from Tennessee 1841–1843, and 1857–1861; editor of the Washington *Union* 1853–1856; prominent in the Secession movement.

attending the Chancery Court at Fayetteville, Ten[n]. He said at that place he saw the Nashville *Whig* which contained an article stating that Washington influence or dictation had designated the candidate for the Senate desired by the administration, that Col. Fulton of Fayetteville had seen it and advised him to write the letter he did to me, saying to him that I would no doubt deny any interference; that under these circumstances he wrote the letter, and that having received no answer he inferred that the statement of the *Whig* was true. He went on to state other reasons why he drew the same inference, such as that he was not supported by any Democrat from East Tennessee, because it was said there that Mr. Nicholson was my choice & that when the Legislature met he had 19 Democratic members in his favour, all of whom left him & voted for Mr. Nicholson except the six members who adhered to him to the last. He then said that his inference was wrong & he was now satisfied of it, and expressed some anxiety that the erroneous impression made on the people of Tennessee should be corrected. I told him that I could not correct it by any publication without making an issue with him. He said he did not expect or desire me to make a publication of the kind, but remarked that he might inform the Democratic members of Congress from Tennessee of the fact & they might write to their friends in Tennessee. I told him as to that I had nothing to say; that all I had to say was, that the charge that I had in any manner interfered in the Senatorial election was wholly unfounded. The whole conversation left no

doubt on my mind that he had resorted to the charge that I had interfered simply to get Whig votes for the Senate and secure his election, and that he did not believe the charge himself. It satisfied me further that having succeeded in securing his election by such means, he was now desirous to relieve himself from the embarrassment in which he was placed, and to support my administration.

My servant announced to me that company was in the parlour. Mr. Turney accompanied me to the parlour where he saw Mrs. Polk and several members of Congress who had called to see me.

Nothing was said about Mr. Turney's letter lately published in the Nashville papers. I did not allude to it, and he did not. The truth, I have no doubt, is that Mr. Turney resolved to come to the Senate if he could, and finding that a majority of his own party preferred Mr. Nicholson, made the charge that I had interfered in the election and expressed a preference for Mr. Nicholson knowing it himself to be false, for the sole purpose of securing Whig votes, and in this he succeeded.

THURSDAY, *4th December, 1845.*— Had many visitors to-day, and among them several members of Congress mostly of the Democratic party. All who spoke on the subject highly approved my message.

FRIDAY, *5th December, 1845.*— A great number of members of Congress, many of them of the Whig party, called to see me to-day. Among them was Mr. Archer of Va., who expressed his gratification at

the message, and especially that part of it relating to Oregon. He spoke in very friendly terms and said he had, on the day the message was read in the Senate, written to a Whig member of the Virginia Legislature that he believed he was half a Polk-man. He intimated that on the tariff we did not exactly agree. He admired, he said, the frankness and plainness of the message, that it was not ambiguous in any of its parts but that every one knew where to find me.

Congress had adjourned over on yesterday to meet on Monday next. Owing to this circumstance the number of members of Congress who called was probably greater than it would otherwise have been.

SATURDAY, *6th December, 1845.*—This was the regular day of the meeting of the Cabinet, but as Congress did not sit & many members were calling, and there being no special business for the consideration of the Cabinet, no meeting was held. Each member of the Cabinet was so informed as he came in.

Many members of Congress called to-day, chiefly Whigs. Among others Col. Benton called, and after the usual salutations said, in presence of Judge Mason who was in my office, "Well! you have sent us the message," and "I think we can all go it as we understand it." I pleasantly replied that he had very high authority for saying, "as we understand it," alluding to a remark of Gen'l Jackson that he administered the Government according to the Constitution as "he understood it"; and I added, I

endeavored to write it in plain English, & thought no part of it could be misunderstood. Col. Benton was in a very pleasant humour, and remarked that he thought the Brittish title to that part of Oregon which lay on Frasier's [1] River was as good as ours to that on the Columbia River, but he said he had said nothing about that. He said the Spanish title to the coast up to the Russian line including all of Vancouver's Island was the best, and that as we held the Spanish title, it was good against Great Brittain. He then stated he had happened to meet Mr. Pakenham some days ago on the street; that Mr. Pakenham remarked to him that he had seen an extract of his (Mr. B's) speech made some years ago published in the *National Intelligencer,* and that he was happy to find that he (Col. B.) recognized Brittish rights in Oregon and had been willing to compr[om]ise at 49°. He said that Mr. Pakenham then made a remark which struck him as having meaning in it; *viz.,* Mr. Pakenham asked him what he would think of surrendering to Great Brittain the Cap[e] of Vancouver's Island South of 49° and the free navigation of the Columbia River, to which Mr. B. said he replied, that as to the nose of Vancouver's Island, he cared but little about it, but the free navigation of the Columbia River was another question. Mr. Pakenham then made a remark about [granting] the free navigation of the St. Lawrence to the United States. From which, I remarked, the inference was

[1] The Fraser River flows through British Columbia and enters the Gulf of Georgia near latitude 49°, its course being nearly parallel with that of the Columbia.

that Mr. Pakenham might be willing to settle the controversy by yielding to the U. S. the free navigation of the St. Lawrence in consideration of the U. S. surrendering to Great Brittain the free navigation of the Columbia & the Cap[e] of Vancouver's Island South of 49°. This conversation I understood Mr. Benton to say took place some time before the meeting of Congress.

Judge Mason jocosely remarked to Col. Benton something relating to that portion of the message which related to graduation & preëmptions in the public lands, and said to Col. B. "I believe, Sir, you were the author of the graduation policy." Col. B. replied, "Yes." I said something on the subject, and Col. B. retired in good humour & apparently well satisfied.

After he retired Judge Mason remarked that he had drawn the conversation off from Oregon, under the impression that Col. B. had desired to draw from me some expression of opinion in regard to the Brittish title to that part of Oregon on Frasier's River. I replied there was no danger of that.

SUNDAY, *7th December, 1845.*— Attended church to-day at the 1st Presbyterian church in company with Mrs. Polk & Miss Rucker.

MONDAY, *8th December, 1845.*— Saw many members of Congress and strangers to-day; some on official business, some to pay their respects, and others seeking offices for themselves & their friends.

TUESDAY, *9th December, 1845.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present except the Attorney General, who was officially engaged in the Supreme Court of the U. States.

After considering several public matters of minor importance, Mr. Buchanan stated that the Brittish Minister might call on him and probably would do so to talk on the Oregon question. He inquired of me what answer he should give, if Mr. Pakenham should introduce the subject. I replied that the subject having been laid before Congress in my annual Message, the Executive of the U. S. was not called on to take any further step on the subject. "But," said Mr. Buchanan, "suppose Mr. Pakenham inquires whether any further proposition which the Brittish Government might make would be received, what shall I say to him?" I told him that I did not know that the Brittish Minister had any right to ask such a question, or to require an answer; that certainly the U. S. could not invite him to take any step whatever; that if he chose to do so voluntarily he had a right to do so, and in that event it would be time enough for me to consider what disposition should be made of it; or what answer if any should be made to it. I stated that I was satisfied that he would make no proposition which I would accept. Mr. Buchanan repeated his anxiety to settle the controversy at 49°, & asked, if that line was proposed by Mr. Pakenham reserving to Great Brittain the Southern cap[e] of Vancouver's Island, whether I would submit it to the Senate for their advice before

acting on it, and whether he was authorized to say so to Mr. Pakenham. I told him he was not authorized to say so, that the Brittish Minister should not know anything of any consultation with the Senate, even if I had determined to ask the advice of that body, which I had not. I told Mr. Buchanan that if Mr. Pakenham held a conversation with him, such as he anticipated he would, that it would be sufficient to refer him to his (Mr. B's) notes to him of the 30th August & [to] those which preceded it, and that I could do nothing, nor authorize nothing to be done, which would have the appearance of inviting the Brittish Minister to make any other movement on the subject. He had a right to do so voluntarily if he chose, and if he did so I would then consider what action it might be proper to take on our part. Mr. B. repeated his anxiety to settle the question at 49° & avoid war. I told him that I did not desire war, but that at all hazards we must maintain our just rights.

WEDNESDAY, *10th December, 1845*.— Had many visitors consisting of members of Congress and others to-day up to 12 O'Clock, when I closed my doors and devoted the remainder of the day to the despatch of the business which had accumulated on my table.

THURSDAY, *11th December, 1845*.— Saw company, members of Congress and others, up to 12 O'Clock to-day, when I closed my doors to enable me to attend to the business on my table. About 2 O'Clock P. M. the Secretary of War called in, &

shortly afterwards the Secretary of State. Mr. Buchanan stated that Mr. Pakenham, the Brittish Minister, had called at the Department of State to-day, and held a long unofficial conversation with him, on various matters concerning the interests of the two countries, *viz.*, on the rough rice question and some others, and finally introduced the Oregon question. This conversation Mr. B. repeated at length. Its substance was, that Mr. P. expressed his gratification that he (Mr. B.) had not been appointed Judge of the Supreme Court, but remained Secretary of State. Mr. P. expressed a desire that the Oregon question could have been settled, but expressed his apprehensions of the action of Congress on the subject. Mr. [Buchanan] said he told him that the recommendations of my message were within the Treaty of the 6th of August, 1827, and Mr. P. admitted that they were. Mr. B. told him he thought Congress would not go beyond those recommendations at the present session. Mr. P. asked what condition we would be in at the end of the year's notice, and expressed a desire to preserve peace. Mr. B. informed him that we too desired to maintain peace. Mr. B. represented his manner to be solemn & earnest. Mr. P. informed Mr. B. that the next Steamer for England would sail something earlier than usual, and that letters or despatches to go out by her must be mailed at Washington by Saturday, the 13th Instant. Mr. B. was satisfied that Mr. P. was waiting further instructions from his Government, after the reception of the message in England.

FRIDAY, *12th December, 1845.*— Had much company to-day as usual; was somewhat indisposed from the effects of cold. Had a dining party of between 30 and 40 persons, consisting of members of Congress and their families.

SATURDAY, *13th December, 1845.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present. Before the Cabinet met Mr. Buchanan sent to me for my examination a draft of a despatch to Mr. McLane, U. S. Minister at London, on the subject of the present state of the Oregon question. One portion of this despatch I disapproved. It was in substance as follows, *viz.,* that if the Brittish Government chose to offer as a compromise the 49° yielding any claim to the free navigation of the Columbia River, & the U. S. yielding to Great Brittain the Southern cap[e] of Vancouver's Island, that the President would feel strongly inclined to submit such a proposition to the Senate for their advice. This is not the exact language, but is the substance of that part of the despatch. I have not the paper before [me]. I directed this part of the despatch to be struck out, and the following paragraph to be inserted in its place which was done accordingly, *viz.,* " Should that Government (Great Brittain) take any further step with a view to settle the controversy, the President would judge of the character of any new proposition when made, and if in his opinion it was such as to justify it, would feel inclined to submit it to the Senate for their previous advice before he would take any action upon it. As the determina-

tion on any new proposition which may be made, might involve the question of peace or war between the two countries, he would feel it to be his duty to consult his constitutional advisers before a final decision." In discussing this alteration which I directed to be made, Mr. Buchanan said it did not impart any information to Mr. McLane & unless I was prepared to let the dispatch stand as he had written [it], we had better prepare for war. I told Mr. Buchanan that I would not invite the Brittish Governm[en]t to make any new proposition, nor would I now inform Mr. McLane what I would do with such proposition when made; that I intended to hold the whole subject in my own hands, and to judge of such proposition, if made, when I saw it and knew what it was. I told [him] that the U. S. stood well as the question had been presented to Congress in my message; that we had the advantage of Great Brittain, and that if anything more was done that Governm[en]t must move voluntarily and of its own accord, and without any intimation or assurance from me of what I would do. The subject was further discussed, and closed by having the amendment made which I had directed. After Mr. Buchanan left the room, Mr. Bancroft remarked to me that he thought I was right.

Mr. Mason in a casual conversation on different subjects, one or two other members of the Cabinet still remaining, alluded to a rumour which had been mentioned to him a day or two before, to the effect that the Secretary of the Treasury had written that part of my message which related to the tariff. Mr.

Mason said he had told the person who mentioned it to him that the rumour was wholly unfounded; and stated to him the fact that while I was preparing my message he called at my office; I read to him the part of the message relating to the tariff, and that after I was done reading it the Secretary of the Treasury called in, when I remarked to him that I had just read to Mr. Mason what I would say in the message on the tariff, but that I would not read it to him (Mr. Walker) until after he had prepared his Report. The fact stated by Mr. Mason I remember, but did not think it worth noting in this diary at the time. The fact is that the tariff part of the message and every other part of it is my own. It was of course submitted to the Cabinet and closely scrutinized, discussed, and examined in all its parts. Changes of phraseology in some of its parts, not affecting its substance or sentiment, were suggested and made. Rough drafts were furnished by the several secretaries of passages relating particularly to their own departments. For instance the Secretary of the Treasury furnishes the statistics relating to the state of the Treasury & the finances; the Secretary of War relating to the state of the Army, the public defences, Indian relations, &c. The other Secretaries furnished like information. With this information before me, I wrote the whole message, and my Private Secretary, J. Knox Walker, copied it. From his copy H. C. Williams & W. V. Voorhies, clerks, made the two copies, which we sent to the two Houses of Congress. I will preserve my original drafts of its

several parts, as also of the copy made by J. Knox Walker, my Private Secretary.

SUNDAY, *14th December, 1845.*— This was a very inclement day; during the greater part of the day it rained & sleeted, the pavements and streets being covered with ice. I was indisposed from the effects of cold, and the excessive fatigues of the last week, and remained quietly at home; the family did [not] attend church as was usual with them.

MONDAY, *15th December, 1845.*— Saw company to-day in my office until 12 O'Clock, when I closed my doors and attended to the business on my tab[l]e; I saw company again in the evening in the parlour.

TUESDAY, *16th December, 1845.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present except the Attorney General, who was understood to be in attendance on the Supreme Court of the U. S. in the discharge of his official duties. The subject of additional instructions to the U. S. Minister to Mexico was discussed and, the character of the instructions being agreed on, Mr. Buchanan was instructed to prepare them. Some other subjects of no general interest were considered and the Cabinet dispersed at an earlier hour than usual.

WEDNESDAY, *17th December, 1845.*— Received company until 12 O'Clock to-day. At that hour left my office & in company with the Secretary of the

Navy visited the Navy Yard at Washington; went on board the vessel called the " Spit-fire " and witnessed Mr. Taylor descend into the water with his diving Bell, and remain under water for half an hour.[1] Returned to my office about 1 O'Clock P. M., and was engaged until dinner in disposing of the official business on my table.

THURSDAY, *18th December, 1845.*— The number of visitors to-day, consisting of members of Congress, persons who called to pay their respects, and office seekers was unusually large. My whole time was occupied in giving them audience, except about half an hour during which I wrote a private letter to the Hon. John Slidell, U. S. Minister to Mexico (see copy of the letter). At night I declined seeing company in order to dispose of the business which had accumulated on my table.

FRIDAY, *19th December, 1845.*— Had a large number of visitors to-day. After they had left Mr. Lester, U. S. Consul at Genoa, called. He had much conversation. I heard him, but I cannot say with patience, for I had much business on my table which I was anxious to dispose of. Among other things he adverted to the fact that he was a writer for the New York *Herald,* and asked me how I was pleased with the course of the *Herald.* I told him I had but little opportunity to read newspapers, and

[1] Captain George W. Taylor, inventor of appliances for the defence of harbors. *H. Rep.* 192, 28 Cong. 2 Sess., and 409, 29 Cong. 1 Sess.

could at no time do more than glance hastily over them. He then stated his views about California, and spoke of his intention to publish articles in the *Herald* on the subject, if I approved his views. I had no doubt in my mind that his object was to ascertain what the course of the Government of the U. S. was in reference to the acquisition of California. This I did not choose to communicate to him. My answers were general and indefinite. Had a dining party to-day.

SATURDAY, *20th December, 1845.*— The Cabinet held a Regular meeting to-day; all the members present. Nothing of importance was discussed. Several matters of business were attended to, when the Cabinet dispersed.

Hon. Jacob Thompson[1] of Mississippi called about 3 O'Clock P. M., and earnestly insisted that I should withdraw from the Senate the nomination which I had made of Dr. Tate of Mississippi. He admitted that he and other members of the Delegation in Congress from Miss. had recommended him for the appointment, but insisted that he had since that time been guilty of duplicity in his intercourse with him. He admitted that he was qualified for the station. I told him I could not withdraw his nomination; that I considered the [reason] assigned by him why I should do so, that the reasons he assigned were of a personal character between Dr. T. and himself. He said he must have his nomination op-

[1] Representative from Mississippi 1839–1851, Secretary of the Interior 1857–1861, Governor of Mississippi 1862–1864.

posed in the Senate, if I did not withdraw his nomination. I told him he could do so, if he chose, but that I would not withdraw the nomination. He left apparently disappointed, and I judged from his manner & conversation was much dissatisfied.

I had a dining party on yesterday, consisting of the Judges of the Supreme Court of the U. States and members of Congress and several ladies belonging to their families. The whole party consisting [consisted] of about 40 persons. This fact is stated in my diary of this day, having been omitted in that of yesterday.

Received despatches by special messenger about 8 O'Clock to-night from Mexico.

SUNDAY, *21st December, 1845.*— Attended the first Presbyterian church to-day in company with Mrs. Polk and Miss Rucker.

MONDAY, *22nd December, 1845.*— Some days ago Mr. Bancroft, the Secretary of the Navy, & myself held a conversation, in which I expressed a willingness to extend to Mr. John Quincy Adams, Ex-President of the U. S., an invitation to dine with me. Though we had always differed widely in politics, and there were many acts of his public life which I disapproved, Mr. Bancroft agreed with me in opinion that it would be proper for me as President of the U. S. in consideration of his age and the high stations which he had held to extend to him such an invitation, provided it was ascertained that it would be agreeable to him. After some further conversa-

tion I authorized Mr. Bancroft to intimate to him my disposition to invite him to dinner, if it should be agreeable to him to accept.

This morning Mr. Bancroft called at my office, and informed me that he had just had a conversation with Mr. Adams, and had intimated to him what I had authorized him to do. Mr. Adams, he informed me, said that a similar communication had been made to him by Genl. Jackson while he was President of the U. S. through a common friend (Col. Richard M. Johnson) [1] and that he had declined it. Mr. Adams, as Mr. Bancroft informed me, said further that his personal relations with me had always been good, and while in Congress together, though we had voted differently on almost every public question, that yet our personal relations had never been disturbed. His [he] expressed his determination to support my administration on the Oregon question, and that he would take an early occasion to make known his views in the House. Mr. Adams, as Mr. B. informed me, then alluded to the controversy which he had had with Gen'l Jackson, Mr. Chas. J. Ingersoll of Penn., and Gov. Brown of Tennessee, in relation to the Boundary fixed by the Florida Treaty of 1819, in which there had been an attempt by these persons to make it appear that he had accepted a less favourable boundary for the U. S. than he could have obtained, and had thereby

[1] Richard Mentor Johnson of Kentucky, 1781–1850, Colonel of the Kentucky volunteers in the War of 1812, U. S. Senator, with a brief intermission, from 1819 to 1837; Vice-President 1837–1841.

lost Texas to the U. S. He said that I had written a letter to the same effect, and that I would know what letter it was. He said that he had made a speech in Massachusetts in which he had spoken of that letter, and intimated that some explanation of my statements in that letter would be necessary before he could accept an invitation to dinner. Mr. Bancroft said he left him in a good humour. I told Mr. Bancroft that it was a matter of no consequence whether he was invited to dinner or not, and that certainly I had no explanations to make. At first I was at some loss to recollect to what letter of mine he alluded. Upon a little reflection I remarked that he must have alluded to my letter to a committee of Citizens of Cincinnati in April, 1844, on the subject of the Annexation of Texas.[1] I told Mr. Bancroft that my statements in that letter were correct, and were sustained by the public records of the country, and that I had no explanations concerning it to make. I told him further that I had never read Mr. Adams' speech in Massachusetts in which, Mr. A. had informed him, he had referred to it. I told

[1] The letter referred to was written April 22, 1844, in answer to an inquiry as to Polk's attitude, as a prospective Vice-Presidential candidate, toward the question of the annexation of Texas. In it Polk argued that the territory of Texas had belonged to the United States from 1803 until 1819 when it had been unwisely ceded to Spain in the treaty of that year. For this cession he blamed John Quincy Adams who, as Secretary of State, had had charge of the negotiation of the treaty. Polk favored therefore the "immediate reannexation" of Texas. The letter is printed in Jenkins, *Polk,* 120–123.

Mr. B. to let the matter rest where it was, and that I would not think of inviting him to dinner; and that I had only thought of extending that courtesy as President of the U. S. which his age and the stations he had held seemed to make proper.

Mr. Jno. C. Calhoun of S. C. called on me this morning, having arrived in the City on Saturday night last. He appeared to be in a fine humour. He introduced the subject of Oregon, and expressed his desire to assert our rights in that Territory. He declared himself, however, opposed to giving the year's notice for the termination of the Treaty of joint occupancy of 1827, as recommended in my message. That point was discussed in a conversation of a few minutes length in which we differed in opinion. Mr. C. expressed himself as being strongly in favour of peace.[1] I told him I was in favour of peace, but at the same time all our just rights must be maintained. I went on to speak of the recommendations of my message and to enforce them. Mr. C. then said that he feared, or rather that the greatest danger of disturbing the peace between the two countries, would grow out of the hasty action of Congress and the debates which would arise. He expressed a strong desire for delay of action on the subject, and said the Executive should confer with the proper committees of Congress and restrain them from taking rash or warlike measures. I became satisfied from

[1] Calhoun's correspondence at this time shows him to have been possessed of the conviction that he alone could save the country from war with England. *Annual Report of American Historical Association,* 1899, II, 671–681.

the whole conversation that he would not support the views of the message. He said a few words on the tariff part of my message, the substance of which was that he approved part of my views on that subject but not the whole, or, as I inferred, that I had not gone to the extent that he would have done. Upon the whole the conversation was not a satisfactory one, and the impression left on my mind is very strong that Mr. Calhoun will be very soon in opposition to my administration.

At about 7 O'Clock P. M. Senators Speight[1] and Chalmers[2] of Mississippi called according to a request made by me. I consulted them about the nomination of Dr. James H. Tate as Consul to Buenos Ayres, which I had made to the Senate. This nomination was objected to by the Hon. Jacob Thompson, who had insisted that I should withdraw it, as will be seen in this diary of Saturday, the 20th Instant. I exhibited the recommendations on which Dr. Tate had been appointed in the recess of the Senate; and they advised me, and Mr. Speight strongly, not to withdraw it. He was appointed originally on the written recommendation of Mr. Thompson himself, and the whole Mississippi delegation in Congress, as well as other members of Congress and some leading citizens of Mississippi.

Shortly after Mr. Speight & Mr. Chalmers left,

[1] Jesse Speight, 1795–1847, Representative from North Carolina 1829–1837; Senator from Mississippi from 1845 until his death in 1847.

[2] Joseph W. Chalmers, Senator from Mississippi 1845–1847.

Gov. Fairfield[1] of Maine called in company with Col. Robertson of Bath, Maine, and in the course of a few minutes Mr. Rice, the Editor of a paper in Maine called *The Age* came in. Gov. Fairfield and the other two gentlemen earnestly insisted on the nomination of Dr. Nourse[2] to the Senate as Collector of Bath. They were apprised that four of the Maine delegation in Congress had protested in a written communication against his appointment. After much conversation on the subject Gov. Fairfield became excited and made some remarks which excited me, but the matter was fully explained before we seperated.

TUESDAY, *23rd December, 1845.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present except the Attorney General, who was officially engaged in the Supreme Court of the U. States. A grave discussion took place in view of the contingency of War with Great Brittain, growing out of the present critical state of the Oregon question. Mr. Buchanan expressed himself decidedly in favour of making vigorous preparations for defence, and said it was his conviction that the next two weeks would decide the issue of peace or war. I expressed my concurrence with Mr. Buchanan that the country should be put in a state of defence without delay;

[1] John Fairfield, 1797–1847, Governor of Maine 1839–1841, Senator from Maine 1843–1847.

[2] Amos Nourse; he was appointed Collector of Customs at Bath, Maine, at the close of the year 1845.

that if peace continued the expenditure would not be lost, and if war came such preparation would be indispensable. The Secretaries of War and Navy were directed to consult with the Chairmen of the Military and Naval Committees of the two Houses, communicate our views to them, and aid them in drafting the proper bills. The character of these Bills was agreed on, and there was no difference of opinion on the subject. The present state of the Oregon question was then considered. A despatch from our Minister at London (Mr. McLane) was read. A Private Letter of Mr. McLane to me of the 1st Instant was also read. The opinion was then expressed by Mr. Buchanan that the Brittish Minister here would probably very soon propose arbitration as an ultimatum. All agreed that this was probably [probable], and also that we could not agree to arbitration, first, because the question of a compromise of territorial limits was not a fit subject for such reference, and 2nd, because in the existing state of the principal Powers of the world an impartial umpire could not be found. It was agreed that the proposition of arbitration, if made, must be rejected. Mr. Buchanan repeated the anxiety he had often expressed to permit the negotiation to be reopened with the hope that the dispute might be settled by Compromise. He desired to know, as he had done on several occasions, what he should say to the Brittish Minister, if he should call to hold a conference with him, and to know also [what he should say] if a new proposition was made by the Brittish Minister, or if he should express a willing-

ness to re-open the negotiation by making such new proposition. He desired to know if he could inform the Brittish Minister that any new proposition he would make would be respectfully considered. He desired to know also, if the Brittish Minister should offer the 49° of North Latitude as the boundary from the Rocky Mountains to the Straits of Fuca leaving the Southern cap [e] of Vancouver's Island to Great Brittain, whether I would submit such a proposition to the Senate for their previous advice. In relation to the latter inquiry I told him if an equivalent, by granting to the U. S. free ports North of 49° on the sea & the Straits of Fuca should also be offered, I would consult confidentially three or four Senators from different parts of the Union, and might submit it to the Senate for their previous advice.

Mr. Buchanan then said he would reduce to writing what he might say, to which I remarked I had no objection. He accordingly wrote the following, *viz.*, "If Mr. Pakenham inquires if a new proposition made by them would be respectfully considered, I would refer him to the correspondence and your last note of the 30th of August, and say, it has been at your option with a perfect liberty to propose any proposition you thought proper, and you had no reason to conclude from what had occurred here that the Government would not have treated such a proposition with respectful consideration when made. You have made no new proposition, & the question therefore stands in its present attitude."

Mr. Buchanan added to the above, & immediately

below on the same sheet of paper, the following, *viz.*, "December 23rd, 1845. I took down the foregoing from the lips of the President in the presence of the Cabinet."

I requested Mr. Buchanan to leave his memorandum with me, and I would look over it when I was more at leisure, and he did so. I requested Mr. Buchanan [to call] immediately after breakfast on to-morrow morning when I would see him again on the subject.

WEDNESDAY, *24th December, 1845.*— Saw company to-day until 12 O'Clock when my doors were closed. Shortly after 12 O'Clock Hon. Henry Horn was announced & I directed that he be shown in. Mr. Horn was in conversation with me on the subject of his nomination to the Senate as Collector of Philadelphia, when Mr. Buchanan called in and after shaking hands with Mr. Horn & myself immediately retired, although invited to take a seat. He went into my Private Secretary's room. Mr. Horn left in a few minutes when my Private Secretary informed me that Mr. Buchanan had left. My Private Secretary informed me that Mr. Buchanan seemed to be in a pet, and asked him how long Mr. Horn would probably remain; to which he replied that he did not know how long it would take him to get through his grievances. Mr. Buchanan said he had some grievances too. The truth is Mr. Buchanan has been for some days, when I saw him, taciturn, with a careworn countenance and apparently in trouble. I know of no cause for it but the

difference between us on the Oregon question, which has existed from the time he entered on the negotiation; and the appointment of a Judge of the Supreme Court of the U. S. for Pennsylvania and New Jersey, in place of Judge Baldwin, deceased. In reference to the Oregon question, I have from the Beginning refused to yield to Mr. B.'s views, and in reference to the Judgeship I was responsible to the country for the appointment and did not select Mr. B.'s choice. He was most anxious to have Mr. John M. Read[1] of Phila. appointed. Mr. Read, I learned, was until within 10 or 12 years ago a leading Federalist, and a Representative of that party in the Legislature. Although he has since that time acted with the Democratic party, I have no confidence in the orthodoxy of his political opinions or constitutional doctrines, and was therefore unwilling to appoint him to a station for life, where he would almost certainly [have] relapsed into his old Federal Doctrines & been latitudinarian in his doctrines. I have never known an instance of a Federalist who had after arriving at the age of 30 professed to change his opinions, who was to be relied on in his constitutional opinions. All of them who have been appointed to the Supreme Court Bench, after having secured a place for life became very soon broadly Federal and latitudinarian in all their decisions involving questions of Constitutional power. Gen'l Jackson had been most unfortunate in his ap-

[1] John Meredith Read, noted for his legal attainments; his later life testified to the force of Polk's reasoning. He became a Free-Soil Democrat and still later a Republican.

pointments to that Bench in this respect. I resolved to appoint no man who was not an original Democrat & strict constructionist, and who would be less likely to relapse into the Broad Federal doctrines of Judge Marshall & Judge Story. Objection[s] similar to those to Mr. Read existed to Judge Grier [1] of Pittsburg, Gov. Vroom,[2] and others who were earnestly urged upon me for appointment, but in a less degree. I became satisfied from information received from Vice President Dallas, Hon. Mr. Wilmot, & Mr. Leib [3] of the Ho. of Repts. & Hon. Andrew Beaumont,[4] with whom I served in Congress and in whom I have great confidence, that Judge George W. Woodward [5] was a sound, original, & consistent democrat, of the strict construction school, that he was a man of fine talents & well qualified. On yesterday I renominated Mr. Woodward to the Senate, and in doing so greatly disappointed and as I suppose dissatisfied Mr. Buchanan. I would have been pleased to gratify him by the appointment of Mr. Read, if I could have regarded it as a personal favour to Mr. Buchanan. I could not so regard it, and could not appoint Mr. Read

[1] Robert Cooper Grier of Pennsylvania, 1794–1870, Associate-Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court, 1846–1870.

[2] Peter D. Vroom, Governor of New Jersey 1829–1832, and 1833–1836.

[3] Owen D. Leib, Representative from Pennsylvania 1845–1847.

[4] Representative from Pennsylvania 1833–1837, Commissioner of Public Buildings at Washington 1846–1847.

[5] George Washington Woodward of the 4th judicial district court of Pennsylvania 1841–1851, Judge of Supreme Court of Pennsylvania 1852–1867.

with the conviction and moral certainty which existed in my mind that he would, as soon as confirmed by the Senate, be broadly Federal in all his constitutional opinions. I suppose the grievances of which he spoke to my Private Secretary consisted chiefly of my refusal to appoint Mr. Read, as he earnestly desired me to do. Mr. Woodward was nominated for the reasons before stated, and because the friends of other candidates had gotten into an excited state between each other. Mr. Woodward did not apply for the office, but was warmly recommended by Mr. Dallas and the other Gentlemen I have named above.

I sent for Mr. Allen, the Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Affairs in the Senate to-day, and held a long and confidential conversation with him on the subject of the Oregon question. I read to him Mr. McLane's last despatch, and also one of the 3rd of October. The present position of the question and indeed the whole subject was discussed at length. I told him that I anticipated that the Brittish Minister would soon either make an offer for arbitration, which we must reject, or would make some new proposition of compromise. He agreed that the proposition for arbitration must be rejected. He advised me that if a new proposition of compromise should be made by him of the 49° or equivalent to it, to submit it confidentially to the Senate for their previous advice before I acted upon it. The reasons for this course were discussed at some length, and I agreed in the propriety of the course he advised.

Hopkins L. Turney of the Senate from Tennessee called about 6 O'Clock P. M., having previously written to me that he desired to see me on the subject of the Oregon question. He opened the conversation by saying that he wished to ascertain my views and intentions on the Oregon question with a view to regulate his own conduct as a Senator by them, and expressed his intention to support my administration on that and all other subjects. I told him the question stood precisely as it did when I delivered my message to Congress, the Brittish Minister having taken no steps since that time. He spoke of the difference of opinion among the Democratic Senators, and among other things said that before Mr. Calhoun's arrival in Washington he had been assured by some of his friends that he would support the views of the administration on the Oregon question, but that since his arrival he had had some conversation with him and was satisfied he would not do so. He found too that Mr. C.'s friends who had given him the assurance above referred to, since his arrival had changed their opinions, and he mentioned two Southern Senators who had done so. He said that Mr. Benton would not support the administration on the question, and that Mr. Benton and Mr. Calhoun in his opinion would be found acting together in opposition, whenever they thought it safe to break ground against the administration. He said many members of Congress from the South were opposed to war and would follow Mr. Calhoun, while some members from the West were almost mad on the subject of Oregon, and

that I was between these two fires and whatever I might do I must dissatisfy the one or the other of these sections of the party. He then asked me (if I did not think it improper to answer the question) if I had made up my mind what course I would take if Great Brittain should renew the offer of the 49° or something equivalent to it. To this I answered that my opinions on the whole subject were candidly set forth in the message, and that I adhered to the opinions there expressed; but that if such a proposition as he had supposed was made, the decision upon it would probably involve the question of peace or War. I told [him] in event of such proposition being made I would feel inclined to take the advice of the Senate confidentially before I acted on it. This Mr. Turney heartily approved and said he would conform his action on the subject to this view of the case.

Mr. Turney had much conversation with me on the subject. He said shortly after he reached Washington Mr. Benton had a conversation with him, and that he was well satisfied that Mr. Benton entertained no friendly feelings towards me or my administration. He informed me that Col. Benton asked him if there was not a combination among my friends in Tennessee to defeat Mr. Van Buren and to run me for a second term, to which he said he replied that he had never heard such a suggestion in the State. Col. Benton spoke, he said, of the Baltimore Convention of 1844,[1] and charged cor-

[1] For Benton's opinion of this convention see his *Thirty Years' View*, II, 591–596. George Bancroft later asserted that he was

ruption and fraud upon them. Mr. T. said he told him that after Mr. Van Buren's [letter] [1] on Texas came out in the Spring of 1844, and the people were all against his views, that my name had not been mentioned for the Presidency except conjecturally among a few friends, as a possible event if a new candidate should be nominated. Mr. T. expressed the distinct opinion that Col. B. would oppose my administration, whenever a fair pretext to do so occurred. He said however that his opposition would amount to nothing more than his own single vote in the Senate. Mr. Calhoun, he said, could take some Southern strength with him, and the two combined might give me trouble.

I remark, on this information thus communicated to me, that I have no doubt both Mr. B. & Mr. C. apprehend that I may be a candidate for re-election, for which there is not the slightest foundation. My mind has been made up from the time I accepted the Baltimore nomination, and is still so, to serve but one term and not to be a candidate for re-election.

the man responsible for the nomination of Polk, and that he worked up the movement in favor of Polk after he had become convinced that Van Buren's nomination was impossible and that of Cass was becoming probable. Bancroft's statement seems to destroy much of Benton's plot theory.—Letter to J. G. Harris, Aug. 30, 1877, in Lenox Library, New York.

[1] Van Buren's letter expressing his opposition to the immediate annexation of Texas was published in the Washington *Globe* April 27, 1844. The opposition roused by it caused him to lose the Presidential nomination at the hands of his party in the Baltimore Convention of the following month. The letter may also be found in *Niles' Register* LXVI, 153.

Mr. Haralson of Geo., Chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs of the Ho. Repts., called about 7½ O'Clock P. M. and held a conversation with me on the subject of preparing measures in Congress to put the country in a state of defence. I advised that it should be done without delay, for though I did not apprehend immediate war if it came at all, yet as we [k]new large preparations [1] of an extraordinary nature were making in England, it was the part of prudence that we should be prepared for any contingency. We had a conversation on the kind of preparation which was required, running into some details. I referred him to the Secretary of War with whom I had conversed, and who would co-operate with him in digesting and preparing the proper measures.

The several conversations held to-day with Mr. Allen, Mr. Turney, and Mr. Haralson were understood to be confidential.

THURSDAY, *25th December, 1845.*—This being Christmas day no company called, with a very few exceptions, who remained but for a short time. Congress had adjourned over, the public offices were closed, and no public business was transacted. After night Mr. Buchanan called. His manner was one of some agitation and care. He made known the object of his visit by saying that he wished to converse with me on a subject which had caused him

[1] Reeves, *American Diplomacy under Tyler and Polk,* chap. 10, discusses the question of the likelihood of war with England at this time.

to spend two sleepless nights. He said that I had a right to nominate Judge Woodward to the Supreme Bench of the U. S., but that I should have done so as I had done on tuesday last without informing him of it was what he complained [of]. I promptly answered that as President of the U. S. I was responsible for my appointments, and that I had a perfect right to make them without consulting my Cabinet, unless I desired their advice. Mr. B. said it had been done by all my predecessors. I told him I did not so understand it. I said to him in reference to this appointment that he knew, when some time ago he had expressed a desire to have the place himself, I had said to him that if he desired it I would appoint him, but that I desired him to remain in the Cabinet and that it would be with very great reluctance that I would agree to his retirement from the Cabinet. I told him that I had frankly informed [him] of this, and after some days of reflection he had called and voluntarily withdrawn all desire to go on the Bench. He said [that] was true. I told him that after he had withdrawn, he had urged the appointment of Mr. Jno. M. Read of Philadelphia, and that I therefore knew his opinion and wishes; that I was not satisfied with Mr. Read, had made up my mind that I could not appoint him, and that any further consultation with him in reference to Mr. Read would have been useless. I told him that on tuesday morning last, being Cabinet day, before I sent the nomination of Mr. Woodward to the Senate I had read the message containing this and other nominations

to some members of the Cabinet who had come in; that he did not happen to be present or it would have been read in his presence, and that certainly there was no intention to conceal it from him. He said that I left the Cabinet room for a few minutes &, as he supposed, went into my private Secretary's room, who shortly afterwards came in & took the message out; that he had inquired of the Secretary of War if I had made the nomination, & that he had informed him that I had read the message to him & the Secretary of the Treasury that morning when the Cabinet were assembling. He said that when the Cabinet adjourned & he returned to his office he received a note in pencil from Dr. Sutherland at the Capitol informing him that Mr. Woodward had been nominated, and that he was deeply mortified that I had not consulted him before I did so; that it was not the appointment of Judge Woodward, but the fact that I had not informed him of my intention to nominate him, of which he complained. I told him that I had not intended to mortify him by concealing the nomination from him. He said reverse the case; suppose I had been President and you Secretary of State, and I [had] been about to appoint a Judge from Tennessee, would you not have thought you ought to have been consulted by me before I made the nomination[?]. I told him I had once conversed with him fully, that I knew Mr. Read was his choice, that I thought Mr. Woodward the preferable man; but that perhaps it would have been better to have mentioned it to him again, but that as I knew no further con-

versation I could have had with him could have changed my mind, I had not thought it necessary to do so. I told him that if I had supposed that he would have taken the view of it he had, I certainly should have mentioned it to him again before I made the nomination; and that I regretted that anything had occurred to give him pain. He then said that the impression was becoming general among his friends in Pennsylvania that the patronage of the Government here was wielded against him. I told him that he knew that nothing was more unfounded, and after a long conversation, in which the appointments which had been made in Pennsylvania [were discussed], he expressed himself as entirely satisfied. In the close of the conversation I expressed my gratification that he was satisfied, and [remarked] that hereafter I would endeavour to avoid even the appearance of what would give him dissatisfaction. I repeated that being alone responsible for my appointments I must myself be satisfied before I made them; that I should be happy if my Cabinet were satisfied with them, but if they were not I must act on my own convictions of what was right. It was a painful conversation, but Mr. Buchanan finally retired, expressing himself to be satisfied.

FRIDAY, *26th December, 1845*.—Nothing of much interest occurred to-day; received company up to 12 O'Clock, and then closed my office & attended to the business on my table. At 5 O'Clock P. M.

had a dining party of between 30 & 40 persons, consisting of Senators and Representatives, ladies, &c.

SATURDAY, *27th December, 1845.*— The Cabinet met at the usual hour to-day, all the members present. Mr. Buchanan, with whom I had the conversation on the 25th Instant, appeared to be pleasant in his manner and in quite a good humor. The only important subject considered at this meeting was the Oregon question. I brought the subject up & asked the opinion of the Cabinet if Mr. Pakenham should offer the 49° or a proposition equivalent to it what I should do. Each member of the Cabinet gave his opinion individually that in that case I should refer it to the Senate & ask their previous advice before I acted, until the question was propounded to the Post Master General, who was the last to give his opinion. He appeared at first to be against such a course. I then asked him if he would advise me to reject it, without submitting it to the Senate. After some discussion among the members of the Cabinet he said that would be a difficult question, as we had once offered 49°, and finally agreed with the other members of the Cabinet that it would be proper to ask the advice of the Senate. It was agreed unanimously by the Cabinet that if a proposition for arbitration should be made, as was probable from Mr. McLane's last despatch, it should be rejected.

The Cabinet adjourned at about 3 O'Clock P. M.

At 10 P. M. Mr. Buchanan & Mr. Bancroft called,

and the former informed me that immediately after he left the Cabinet he met Mr. Pakenham at the State Department, who submitted a proposition to refer to arbitration the Oregon question. The despatch was read. It proposed to refer the question not of *title* but to *divide* the Oregon Territory, to the arbitrament of some friendly power. I instantly said it must be rejected, in which decision Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Bancroft both agreed.

SUNDAY, *28th December, 1845.*— Attended the first Presbyterian church to-day in company with Mrs. Polk, my niece, Miss Rucker, and my nephew, Marshall T. Polk.

MONDAY, *29th December, 1845.*— Saw company to-day up to 12 O'Clock. The committee of enrollments of the two Houses of Congress presented to me to-day a Joint Resolution for the admission of Texas into the Union, & an Act to extend the laws of the U. S. over the State of Texas. I approved & signed them, and at 9 O'Clock P. M. delivered authenticated copies of them, and a letter addressed to President Jones of Texas, to Capt. Tod of Texas, who was employed as special messenger to bear them to President Jones.

To-day Mr. Buchanan sent to me for my approval the rough draft of a despatch to Mr. McLane transmitting to him a copy of Mr. Pakenham's note of the 27th Instant, proposing to refer the Oregon question to arbitration. I struck out the following paragraph, *viz.*, "We had supposed that instead of

this they would have continued the negotiation, by presenting a new proposition for an adjustment of the controversy by the action of the parties themselves." With [this] amendment I returned the draft to Mr. Buchanan.

TUESDAY, *30th December, 1845.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present except the Attorney General, who was professionally engaged in the Supreme Court of the U. States. Several public subjects were considered and disposed of, after which Mr. Pakenham's despatch of the 27th Instant proposing to refer the Oregon question to arbitration was read, when it was unanimously agreed that it should be rejected. The terms and character of the answer were considered, and it was agreed that Mr. Buchanan should prepare the answer and have it ready to submit at the next meeting of the Cabinet. Mr. Buchanan read the substance of the conversation which had taken place between Mr. Pakenham and himself when the former delivered to him his despatch on the 27th Instant; and [which] he, Mr. B., had reduced to writing.

WEDNESDAY, *31st December, 1845.*— Saw company in my office until 12 O'Clock to-day. The balance of the day was occupied in disposing of the business on my table. Mr. Levy & Mr. Wescott,[1] Senators from Florida, called at 2 O'Clock P. M.,

[1] James D. Westcott, 1802–1880, Senator from Florida 1845–1849.

when the latter presented to me a fine walking cane of Prime Wood, the growth of Florida, and a box containing various specimens of the agricultural productions of Florida, which were presented to me through him by Gov. Moseley[1] of Florida.

Several members of Congress called after night and held conversations on public subjects.

THURSDAY, *1st January, 1846.*— This being the first day of a new year, the President's Mansion was open for the reception of company according to custom. At a few minutes after 11 O'Clock A. M. the members of the Cabinet and the ladies of their families, with a few friends began to assemble. At about half past 11 O'Clock the Diplomatic Corps, in full court dress, with the ladies of their families came in and paid their respects. At 12 O'Clock all the halls, parlours and the East Room were crowded with visitors, ladies and gentlemen, and persons of all ages and sexes, without distinction of rank or condition in life. I shook hands with thousands of them, and interchanged salutations with them. The day passed off pleasantly and at about 2½ O'Clock P. M. the company began to retire, and before 3½ O'Clock they had with few exceptions retired. The most perfect order prevailed.

FRIDAY, *2nd January, 1846.*— Had a busy day, listening chiefly to office seekers most of whom were more importunate than meritorious. I closed my

[1] William D. Moseley, 1795–1868, Governor of Florida 1845–1849.

doors at 12 O'Clock, but several members of Congress came to my Private Secretary's Office with their friends to introduce them, and I was compelled to see them or run the hazard of giving them offence. The day was unprofitably spent, not having an opportunity to transact much of the business on my table.

I find that I will be compelled to refuse company absolutely, at 12 O'Clock each day, in order to be enabled to discharge promptly my public duties.

Mr. Buchanan submitted to me the project of his answer to Mr. Pakenham's note, proposing to refer the Oregon question to arbitration.

SATURDAY, *3rd January, 1846.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present.

Mr. Buchanan read the draft of his answer to [the note of] Mr. Pakenham proposing to refer the Oregon question to arbitration, which he had submitted to me on yesterday. It was agreed unanimously that the proposition to arbitrate should be rejected. The terms in which the rejection should be made were discussed and after full consideration agreed on. Mr. Buchanan said he would deliver the answer this day.[1]

At 7 O'Clock P. M. Mr. Dickins, the Secretary of the Senate, called and communicated to me a part of the Executive Journal of the Senate, *viz.*, a Resolution introduced in Executive Session by Mr. Cameron, one of the Senators from Pennsylvania,

[1] Moore, *Buchanan,* VI, 355.

calling on the President for the recommendations upon which Henry Horn had been appointed Collector of Philadelphia, and also for a protest of certain members of the Pennsylvania delegation in Congress against Mr. Horn's nomination to the Senate. The nomination was made several days ago & is now pending before the Senate. Mr. Dickins informed me that he had directed one of his clerks to search, in order to see whether there was any precedent for such a call, and said no such call had ever been made on the President since he had been Secretary of the Senate, & he thought none such had ever been made.

Shortly after Mr. Dickins left Mr. Haywood,[1] Chairman of the Committee of Commerce of the Senate, called on the same subject. He appeared to be very indignant that such a Resolution had been introduced, and said that under the rules of the Senate it had been laid over for consideration one day and would not come up until Monday. He requested me to send to him the papers relating to Mr. Horn's appointment, and he would expose Mr. Cameron on the floor of the Senate. He said he would inform the Senate that Mr. Cameron had never called on the Committee of Commerce, to which Mr. Horn's nomination was referred, to know if they had the papers referred to, or what information they had. Mr. Cameron, I have learned from Mr. Wescott of the Senate and other sources, is active in his exertions to have Mr. Woodward's nomina-

[1] William Henry Haywood, 1801–1852, Senator from North Carolina 1843–1846.

tion as Judge of the Supreme Court of the U. S. rejected. I hope my suspicions may be wrong, but facts and circumstances which have come to my knowledge, I think justify me in indulging them, that Mr. Buchanan has given countenance to these movements of opposition on the part of Mr. Cameron. It will be deeply painful to me, if I ascertain that my suspicions are correct, but if I do so ascertain, I will act with promptness and energy towards Mr. Buchanan, whatever the consequences to myself or my administration may be.

SUNDAY, *4th January, 1846.*— Attended St. Matthews (Catholic) church to-day, in company with Judge Catron [1] of the Supreme Court of the U. S. and Mr. Corcoran [2] of Washington. I was requested on last evening to attend that church to-day, and did so accordingly. Mrs. Polk & the family attended other churches as usual; Mrs. P. & Miss Rucker attending the first Presbyterian Church & Col. Walker's family St. John's Church.

At about 7 O'Clock P. M. my messenger, William Day, brought to me a card marked "James A. Black of So. Ca., Important," and informed me that the gentleman was in waiting below. I departed from my established rule to see no company on the Sabbath, and told the messenger to show the gentle-

[1] John Catron of Tennessee, 1778–1865, Associate-Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court 1837–1865.

[2] William Wilson Corcoran of the banking firm of Corcoran and Riggs; noted for his philanthropic enterprises and for his gifts in support of letters and the fine arts.

man up. He did so. Mr. Black, who is a member of the Ho. of Repts. from South Carolina, after making an apology for calling on the Sabbath, which was the importance of the subject about which he wished to converse. He then introduced the Oregon Question, and expressed his apprehension & belief that the question of the notice to terminate the joint occupation under the Convention of 1827, would produce a serious split in the Democratic party in Congress. He said the North Western members were for the notice, were excited, and he feared would act rashly and imprudently, and that Mr. Calhoun and a portion of the Southern members were against the notice. He said he had been endeavoring to harmonize them and bring them together on some common ground; that for this purpose he had seen Mr. Senator Semple[1] of Ill. & Mr. Senator Atchison[2] of Mo., that he thought they would agree not to press the notice if the South would unite with them in supporting all the other recommendations of my message, including grants of land to emigrants to Oregon, with this provision, that if any of the settlers in Oregon should locate themselves on the Brittish side of the line which by any future arrangement between the two Govern-[me]nts might be established as a boundary between them, they should have floats & land titles to be lo-

[1] James Semple, 1798–1866, Senator from Illinois 1843–1847, an active advocate of the 54° 40′ policy with reference to Oregon.

[2] David R. Atchison of Missouri, 1805–1886, Senator from Missouri 1843–1855, leader of the Missouri pro-slavery faction in the Kansas troubles of 1855–1857.

cated elsewhere. He said he had seen Mr. Calhoun & he thought, though he was not authorized to say positively, that he would agree to this proposition; that he doubted about granting floats to settlers, &c. He said in the present excited state of the Ho. of Repts., he apprehended that the question of Notice would be forced to a vote under the operation of the Previous question, before the compromise or understanding of which he was speaking [could be arranged], and his [purpose] was to get me to interpose with my friends in Congress to gain time by postponing action for a few days. I told him that my opinions were contained in my message, that they had been well considered, and that I had not changed them; that I had recommended the Notice and thought it ought to be given. I remarked to him that the only way to treat John Bull was to look him straight in the eye; that I considered a bold & firm course on our part the pacific one; that if Congress faultered or hesitated in their course, John Bull would immediately become arrogant and more grasping in his demands; & that such had been the history of the Brittish Nation in all their contests with other Powers for the last two hundred years. I remarked to him that I had said in my message that if the wisdom of Congress could devise any better plan to maintain our rights in Oregon than I had suggested, that I would heartily co-operate with them. The whole Oregon subject was discussed in a lengthy conversation. Mr. Black asked me if I would have any objection to hold a free conference with some of the Western Senators and Mr.

Calhoun. I told him I would do so cheerfully, if they desired it. Mr. Black expressed himself strongly in favour of our claim to Oregon, and intimated, but did not expressly say, that he might separate from his Southern friends in his vote on the question of notice. He seemed to be much concerned, and most anxious to gain time in order to see if the Democratic party in Congress could not be brought to act together upon some proposition of compromise. I think him a sensible & patriotic man, and that his motives are good. I think it probable that his visit to me was at the instance of Mr. Calhoun, who is probably becoming uneasy at his position on the Oregon question and may be desirous to extricate himself from it, though this is more an inference than any evidence of the fact derived from Mr. Black's conversation.

MONDAY, *5th January, 1846.*— Had a very busy day, saw much company, and was enabled to transact but little of the business on my table. Saw several Senators & Representatives and had conversations with them on the Oregon Question, and among them Senator Allen and Senator Cass.

The Senate, I learn, adjourned after a very short sitting to-day, on the motion of Mr. Calhoun. A member of the House mentioned to me that Mr. McDuffie had come from a sick room to vote for the adjournment, and that he suspected that there was some object in procuring an adjournment. This is perhaps explained by Mr. Black's conversation with me last night.

TUESDAY, *6th January, 1846.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present except the Attorney General, who was understood to be officially engaged in attending the Supreme Court of the U. States.

No business of importance was transacted. Several public matters were the subject of conversation, and the Cabinet dispersed between 1 & 2 O'Clock P. M.

Had a dinner party to-day, consisting of between 30 and 40 people, Senators and Representatives and about a dozen ladies of their families.

WEDNESDAY, *7th January, 1846.*— Saw company until 1 P. M. to-day; and spent the balance of the day in disposing of the business on my table.

At 6 O'Clock this evening, Mr. Buchanan sent me a note from Mr. Pakenham, the Brittish Minister, dated on the 6th Instant, in which he informed him that he would transmit to his Government Mr. Buchanan's note of the 3rd Instant, declining to accept his (Mr. Pakenham's) proposition to refer the Oregon question to arbitration.

THURSDAY, *8th January, 1846.*— Nothing remarkable transpired to-day; saw company and transacted business as usual. At about 1 P. M. a committee of members of Congress and citizens called, to invite me & the family to attend the 8th of January Ball at Carusi's [1] rooms to-night. Having

[1] Carusi's Saloon, a fashionable assembly place of this period, was on C St. between 10 and 11 Sts. northwest.

seen in the City newspapers that I was to be invited, and knowing that it was expected that I would attend, I told them I would do so, though I think they were rather late calling on me. It was, however, a day of national rejoicing as commemorating the victory of New Orleans, and I thought it unnecessary that I should intimate to them that they had been tardy in calling. At 9½ O'Clock P. M. the Committee called & attended me to the Ball room where I remained about two hours.

FRIDAY, *9th January, 1846.*— Saw company until 12 O'Clock to-day; had an unusual number of visitors in my office, male & female, to call on visits of ceremony. Had also the calls of many office seekers, but having learned to say No! with a good grace, I soon disposed of them. Unfortunately a portion of our people, and I must say not the most meritorious, seem to have concluded that the chief end of Government is office. They are most importunate in their demands, and I have learned that the only way to treat them is to be decided & stern.

Had a dinner party to-day consisting of between 30 & 40 persons, ladies & gentlemen, all of them members of Congress & their families, except Mr. Ritchie, Ed. of the *Union.*

SATURDAY, *10th January, 1846.*— Mr. Senator Calhoun of S. C. called this morning & introduced a Catholic Priest of Columbia, S. C., who was on his way, as Mr. C. said, to Europe on the business of his church & to visit the Pope. The Priest remained

but a few minutes and retired, Mr. Calhoun remaining. Mr. C. introduced the subject of the Oregon question. He expressed himself as being very desirous of acting with the administration on the subject; that he knew we desired peace as well as himself, and went on at some length to give his views against giving the notice as recommended in my message to terminate or abrogate the Convention with Great Brittain of the 6th of August, 1827. He said he desired to pursue the course most likely to preserve peace, and desired to know if I had any information beyond what had been communicated to Congress on the probable course of the Brittish Government. I told him I had reason to believe, judging from the conversation of Mr. Pakenham with Mr. Buchanan and from the information communicated by Mr. McLane at London, that Lord Aberdeen and Sir Robert Peel would be averse to going to War, but that no new proposition to compromise the dispute had been made. I expressed the strong conviction that the notice should be given, that it was pacific, being expressly provided for by the convention of 1827, and that until it was done and the American Government boldly faced the Brittish power & asserted their rights, that the latter would yield nothing of her pretensions; that if the American Government faultered or hesitated England would become the more arrogant, and that until the question reached a crisis there would be no prospect of our obtaining justice. I urged other considerations in favour of giving the Notice, of carrying out the other recommendations of the message,

and taking a bold course, as the only proper course & one most likely in the end to preserve peace. Mr. C. said that the members of Congress who were in favour of giving the Notice would so vote from very different motives. The larger portion of them would vote for the notice from the belief that it would prevent any compromise, and in the event the notice was given & no compromise followed, in his opinion war was certain & inevitable. Another portion of members who would vote for the notice would do so believing that when the question was brought to this crisis, it would lead to a compromise & settlement of the question. He said he had conversed fully with two of the most moderate & discreet Western Senators who were in favour of giving the notice, who had avowed their object to be to prevent any compromise or settlement of the question; and that they had proposed to him, Mr. C., that if he would agree, [or] that he and his friends from the South would agree, not to support any compromise that might be made by the President, that they would in consideration of that compact on his, Mr. C.'s part, vote against giving the notice. He did not mention the names of the Western Senators referred to, but I suppose they are the two named by the Hon. Mr. Black of S. C.[1] in his conversation with me, as noted in this diary of Sunday, the 4th Instant. Mr. Buchanan about this stage of the conversation came in (this being Cabinet day). Mr. C. said he was glad to see him, as he had intended to call on him af[ter] seeing me. Mr. C.

[1] Senator Semple of Illinois and Senator Atchison of Missouri.

continued the conversation, and in a few minutes the other members of the Cabinet came in in succession, first Mr. Walker, then Mr. Bancroft, and shortly afterwards the other members. Mr. C. turned to me & inquired if it was Cabinet day, to which I answered in the affirmative. He then intimated that he would leave, but I invited him to remain, as we had nothing very important to engage our attention to-day. He did so and continued the conversation, addressing himself chiefly to Mr. Buchanan, and repeating substantially what he had said to me before the Cabinet came in. Mr. Buchanan remarked to him that he would be happy to have his support on this great question of the administration, and went on to reason in favor of giving the notice, and the question was debated between Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Calhoun. Mr. Bancroft and Mr. Walker engaged somewhat in the conversation and were in favour of the notice. Mr. Calhoun then spoke of the title of the two countries, and expressed the decided opinion that the Brittish title was as good to the valley of Frasier's River, as the American title was to the valley of the Columbia River. He thought the Brittish title under the Nootka Sound Treaty [1] was a mere usufruct and conferred no claim; and he thought our title under Spain was not valid north of the valley of the Columbia River; that the Brittish discovered & occupied Frasier's River, and the Americans the Columbia River. He

[1] For the history of this treaty see Manning, "The Nootka Sound Controversy," *Report of American Historical Association*, 1904, 279–478.

spoke of the country between the valleys of the two rivers, and thought neither had a valid title to it. He said he was in favour of 49° as the line of division, and was willing in addition to this to yield to Great Brittain the cap[e] of Vancouver's Island South of 49°, and also, if I understood him, the free navigation of the Columbia River, though his remarks on the latter point were rather incidental than direct. I participated but little in the conversation after Mr. Buchanan came in and the Cabinet commenced assembling. I had in the beginning of the conversation fully expressed my opinions. Mr. Calhoun was earnest in his manner, & was manifestly uneasy at his position. The conversation was one of some length. Mr. Mason, just before Mr. C. left, pointedly [?] remarked that the correspondence of Mr. C. & Mr. Buchanan had established our title & they were responsible for that. Mr. C. explained his participation in that correspondence & retired. Mr. Marcy & Mr. Johnson did not participate in the conversation.

The Cabinet considered several subjects, and among others the project of a Treaty of extradition proposed by the Spanish Minister, but came to no decision in relation to it.

I brought before the Cabinet the case of Lieut. Hurst,[1] late of the U. S. Navy, who was dismissed by me some months ago, for fighting a duel with a junior officer under his command, and who has ap-

[1] William Decatur Hurst, dismissed from the navy April 25, 1845, for fighting a duel with a midshipman on the coast of Africa.

plied to be restored. Many of the Senior Officers of the Navy have united in the application for his restoration. The Secretary of the Navy had made a Report to me approving his dismissal as for good cause, but under the circumstances of his case recommending his restoration. The case was fully discussed, when I took the opinions of the Cabinet. Mr. Walker & Mr. Johnson advised against his restoration. Mr. Marcy, Mr. Bancroft, & Mr. Mason advised in favour of his restoration. Mr. Buchanan said his judgment was against & his feelings in favour of restoration, but upon the whole he advised his restoration. I then remarked that I would postpone the case for further consideration, and requested Mr. Bancroft to send to me from his Department all the papers on file relating to the case, including the recommendations of officers of the Navy in his favour.

SUNDAY, *11th January, 1846.*— Attended the first Presbyterian church to-day, in company with Mrs. Polk & my two nieces, Miss Rucker & Miss Walker.

MONDAY, *12th January, 1846.*— Kept my office open for the reception of visitors until 12 O'Clock. Had several visits afterwards which I could not refuse. A Committee of Congress called with an enrolled bill to present to me for my approval and signature. Mr. Jarnigan [1] & Mr. Bright,[2] Senators

[1] Spencer Jarnagin, Senator from Tennessee 1843–1847.

[2] Jesse D. Bright, 1812–1875, Senator from Indiana 1845–

from Tennessee & Indiana, presented the Bill. These gentlemen entered into conversation, in the course of which Mr. Jarnigan expressed his intention to vote for the notice to abrogate the Convention of 1827 with England in reference to the Oregon question. I expressed my gratification on learning that such was his intention.

Mrs. Polk and myself dined to-day with the Secretary of the Navy, being the first time we have dined out since I have been President.

TUESDAY, *13th January, 1846.*— There was a regular meeting of the Cabinet to-day; all the members present except the Attorney General, who was understood to be officially engaged in the Supreme Court of the U. States. Despatches from Mexico, which had been received last evening, were read & considered. Some other public matters not important were also considered.

Had a dinner party to-day of members of Congress and the ladies of their families, numbering between 30 & 40 persons.

WEDNESDAY, *14th January, 1846.*— Saw company as usual until 12 O'Clock to-day. After that hour was engaged in transacting the business on my table. Mrs. Polk in the evening attended the marriage ceremony of the daughter of Genl. Jesup of the army. I declined to attend, but was engaged during her absence in transacting business in my office.

1862, when he was expelled because of a letter he had written to Jefferson Davis.

I omitted to note in this diary of the 12th Instant that Mr. Jarnigan, Senator from Tennessee, in the interview which he had with me on that day, remarked that he had received a note from Mr. Turney of the Senate from Tennessee asking him to state a conversation which took place between them, shortly after their arrival in Washington, which Mr. Jarnigan said he had done in substance as follows, to-wit, that he had asked Mr. Turney to visit the President with him, to which Mr. Turney had replied that he desired to ascertain what his relations were with the President first.

THURSDAY, *15th January, 1846.*— Saw company as usual in my office until 12 O'Clock to-day. At 1 O'Clock P. M. Mr. Healey,[1] the French artist, sent to the U. S. by the King of the French to take the portraits of Genl. Jackson and other distinguished persons, called and exhibited the original portraits of Genl. Jackson, Mr. John Quincy Adams, and Mr. Henry Clay. They were exhibited in the parlour below stairs in the presence of the ladies of the family, and some company who had called. I thought the portrait of Genl. Jackson, which was completed only four days before his death, very good. Those of Mr. Adams and Mr. Clay were fair likenesses.

During the last recess of the Senate I appointed

[1] George Peter Alexander Healy, born in Boston in 1813 and died in Chicago in 1894; noted for his portraits, of which he is said to have painted over six hundred. The largest collections of his works are in the Corcoran Gallery, Washington, and the Newberry Library, Chicago.

James H. Tate of Mississippi, Consul at Buenos Ayres, and Mr. Tate left the U. S. some time during the last summer or autumn to enter on his duties. Since the commencement of the present Session of Congress I nominated him to the Senate for confirmation. After I had made the nomination Mr. Thompson, one of the Representatives from Mississippi, applied to me to withdraw the nomination, which I declined to do. I refer to this diary of the 20th & 22nd of December last. On yesterday Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, called and after stating his favourable opinion of Mr. Tate, stated that from what he had learned his reputation had been assailed by Mr. Jacob Thompson before the Senate or with individual Senators, and he thought unless Mr. Tate could be present to answer or refute the charges (which he had no doubt he could do if he were present) that he would be rejected by the Senate. Mr. Walker suggested to me that under the circumstances I should withdraw his nomination. I told him I could not do so. After some further conversation on the subject, I told him that I had conversed with the two Senators from Mississippi after his nomination had been sent to the Senate, and Mr. Thompson had called on me to withdraw it and I had refused, and that they both were in favour of his confirmation & had advised me not to withdraw it [the nomination], but that if anything had since transpired which had changed their minds and satisfied them that I ought to withdraw it, on learning that fact I would consider of it. Mr.

Walker left my office & I heard nothing more on the subject on yesterday.

To-day about 11 O'Clock A. M. Mr. Walker called & informed me that he had seen the two Senators from Mississippi and held a conversation with them, and he delivered to me a letter from them of which the following is a copy, *viz.*, "Washington, 14th Jany. 1846.

"His Excellency
"The President of the U. S.
Sir

The nomination of James H. Tait, one of our constituents, for Consul at Buenos Ayres, was made by you upon the very strongest recommendations, which we esteem were well deserved.

We regret to inform you that the confirmation of his appointment has been opposed upon grounds which can only be explained by Dr. Tait himself, and under such circumstances we would most respectfully advise you to withdraw his nomination for the present.

We are
Most Respectfully
Your Obt. Serts.,
Jas. W. Chalmers
J. Speight

His Excellency
Jas. K. Polk
Prest. of the U. S."

Immediately on receiving the foregoing letter I addressed a message to the Senate withdrawing the nomination of Dr. Tate. At the time I did so I was still satisfied that he was a worthy man, but I felt it to be proper to yield to the request of the two Senators from Mississippi whose constituent he was.

My Private Secretary on returning from the Senate, after delivering the message withdrawing Dr. Tate['s] nomination, informed me that he had seen Mr. Senator Haywood of N. C., who expressed to him his regret that I had withdrawn Dr. Tate's nomination.

FRIDAY, *16th January, 1846.*— Saw company today as usual until 12 O'Clock, when I closed my office & attended to the business on my table. At about 2 O'Clock the porter informed me that Mr. Senator Haywood of N. C. had called and desired to see me. I directed that he be shown into my office. Mr. Haywood expressed his regret, that I had withdrawn Dr. Tate's nomination. I showed him the letter from the two Mississippi Senators which is recorded in the diary of yesterday, & informed him that it was upon that letter that I had withdrawn the nomination. He said he had heard that they had addressed me such a letter, and said they were mistaken friends and bad counsellors, and had not treated me well, or as he as a true friend should have done. He then stated to me for the first time that I had heard it, that on the day before it was withdrawn, the nomination had been under consideration in Secret Session of the Senate, and that a resolution had been offered

in Secret Session, which was under debate and was left undecided at the adjournment on that day, which proposed to call on Mr. Walker for a statement in answer to the charges which had been made by Mr. Jacob Thompson to the Senate in Secret Session against Mr. Tate, that Mr. Walker was supposed to be involved in the controversy, and that my withdrawal of the nomination, as the record now stood, would have the appearance of my having done so to screen & save my Secretary of the Treasury. I expressed my astonishment at this information, and at once told him that I never would have withdrawn the nomination if I had known. He said he knew I had been deceived, for immediately upon my message withdrawing the nomination reaching the Senate he had gone to the Secretary of the Senate and inquired of him if he had given me a copy of the Executive Journal containing the resolution, & he informed him he had not. Mr. Haywood said he then knew I must have acted without a knowledge of its existence, & that I had been misled and deceived. I told him that the information he now gave me, was the first intimation I had of its existence. I was deeply mortified that I had been placed in so false a position before the Senate, and consulted with him as to the proper means of correcting it. I spoke of renominating Dr. Tate, and communicating with my message the letter of the two Mississippi Senators upon which I had withdrawn the nomination, and of stating that the Executive Journal not having been furnished to me by the Secretary of the Senate, I had no knowledge at the time of the pendency of the reso-

lution in Secret Session of the Senate, calling on Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury. Mr. Haywood doubted whether this would be the proper course, and after some further conversation said he would consult with some of the Senators and see me again. I told [him] I would be glad if he would explain to any Senator he chose the true state of the facts, for I disliked exceedingly to stand in the false position in which the Executive Journal of the Senate unexplained would place [me]. I told him he was at perfect liberty to take the letter of the two Mississippi Senators, and show it to any Senator whom he might choose. He took the letter accordingly and retired. The Senate had adjourned over yesterday until Monday next, and therefore no communication could be made to them before that day. Mr. Haywood said he had intended to leave the City to-night on a visit to his family in N. C., but he would remain until Monday, on account of this matter and some others which were before the Senate in Executive Session. Among these was the nomination of Mr. Slidell as Minister to Mexico, which was opposed. On leaving he said if he did not call sooner he would do so immediately after church on Sunday.

Had a dinner party to-day consisting of between 30 & 40 persons, members of Congress & ladies of their families. Among the guests was Mr. Senator Jarnagin of Tennessee, who mentioned to me the case of Dr. Tate's nomination, & said he thought I had bad advisers or I would not have withdrawn it. I explained the whole matter to him as I had to Mr. Haywood. He said he knew I had been deceived.

SATURDAY, *17th January, 1846.*— I directed my Private Secretary, immediately after breakfast this morning, to call on the Secretary of the Senate to furnish me with a copy of the Executive Journal of the Senate, if by the rules of the Senate I was entitled to receive it.

The Cabinet met at the usual hour this morning; all the members present. The Secretary of War stated that he had heard in his office, just before leaving it, that the Hon. William Taylor, one of the Representatives from the State of Virginia, died suddenly this morning.

The subject of our relations with Mexico were [was] considered, and in view of the probability that a revolution had taken place in that country, additional orders were agreed upon, with the object of concentrating our naval forces at Vera Cruz. Some other public matters were considered & disposed of. After the Cabinet had all left but Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, I communicated to him the information which Mr. Senator Haywood had given me of the pending of a resolution in Secret Session in the Senate, calling on him (Mr. Walker) at the time I had withdrawn Dr. Tate's nomination. He expressed his great surprise at the information, and said he had never heard of it before. He saw, as I did, the false position in which both he and myself were placed by the withdrawal of the nomination whilst such a resolution of inquiry was pending. He said neither the Senators from Mississippi or any one else had informed him of it, and if he had known it he never would have advised the withdrawal of

Dr. Tate's nomination as he had done. Mr. Walker had delivered to me the letter from the two Mississippi Senators on the 15th Instant and had concurred with them in advising the withdrawal of the nomination, upon the ground that in Dr. Tate's absence no one could explain a part of the charges which he understood had been preferred against him by Mr. Thompson, consisting as they did in part of conversations alleged to have taken place between Dr. Tate & Mr. Thompson, when no one but themselves were present. Mr. [Walker] expressed his unabated confidence in the honor & integrity of Dr. Tate, and said he deeply regretted that he had advised the withdrawal of his nomination, pending the resolution in Secret Session of the Senate, of which I now informed him. He said he had advised the withdrawal of his nomination believing that in his absence he would probably be unjustly rejected by the Senate, but that when he returned he was confident he could and would fully explain & refute the charges made against him by Mr. Thompson. He said he would see the Mississippi Senators to-night, and call and see me again at 9 O'Clock to-morrow morning, if I would see him at that time. I told him I would do so.

Between 3 & 4 O'Clock P. M. Mr. Dickins, the Secretary of the Senate, called and handed to me what he said was a copy of the Executive Journal of the Senate as follows, *viz.*, "January 13th, 1846. On motion of Mr. Haywood the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination of James H. Tate & after debate

Mr. Westcott submitted the following Resolution:

" Resolved that the nomination be recommitted to the committee on Commerce and the committee be instructed to transmit the communication of the Honorable Jacob Thompson respecting the nominee to the Secretary of the Treasury, in order to afford that officer an opportunity to answer or explain such parts of the same as he may be desirous to do."

I told Mr. Dickins that if I had been in possession of this information before I withdrew Dr. Tate's nomination I should not have withdrawn it, and inquired of him why it had not been communicated, and what the rule of the Senate on the subject was. He answered, as I thought, in an evasive way, and manifested much indifference on the subject, saying that the clerks in his office were very busy and could not furnish copies daily with convenience. In relation to the rule of the Senate, he said, in [on] a second inquiry made by me, that it was that a copy of the Executive Journal should be furnished to the President from time to time by the Secretary. I explained to him the embarrassment under which his failure to furnish me with a copy of the Journal had placed me in the case of Dr. Tate. He still by his manner & tone of conversation manifested great indifference, and I came to the conclusion that I had no assurance from him that for the future I would be furnished with the copy of the Journal. So great was his apparent indifference that I felt indignant, and became perhaps a little excited. I then told him

in an earnest manner that [I] had no authority over him, and pretended to exercise none; but that if I was entitled to a copy of the Executive Journal of the Senate, I demanded that it should be furnished to me, and that if he did not furnish it I would communicate the fact to the Senate and request that he should be required to do his duty. I told him that if he had done his duty I should have been saved the embarrassment in Dr. Tate's case, for I never would have withdrawn his nomination from the Senate. I told him that I was judge of what it was important for me to know on [in] the Executive Journal, and I demanded to be furnished daily with a copy of it. He seemed for the first time to become sensible of his position, and said I should be furnished with a copy of the Journal as desired. He expressed his regret that he had not furnished me with a copy in Dr. Tate's case. He made an apology for his failure to do so, and proposed to state the fact that he had not done so to the Senate through the Vice President. I told [him] no, not at my instance; that if I thought it necessary to make the fact known to the Senate I would do it myself. After his apology & a more full explanation, I told him that I supposed he had not intended to omit to do his duty, and that I hoped such an omission would not occur again.

SUNDAY, *18th January, 1846.*— Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, called between 9 & 10 O'Clock this morning. He told me he had seen the two Mississippi Senators and handed to me a letter from them of which the following is a copy, *viz.,*

"Washington, 17th Jany., 1846.

"His Excellency
Jas. K. Polk
Prest. of the U. S.
Sir;

At the time we advised you to withdraw the nomination of Dr. James H. Tate, it had not occurred to us that there was a resolution pending to call upon the Honl. R. J. Walker for further testimony in this matter, nor had we stated this fact to any one out of the Senate.

The charge upon which it was expected to defeat the nomination, was conversations alleged to have taken place between Mr. Thompson & Dr. Tate when no one was present but these two gentlemen, and as such a charge could only be answered or explained by Dr. Tate himself, we thought it proper to advise the withdrawal of his nomination.

Respectfully your obt. serts.
Jas. W. Chalmers
J. Speight"

Mr. Walker, after I had read this letter, entered into conversation on the subject and repeated his regret that under the circumstances the nomination of Dr. Tate had been withdrawn. He made a statement of the facts of the controversy between Mr. Thompson & Dr. Tate, & said he was the person whom Mr. Thompson intended in fact to assail. With this controversy I have nothing to do, and do not therefore deem it to be necessary to record Mr. Walker's statement concerning it, further than to

remark that according to Mr. Walker's statement there is not in his conduct or in that of Dr. Tate anything to censure. Mr. Walker did not advise the renomination of Dr. Tate because, as he said, as the Mississippi Senators had stated in their last letter, the ground upon which he would probably be rejected by the Senate was the alleged private conversation between Mr. Thompson & Dr. Tate of which he (Mr. Walker) knew nothing, & not upon any controversy which Mr. Thompson had with him (Walker). Mr. Walker said he thought on this *avowed* ground he would be rejected, and he could not therefore recommend or advise his renomination. He then entered into a very solemn & earnest conversation in relation to his position in the administration. He said he had some political enemies among the Democratic Senators. He intimated that they were apprehensive that he might desire to be a candidate for the Presidency as the cause of it. He disavowed any such desire or intention, and repeated to me what he had once before said to me on that subject, which was in substance that without his procurement or consent a few newspapers had mentioned his name in connection with the Presidency. He said he had thought seriously of publishing a letter disavowing any such intention, and strongly expressing his opinion that no member of the Cabinet could, without prejudice to the administration or impairing his own usefulness, be regar[ded] as an aspirant to that high station. He said he would write such a letter at once if it were not that he might appear ridiculous by assuming that he was looked to for that office, and that

if it became necessary hereafter he would do so. I told him I concurred with him that no member of the Cabinet could with propriety be a candidate for the Presidency, and that he knew I had made a condition that they should not be, in selecting my Cabinet, having addressed letters and received letters from each member of the Cabinet to that effect, before their appointment. He then said he would [write] such a letter as he had indicated as soon as it became more manifest that it would be proper. He said he was the object of violent attack and, with much agitation & feeling, said he would retire from the Cabinet the moment I was of opinion that his remaining in it would embarrass the success of my administration. I told him that nothing had occurred as yet to make such a step necessary, that I had the same confidence in him that I had when I called him to take charge of the Treasury Department; and that I advised him to disregard these attacks upon him to which he had alluded, to go on & do his duty, and at such time as it became necessary, publish his letter disconnecting his name with the Presidential office. He retired.

Attended the first Presbyterian church to-day in company with Mrs. Polk & my niece, Miss Rucker. Mr. Senator Haywood called shortly after we returned from church. He informed me that he had seen some of the Senators, since his interview with me on friday last, in reference to the withdrawal of Dr. Tate's nomination, some of them Whigs & others Democrats, and had explained to them how it happened that the withdrawal had been made. He ad-

vised that I should on the next meeting of the Senate nominate a successor to Dr. Tate and communicate with the message the letter of the two Senators from Mississippi on which the withdrawal had been made, & state the fact that at the time it was made I had no knowledge of the pendency before the Senate in secret session of the resolution proposing a call on the Secretary of the Treasury for information, the copy of the Executive Journal not having at that time been communicated to me. He said that as the Senate would attend the funeral of the late Mr. Taylor of the Ho. Repts. on to-morrow, they would not sit to transact business, & that tuesday would be the earliest day I could make a communication to them.

MONDAY, *19th January, 1846.*— Saw no company to-day. At 12 O'Clock repaired with my Cabinet to the Hall of the Ho. Repts. to attend the funeral ceremonies of the Hon. Mr. Taylor of Va., late a member of that House. The religious services were performed by the Chaplains of Congress. The Rev. Mr. Tustin preached the sermon from the text from the Book of Job, "The Lord gave; the Lord hath taken away; and blessed be the name of the Lord." I attended the procession with my Cabinet to the Congressional burial ground, and returned to the President's Mansion between 2 & 3 O'Clock.

Mr. Senator Haywood called about 5 O'Clock and returned to me the letter of the two Mississippi [Senators], advising me to withdraw the nomination of James H. Tate as Consul at Buenos Ayres, which I had handed to him on Sunday, the 18th Instant,

and which is recorded in this diary of the 15th Instant. He stated that he had explained the transaction to several Senators since he had seen me, and that they were all satisfied that I had no knowledge of the Resolution pending before the Senate at the time I had withdrawn the nomination of Mr. Tate. He still inclined to the opinion that I had better nominate a successor to Dr. Tate, and in the same message communicate the letter of the Senators from Mississippi as the ground on which I had withdrawn his nomination. I told him I had reflected on the subject, and thought there was no way in which I could put myself right on the record and before the Senate but to renominate Dr. Tate, accompanied with the letter of the Senators from Mississippi upon which I had withdrawn his nomination, and thereby place the whole matter in the position in which it was before the withdrawal. Mr. Haywood still inclined to think that I had better make a new nomination accompanied with an explanatory message, and the letter of the Senators upon which the nomination had been withdrawn, but said he did not perceive any great objection to the course which I proposed.

Shortly after Mr. Haywood left Mr. Senator Chalmers of Mississippi called. He said his colleague, Mr. Speight, was sick or he would have called also. He deeply regretted that Mr. Speight and himself had not informed me, at the time they advised the withdrawal of Dr. Tate's nomination, of the pendency of the Resolution before the Senate in Executive Session. I told him that I was placed upon the records of the Executive Journal of the

Senate in an awkward and false position; that as the record now stood it would leave the inference that I had withdrawn the nomination to screen my Secretary of the Treasury, or save him from the inquiry proposed of him by the Resolution pending before the Senate in Secret Session at the time, and of the pendency of which I had been wholly ignorant; which would be a false inference and do great injustice both to the Secretary of the Treasury and myself. I told him that I knew no way to correct this false inference but to renominate Dr. Tate accompanied by a statement of the facts. He said that was precisely what he had intended to advise me to do, and added he wished me to send in with my message [the letter] which Mr. Speight and himself had addressed to me, advising me to withdraw the nomination, because he said he wished the Senate to see what they had said in that letter. I told him I would probably do so on to-morrow. Mr. Chalmers said he censured himself for having remained so long silent about Dr. Tate, who was, as he said, a highly honorable and worthy man, and permitting Mr. Thompson to go [a]round among Senators and poison their minds against him.

Mr. Senator Cass of Michigan called in shortly after Mr. Chalmers left, and held a conversation with me in relation to the news received to-day, of the dissolution of the English Ministry,[1] and its probable effects upon our relations with that Country.

[1] The Peel ministry fell because of its championship of the repeal of the Corn laws. In revenge for this the Protectionists joined the opposition on the Irish Arms Bill. This caused Peel's

He expressed himself strongly in favor of vigorous preparations for defence, in which I concurred with him.

Mr. Dallas, Vice President of the U. S., called and had a conversation on the English news received to-day. He concurred in the propriety of taking immediate measures for the defence of the country.

TUESDAY, *20th January, 1846.*—The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present, but [the] Attorney General retired early to attend the Supreme Court.

I read to the Cabinet a message which I had prepared to the Senate, renominating James H. Tate as Consul at Buenos Ayres, in the following words, *viz.*,

"To the Senate of the United States.

On the 15th of January, 1846, I withdrew the nomination of James H. Tate of Mississippi as Consul at Buenos Ayres. The withdrawal was made upon the receipt on that day of a letter addressed to me by the Senators from the State of Mississippi advising it. I transmit their letter herewith to the Senate. At that time I had not been furnished with a copy of the Executive Journal of the Senate, and had no knowledge of the pendency of the Resolution before that body, in Executive Session, in relation to this nomination. Having since been furnished by the Secretary of the Senate with a copy of the Executive Journal containing the Resolution referred

downfall, but not, however, until he had concluded the settlement of the Oregon Boundary question.

to, I deem it proper and due to the Senate to reinstate the nomination in the condition in which it was before it was withdrawn, and with that view I nominate James H. Tate of Mississippi to be Consul at Buenos Ayres. James K. Polk."

Washington, January 20th, 1846.

All the Cabinet concurred in the propriety of sending the message, and it was sent accordingly. The letter enclosed in the message was that recorded in this diary of the 15th Instant.

Saw Senators Haywood & Cass, separately, in the evening, who informed me that the message was well received in Executive Session and was a clear vindication of any supposed impropriety on my part in withdrawing the nomination.

WEDNESDAY, *21st January, 1846.*— There was a severe storm last night & the day was inclement, but notwithstanding this there was the usual number of visitors, many of them seeking offices for themselves or their friends. Closed my doors at 12 O'Clock. At half past 12 O'Clock Mr. Healey, the artist sent to the U. States by the King of the French last year to take the likeness of Genl. Jackson & others, called by previous appointment to take my likeness for Justice Catron of the Supreme Court of the U. States. I gave him a sitting of two hours.

Had a drawing room at 8 P. M. to-day. All the parlours, including the East Room, were brilliantly lighted. The night was very cold and the crowd was not very great, though all the rooms were filled,

not crowded. The evening past [passed] off pleasantly. Many of the Foreign Representatives, members of Congress, citizens and strangers were present.

THURSDAY, *22nd January, 1846.*— Saw company as usual until 12 O'Clock to-day. At half past 12 O'Clock gave Mr. Healey, the artist, who commenced taking my portrait on yesterday, another sitting of two hours. Afterwards saw the Secretary of the Navy and transacted business with him. About 5½ O'Clock Mr. Shields,[1] the Commissioner of the General Land Office, called and informed me that he had seen Gen'l Cass of the Senate, who informed him that the Senate had rejected the nomination of Geo. W. Woodward as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the U. States. Judge Shields advised the appointment of Mr. Buchanan, the Secretary of State, and said that Gen'l Cass advised the same thing. I had some conversation with Judge Shields on the subject, who among other things told me that he had conversed with Mr. Buchanan on yesterday, and that he knew he was anxious to have the appointment. I thought it strange that Mr. Buchanan should have expressed such a wish to any one pending the nomination of Mr. Woodward before the Senate. I knew Mr. Buchanan had not been satisfied with Mr. Woodward's nomination, but supposed it was because he preferred Mr. John M. Read of Philadelphia. The information given

[1] James Shields, Commissioner of General Land Office 1845–1847, Brigadier-General in Mexican War, and also in the Union army in the Civil War.

me by Mr. Shields left the painful impression that Mr. Buchanan had been willing to see my nomination of Mr. Woodward rejected by the Senate, in order to obtain the office himself. This I hope is a mistaken impression. Of one thing, however, I am satisfied, and that is, that if Mr. Buchanan did not interfere with Mr. Cameron, Mr. Sevier,[1] & others of the Senate to have Mr. Woodward rejected, he at least took no interest in his confirmation, and was willing to see him rejected. The circumstances attending the nomination of Mr. Woodward are recorded in this diary of December last.

After Mr. Shields had held this conversation, I received the Executive Journal of the Senate, from which it appears that the entire Whig party and six Democratic Senators voted against Mr. Woodward's confirmation. The six Democratic Senators are Mr. Cameron of Pen[n]., Mr. Benton of Mo., Mr. Sevier and Mr. Ashley[2] of Arkansas, and Mr. Yulee[3] & Mr. Wescott of Florida.

The Vice President, Mr. Senator Dickinson[4] of

[1] Ambrose H. Sevier, 1802–1848, Senator from Arkansas 1836–1848; appointed by Polk in 1848 Commissioner to Mexico with rank of Minister Plenipotentiary to conclude peace negotiations.

[2] Chester Ashley, 1790–1848, Senator from Arkansas 1844–1848.

[3] David Levy Yulee, 1811–1886; he was of Hebrew descent and adopted the name Yulee about 1845 in place of the name Levy by which he had been known hitherto; Senator from Florida 1845–1851, and 1855–1861, retiring to join the Confederate cause.

[4] Daniel S. Dickinson, 1800–1866, elected to the Senate in 1844, prominent in the development of the Squatter Sovereignty doctrine.

N. Y., and Mr. Senator Allen of Ohio called about 8 O'Clock, and expressed their indignation at the rejection of Mr. Woodward. They gave me an account of what had occurred in Executive Session of the Senate. They informed me that every frivolous objection which had been at first urged against him had been fully refuted, and expressed their strong conviction that he ought to have been confirmed. They concurred with me in opinion that he was eminently qualified, of irreproachable character, and a sound republican in his constitutional opinions. Mr. Cameron was the active member of the Senate in procuring his rejection. Mr. Woodward was the nominee of the Democratic caucus of the Pennsylvania Legislature last year for the Senate of the U. States and was defeated by Mr. Cameron, who received the united [Whig] vote & a faction consisting of a small minority of the Democratic members. By a similar combination Mr. Woodward's nomination as Judge of the Supreme Court has been defeated. Of the six [Democratic] Senators who voted against him, Mr. Cameron, Mr. Sevier, and Mr. Wescott are the intimate friends of Mr. Buchanan, the latter of whom (Mr. Wescott) judging of his course since he has been in the Senate, I consider, though elected as a democrat, to be a Whig in disguise. There can be no doubt that Mr. Buchanan could, if he had desired it, have prevented either of these Senators, and probably Mr. Benton also, from voting against him. Mr. Senator Allen told me this evening that immediately after the rejection of Mr. Woodward, it was rumoured in the

Senate that Mr. Buchanan would be appointed. I conclude to make no nomination for the present, nor until I have time to investigate the circumstances and causes of Mr. Woodward's rejection more fully. At present I consider the course of the 6 Democratic Senators factious & without adequate reason.

FRIDAY, *23rd January, 1846.*— Saw company today until 12 O'Clock. As the Senate did not sit today I saw several Senators after that hour. Among others Mr. Speight of Mississippi called, and spoke very indignantly and strongly of the course of the six democratic Senators who had united with the Whig Senators on yesterday, and rejected the nomination of Mr. Woodward as Judge of the Supreme Court. I said nothing, except to give general & evasive answers. He expressed the confident opinion that Mr. Buchanan had controlled, if not directly at all events indirectly, the votes of Mr. Sevier, Cameron, & Wescott, and this without the slightest intimation indicating such a suspicion on my part. He said he boarded near Mr. Sevier and Mr. Thompson of Mississippi, and that they were very intimate with Mr. Buchanan, and visited him at least three times a week, and to use his own words, he said Sevier & Thompson almost lived at Buchanan's, and with an oath he expressed the opinion that Sevier, if Mr. Buchanan had given him the slightest intimation, would have voted as he desired. To all this I replied that I hoped he was mistaken. I told him, as I had told other Senators, Mr. Allen, Mr. Dickinson of N. Y., and others, that Mr. Cam-

eron and others who had rejected Mr. Woodward, should not be gratified in having the man they might desire nominated in Mr. Woodward's place; that I had the right of nomination under the constitution, and the Senate had the right to reject; and that I would take my own time and make my own selection before I made another nomination, & that I would select some sound Republican, of the Jeffersonian faith in politics and Constitutional law. Mr. Speight told me that Mr. Sevier had said to him, pending the nomination of Mr. Woodward, that Gen'l Jackson could make appointments over the heads and against the will of his Cabinet, but with an oath, he would teach me that I could not. This probably had reference to Mr. Buchanan's opposition to Mr. Woodward, which had probably been communicated to Mr. Sevier. I think this the most probable inference, though I have no positive knowledge that it is correct. One thing I remark, that if I was certain that Mr. Buchanan had advised the rejection of Mr. Woodward, or caused it to be done, I would regard it as such bad faith to me by a member of my Cabinet, that I would instantly dismiss him. For the present I will await further developments. Mr. Senator Turney of Tennessee called to see me & desired me, if I could with propriety, to give some office to Gen'l Clements of Fayetteville, Tennessee. After conversing about this and one or two minor appointments, he introduced the case of Mr. Woodward's nomination and his rejection by the Senate, and expressed himself strongly in condemnation of the six Democratic

Senators, who had united with the Whigs and rejected him, & particularly so against Mr. Cameron, who, he said, ought to be exposed. Mr. Turney's conversation on the subject was very strong towards Gen'l Cameron, in whom he had no confidence as a democrat, and [he] intimated in pretty direct terms that he was at heart a Whig. Mr. Turney's visit was a pleasant one, and from all he said he appeared to be ardent and zealous in support of my administration. When he was about to leave, I said to him that I would be pleased to see him whenever he could call, or had anything which he desired to communicate to me. He seemed to be pleased, and said he would do so, as he would have done in old times.

Mr. Senator Niles[1] of Con[n]. also called on business, and after transacting it, expressed himself in strong terms against the conduct of those democratic Senators, who had joined the Whigs in rejecting Mr. Woodward. Mr. N. spoke in high terms of Mr. Woodward, and said all grounds of objection to him had been met, and been finally abandoned; that the Whigs had voted against him because of his opposition to corporations and his orthodox republican principles, but it was difficult to find a satisfactory reason why Democrats should join them in rejecting him.

I received to-day a letter from Col. Benton, who voted against Mr. Woodward, requesting me to nominate Mr. Buchanan in his place, saying that he (Mr. B.) had long desired the place, and that if nominated

[1] John Milton Niles, 1787–1856, Senator from Connecticut 1835–1839, and 1843–1849; Postmaster General 1840–1841.

the Senate would at once confirm the nomination. This letter of Col. B. I have placed on my files.

Had a dinner party to-day consisting of between 30 & 40 members of Congress. There were no ladies present except Mrs. Polk.

This evening Mr. Buchanan gave a Ball at Carusi's saloon. Col. Walker and Miss Rucker & Miss Walker attended it; Mrs. Polk declined.

SATURDAY, *24th January, 1846.*—This morning about 9½ O'Clock Mr. Senator Pennybacker[1] & Mr. Brown of Va. called to see me on the subject of the Post Master at Wheeling, Va. They recommended Mr. Newman of Wheeling, now a State Senator from the Wheeling District, to take effect on the 1st of April next, on which day the resignation of the present incumbent will take effect. Mr. Brown retired & Mr. Pennybacker remained. He expressed himself, as other Senators had before done, in terms of strong indignation at the rejection of Mr. Woodward as Judge of the Supreme Court by the Senate.

I learned from my private Secretary, Col. Walker, and from others to-day that it was the common talk at Mr. Buchanan's Ball last night that he (Mr. B.) was to go on the Bench of the Supreme Court, in place of Mr. Woodward rejected. I learned, too, that there is another rumour in the streets that Mr. Buchanan will soon leave the Cabinet. These rumours are strange to me. I have reason to believe

[1] Isaac Samuels Pennybacker, 1807–1847, Senator from Virginia 1845–1847, dying in office.

that Mr. Buchanan is dissatisfied, but if so he has no reason for it unless it be that I make my own appointments to office, according to my best judgment, and will not suffer him to dispense the public patronage, especially in Pennsylvania. In my appointments in that State, as well as elsewhere, I have known no clique or section of the Democratic party, but have endeavored to select qualified persons and to do justice to all the local divisions of the Democratic party. I have refused to gratify Mr. Buchanan but [by] bestowing all the offices in Pennsylvania on his peculiar partisans, to the exclusion of all others, as it is manifest he has on many occasions desired me to do. I have done Mr. B. full justice, and have given to his peculiar friends even more than their proportion of the offices, because he was a member of my Cabinet & I was desirous to satisfy him by giving him evidence that I had friendly feelings towards him. With this I fear he is not satisfied. His greatest weakness is his great sensitiveness about appointments to office. He has repeatedly seemed to be troubled, & taken it greatly to heart when I have differed with him about appointments & made my own selections. Being responsible for my appointments, I cannot surrender the appointing power to any one else, and if, because I will not do so, Mr. B. chooses to retire from my Cabinet I shall not regret it. I have heard of his talking and complaining to others of my self-will in making my appointments. His opposition to my nomination of Mr. Woodward was, I understand, a matter publicly known in the streets.

The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present. Despatches which were received from Mr. Slidell, our Minister at Mexico, last night were read, and the answer to be given was discussed & agreed on.

I brought the present state of the Oregon question again before the Cabinet. I suggested for consideration, the possibility of some new basis of adjustment. I stated that there was no probability that any division of the territory could be agreed upon, or would be acceded to by the people of the U. S., & that we had rejected the offer of arbitration which had been recently made by the Brittish Minister. I then suggested as a possible basis of adjustment a Treaty of commerce by which each country should stipulate to relax their restrictive systems; by which Brittish duties on American Breadstuffs, rice, cotton, tobacco, & other articles exported to Great Brittain should be reduced to a moderate revenue standard; and that like reductions should be made by the U. S. on Brittish manufactures imported into the U. S. I stated the reduction of our tariff would be a great object with Great Brittain, and that to attain it that Government might be willing to surrender her claim to the whole Oregon territory, on receiving a round sum to enable her to indemnify her Hudson's Bay Company for the valuable improvements which they had made in Oregon. I stated that I did not know this was feasible, but it would relieve Great Brittain of the point of Honor in the controversy, and that possibly she might acceed to it, because she esteemed her commerce

with the U. S. as of infinitely more value than she did the Oregon territory. Of course if such an adjustment could be made, it must first receive the ratification of the Senate, and then the approval of Congress, who must pass a law revising our tariff of duties accordingly, and making the necessary appropriations to carry it into effect. I stated that I had [not] matured or fully considered the subject, but merely suggested it for deliberation between this time and the next meeting of the Cabinet.

After the other members of the Cabinet retired Mr. Marcy, the Secretary of War, asked me if Mr. Buchanan had any agency in causing Mr. Woodward's rejection by the Senate. I told him I had no knowledge that he had taken any affirmative action to cause such a result, but that I had no doubt that an intimation from him to his friends in the Senate who voted against him, such as Cameron, Wescott, Sevier would have prevented his rejection. That he had done nothing to prevent his rejection, I was satisfied.

SUNDAY, *25th January, 1846.*— Attended the first Presbyterian church to-day in company with Mrs. Polk, my niece, Miss Rucker, and my nephew, Marshall T. Polk. After church Gen'l Cass called to ascertain what the Foreign news was, brought by the last Steamer from England.

About 7 O'Clock my messenger informed me that Mr. Buchanan and Judge and Mrs. Catron were in the parlour below stairs. I went down & found Mrs. Polk with them. Mr. Buchanan re-

mained a short time and retired. After Judge and Mrs. Catron retired, Mrs. Polk remarked to me that she thought she observed that Mr. Buchanan's & my meeting was cold and formal. I told her I was not conscious of it on my part.

MONDAY, *26th January, 1846.*— Mr. Buchanan came over about 9 O'Clock with the Foreign despatches brought by the last steamer from Europe. He read those from England and France, and after some conversation on the subject he retired.

I saw company after he left until 12 O'Clock. Mr. Bancroft called to read to me a private letter which he had received from Dr. Holland of London on the subject of Oregon.

Gave Mr. Healey, the portrait painter, another sitting of two hours to-day, though I could but illy spare the time. I think it is the last sitting for my portrait which I will submit to during a Session of Congress.

Mr. Buchanan sent to me from the Department of State, a commercial Treaty received by the last Steamer, between the U. S. & the King of the two Sicilies, signed at Naples on the 1st December, 1845, by Wm. H. Polk,[1] U. S. chargé d'affaires. Mr. Buchanan accompanied the Treaty with a note approving it.

At 7 O'Clock P. M. Mr. Alex. Everett,[2] U. S.

[1] Brother of the President. Charge d'affaires to the Two Sicilies March 13, 1845, to August 31, 1847, when he resigned to accept an appointment in the army for service in Mexico.

[2] For Everett's commission and a brief biography, see Moore, *Buchanan,* VI, 139.

Commissioner to China, called, and I held a conversation with him in reference to his mission, and intimated to him that it was desirable that he should proceed as soon as his health would permit. He said he thought he would be able to set out on his voyage in April.

Mr. Senator Allen [and] Mr. Senator Sevier called on business.

Judge Mason, the Attorney Gen'l, called at about 9 O'Clock. He said he called at the request of Mr. Buchanan, who was troubled at his position because of the events which had transpired in reference to the nomination and rejection of Mr. Woodward as Judge of the Supreme Court of the U. S. Judge Mason said that Mr. Buchanan protested that he had not interfered to have Mr. Woodward rejected, but had said to him, in conversation on Saturday last, that if he had been consulted at the time Mr. Woodward was nominated to the Senate that he would have been confirmed. I was particular to have Judge Mason repeat this statement that I might not misunderstand it. Mr. Mason said that Mr. Buchanan desired him to request me to appoint him to the vacant seat on the Bench, for which I had nominated Mr. Woodward. I replied that Mr. Woodward had been rejected by the votes of Mr. Buchanan's special friends in the Senate (at least some of them were so) who had joined with the United Whig party to effect his rejection, and that Mr. Buchanan's statement to him that he could have procured his confirmation was what I had before

believed. I stated that five-sixths of the Democratic Senators had voted to confirm him, and that six professed democrats, some of them the confidential and intimate friends of Mr. Buchanan, had chosen to unite with the whole Whig party in the Senate, and had rejected him, and that, though the Senate had a perfect right to reject any of my nominations, I could not approve the conduct of any member of my Cabinet in conniving at such rejection. I stated to Judge Mason that under the circumstances of Mr. Woodward's rejection, I considered it a blow struck at my administration. I informed [him] also that several of the Democratic Senators who had voted for Mr. Woodward's confirmation had called on me and expressed deep indignation at the course of the 6 Democratic Senators who had caused his rejection; and that from what some of them had told me, I had no doubt they attributed the rejection to Mr. Buchanan's influence with Cameron, Sevier, Wescott, & perhaps others. Judge Mason then remarked to me that Mr. Senator Chalmers of Miss. had told him a day or two ago that if Mr. Buchanan was nominated to the Senate he would vote against his confirmation. I told Judge Mason that I would make no nomination of Judge for the present, and that Mr. Buchanan had brought all his troubles on himself; that I would take my own time, and receive further developments before I made another nomination. I told him [from] all I had learned the same six Democratic Senators, or a faction of them who had voted against Mr. Woodward had formed

a combination with the Whigs to reject Mr. Horn as Collector of Phil'a, and other of my nominations, and that I would wait & see what their course would be. I told him if they did so I would know that Mr. Buchanan countenanced it. I told him I was unexcited but intended to be firm, and that if I found that any member of my Cabinet gave countenance to a factious minority of the Democratic Senators to unite with the Whigs in making war on my administration by rejecting my nominations, he would find me a lion in his path, and that I would not submit to it, whatever the consequences might be. Judge Mason said that among other rumours which he had heard in the streets, one was that if Mr. Buchanan was placed on the Bench, he (Judge Mason) was to be appointed Secretary of State. He said he mentioned [it] to say that he preferred his present position of Attorney General to any other in my Cabinet. He asked me what he should say to Mr. Buchanan in reference to his application to be appointed Judge. I repeated to him that I could make no appointment at present; and that I desired that Mr. B. would go on quietly in the discharge of his duties as Secretary of State, but that I could give no assurances whom I would appoint Judge. In the course of my conversation, Mr. Buchanan's course in this matter & his great sensitiveness about appointments was freely spoken of. I told Mr. Mason that this was Mr. B's great weakness and error; that I was President & responsible for my appointments, & could not delegate the appointing power to him.

TUESDAY, *27th January, 1846.*— This being Cabinet day I saw no company. Mr. Bancroft was the first of the Cabinet who attended. He at once informed me that he had been greatly astonished a day or two before by Mr. Buchanan, who told him he was a solicitor to me for the office of Judge of the Supreme Court of the U. S. He had scarcely given me this information, when Mr. Marcy came in & Mr. Bancroft repeated what he had told me. They were both surprised at it, and disapproved it. I told them I would make no appointment for the present, which they both approved. We continued to talk on the subject, and of the excitement of several Democratic Senators at Mr. Woodward's rejection by the Senate, when Mr. Buchanan entered my office & the conversation ceased. Mr. Buchanan seemed at first to be embarrassed, but soon assumed a more cheerful air and I thought made an effort to make himself agreeable.

All the Cabinet were present except Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, who sent a note that he was detained by indisposition, and Mr. Mason, Attorney Gen'l, who was attending the Supreme Court of the U. States. Our relations with Mexico & Great Brittain were subjects of conversation. Mr. Buchanan read a despatch which he had prepared to Mr. Slidell in Mexico. The character of a despatch to Mr. McLane at London was agreed on. The commercial Treaty negotiated by Wm. H. Polk with the King of the Two Sicilies was considered and approved, and it was agreed that it should be communicated to the Senate for their rat-

ification. After disposing of some minor matters, the Cabinet retired.

Had a dinner party this evening, consisting of between 30 & 40 members of Congress & visitors & the ladies of their families. Mr. James Craighead and Mr. McGavock, both of Nashville, were of the company.

WEDNESDAY, *28th January, 1846.*— Had an unusual crowd of visitors to-day, some of them on visits of ceremony, some asking alms and donations for churches, and many of them most ravenous for office. I directed my doors to be closed at 12 O'Clock, but could not get clear of my kind visitors until near 2 O'Clock P. M.

Mr. Buchanan came in and read a despatch to Mr. Slidell, the U. S. Minister to Mexico. Some alterations were made in it by my direction.

Mr. Mason, the Attorney General, called & informed me that he had communicated to Mr. Buchanan my refusal to appoint him to the vacant seat on the Bench of the Supreme Court of the U. S., but as I was much engaged he did not detail the particulars of his conversation with him.

Mr. Wilmot, a member of the House of Representatives from Pennsylvania, informed me today that his colleague, Mr. Garvin,[1] of the House had informed him that he had called on [at] the lodgings of Mr. Cameron, Senator from Pennsylvania, on Sunday last, and that Mr. Cameron had informed

[1] William S. Garvin, Representative from Pennsylvania 1845–1847.

him that Mr. Buchanan would accept the vacant Judgeship. Mr. Wilmot said that Mr. Garvin informed him that Gen'l Cameron on that occasion in speaking of my nomination of Mr. Woodward and his rejection by the Senate, [said] that Mr. Wescott, one [of] the Senators from Florida, had remarked, and applied the remark to me and my course in nominating Mr. Woodward, that " the only way to treat an ugly Negro who was unruly, was to give him a d—n drubbing at the start, and he would learn to behave himself." The drubbing given to me, according to the low and vulgar language of Mr. Wescott, was the rejection of Mr. Woodward by himself & 5 other professed democrats, united with the whole Whig vote in the Senate. Mr. Garvin, as Mr. Wilmot said, informed him that he was indignant at the remark, and that while the conversation was going on between himself and Cameron, Mr. Wescott, who boarded at the same house with Cameron, came into the room, and Cameron repeated to him what he had informed Garvin, and that he, Garvin, seemed to take it seriously. Mr. Wescott admitted that he had made the remark & repeated it. I cannot express my contempt for a Senator who could be capable of such coarseness and vulgarity. This Mr. Wescott, too, was elected as a Democrat by the Democratic Legislature of Florida. While Mr. Wilmot was in my office, where he related to me the foregoing conversation as communicated to him by Mr. Garvin, Mr. Cameron came in and introduced a friend. He put on a smiling & hypocritical [air], and acted as though he had been

one of my friends. I of course treated him civilly in my own office, but I felt great contempt for him.

Mr. Wilmot had no hesitation in avowing his opinion that Mr. Buchanan had controlled both Cameron and Wescott, and had been the cause of Mr. Woodward's rejection. He asked me if the rumour which was current in the City was true, that Mr. Buchanan was to be appointed to the Bench of the Supreme Court. I told him it was not; that I would take my own time to select a judge, and when I did so he should be my own choice. I told the same thing in answer to a similar question to Mr. Senator Sturgeon[1] of Pennsylvania, who expressed his gratification that such was my determination.

Mr. Wilmot told me in the course of his conversation that Mr. Platt, who is the special friend of Mr. Buchanan, had in conversation with him spoken very harshly of me for nominating Mr. Woodward, contrary to Mr. Buchanan's wishes.

It was communicated to me this evening that the rumour in the City was that Mr. Buchanan was about to resign his seat in the Cabinet. Should he tender his resignation, unless he shall make satisfactory explanations I will accept it and will not regret it. Many other rumours concerning the affair have reached my ears to-day. The whole difficulty has been produced by Mr. Buchanan himself, because he cannot control my appointments. He accepted his place in my Cabinet under the written pledge,

[1] Daniel Sturgeon, 1789–1878, Senator from Pennsylvania 1839–1851.

as did all the members of my Cabinet, that during his continuance in it he would not become a candidate for the Presidency, and yet it is manifest that he desired to control my patronage with that view. I have not permitted this, and have made my own appointments without reference to the succession. I have done Mr. Buchanan full justice, but with this he is not satisfied. I cannot, to gratify him, proscribe good democrats who do not happen to be his peculiar friends or favourites. I am no candidate for re-election, and will, as far as I know it, do justice to all sections of the Democratic party, without reference to their preferences or partialities for me.

Mr. Ritchie & Cave Johnson called to-night to learn the truth or falsehood of the rumours about Mr. Buchanan, which were circulated in the City. They were not in the office at the same time. I told them the facts, &, in answer to a question propounded, each of them said I was right in not appointing [him] to the Bench.

I told Mr. Sturgeon to-day that I would consult him before I made another nomination of Judge, and he thanked me. Mr. Sturgeon is an honest man, has acted well in this whole matter, and I have great confidence in him.

Mr. Buchanan will find that I cannot be forced to act against my convictions, and that if he chooses to retire I will find no difficulty in administering the Government without his aid. What is under the circumstances most remarkable, is that Mr. Buchanan, when on business in my office to-day, suggested that Dr. Joel B. Sutherland would be a fit

person to be appointed to a station in the mint at Phila., soon to become vacant by the resignation of Dr. McClintock, the melter & coiner. This struck me as strange, as Mr. Buchanan had urged me last year to remove Dr. Sutherland as Naval Officer at Phila. and upon his recommendation & that of others I did so.

THURSDAY, *29th January, 1846.*— Saw company as usual to-day until 12 O'Clock. In the course of the morning I received the annexed note[1] from the Hon. Mr. Wilmot of the Ho. Repts., explanatory of the facts which he related to me on yesterday, and which are recorded in this diary of that day.

"Dear Sir;

I called this morning and also last evening, for the purpose of correcting an error into which I had fallen in my conversation with you yesterday morning. I had, it appears, misunderstood Mr. Garvin. He did not understand that Mr. Wescott had made use of the language touching the treatment proper for obstinate negroes in connection with Mr. Woodward's rejection, or in any sense disrespectful to yourself; but merely as illustrating the negro character. Mr. Cameron quoted this remark of Wescott's in connection with the subject of Woodward's rejection, and in such a way as to show that he thought that kind of discipline good for Presidents. Mr. Garvin took exception to such language in its

[1] Wilmot's original letter has been pasted in the Diary at this place, apparently by President Polk himself.

being applied to you, and when Wescott came in Cameron says to him, 'I have been telling your mode of dealing with obstinate negroes, and Garvin dislikes my application of it to the President.'

I have been very anxious to correct this error arising from my misunderstanding of Mr. Garvin, as in the way I narrated it to you, great injustice was done Mr. Wescott; but owing to your engagements at the hours of my calling, have been unable to see you, & therefore have adopted this method.

Very Respectfully
Your Ob't Ser'v't.
D. Wilmot.

His Excellency the President
Jan'y 29, 1846."

It appears from this note that the offensive remark, as applied to me, is to be attributed to Mr. Senator Cameron. Mr. Wescott it seems made the remark as to the treatment proper for the negro, and Mr. Cameron applied it to me in the case of the nomination of Mr. Woodward. It does not appear in what connection Mr. Wescott made the remark, but it does appear that when Cameron repeated it to him as applicable to me he did not disavow the application. I consider both therefore as guilty of gross rudeness & vulgarity.

FRIDAY, *30th January, 1846.*— Saw company until 12 O'Clock to-day. Senators Allen, Jarnigan, & Niles called after 12 O'Clock, but I made my apology to them that I was engaged & they remained

but a short time. Gave another sitting of two hours today to Mr. Healey, the artist, who is taking my portrait.

Had a dining party today consisting of about 40 members of Congress and the ladies of their families. Saw Mr. Senator Semple of Illinois on business after dinner.

SATURDAY, *31st January, 1846.*— Before the Cabinet met this morning Gen'l Cass called and held a conversation with me in reference to our foreign relations and other public subjects. Among other things he adverted to the reference made in debate in the Senate by Mr. John M. Clayton [1] of Delaware, one day this week, perhaps on Wednesday last, to my speech [2] on the Panama Mission in 1826, to show that my opinion then differed from that expressed in my Message, in reference to Foreign interference or colonization on the American Continent. Gen'l Cass stated the fact to me that Mr. Calhoun of S. C. had informed him that he had searched up my speech in 1826 and furnished it to Mr. Clayton. Mr. Cass mentioned [this] to show that Mr. Calhoun was disposed to attack the ad-

[1] John M. Clayton, 1796–1856, Senator from Delaware 1829–1836, 1845–1849, and 1853–1856; Secretary of State under Taylor, 1849–1850.

[2] On April 11, 1826, in connection with the debate on the Panama Mission, one of John Quincy Adams' measures, Polk introduced a series of resolutions in defence of the right of the House to influence treaties by means of its control over appropriations. On April 21 he delivered a speech on the subject. *Cong. Debates,* 19 Cong. 1 Sess. II, Part II, 2166, and *ibid,* 2472.

ministration, but preferred at present to have it done by Mr. Clayton, who was a professed opposition Senator. I think myself it would have been more open and manly for Mr. Calhoun to have used the speech himself in debate, if he desired it to be used to show an apparent inconsistency on my part. But there is no inconsistency between the speech of 1826 and the message of 1845. The subjects treated of at the two periods were of an entirely different character. My speech in 1826 was against forming "entangling alliances" with other nations. My message asserted the great principle that we would permit no Foreign colonization or interference on the North American continent, and that the nations of this continent would regulate their own destiny.

The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present except the Attorney Gen'l. The propriety of forming a commercial Treaty with the King of Hanover, and several other public subjects were considered.

After night Senator Semple called and held a conversation with me in relation to the intended emigration of the Mormons of Illinois to Oregon. I had examined Gov. Ford's letter on the subject, which he had delivered to me on the 30th Instant, & which I have placed on file, and informed him that as President of the U. S. I possessed no power to prevent or check their emigration; that the right of emigration or expatriation was one which any citizen possessed. I told him I could not interfere with them on the ground of their religious faith, however absurd it might be considered to be; that

if I could interfere with the Mormons, I could with the Baptists, or any other religious sect; & that by the constitution any citizen had a right to adopt his own religious faith. In these views Mr. Semple concurred with me. After Mr. Semple left Mr. Senator Breese[1] of Illinois called and had a conversation on business.

Judge Catron and his lady called and spent an hour in the parlour.

SUNDAY, *1st February, 1846.*— Attended the first Presbyterian church to-day in company with Mrs. Polk, my niece, Miss Rucker, & Mrs. Judge Catron of Tennessee.

MONDAY, *2nd February, 1846.*— Saw a large number of visitors to-day, male and female, some to pay their respects and others on business and seeking office. Among others Gen'l Cass called and enquired of me if I cared anything about the confirmation by the Senate of Gov. Morton[2] as Collector at Boston, remarking that he might vote against him on account of his abolition tendencies. I told him he was no abolitionist, and asked him if he had seen a letter written by Gov. Morton to Mr. Bancroft denying the charge, which letter had, I understood, been placed by Mr. Bancroft in the hands of Mr. Haywood of N. C., Chairman of the Committee of Com-

[1] Sidney Breese, Senator from Illinois 1843–1849.

[2] Marcus Morton, 1784–1864, Governor of Massachusetts 1840–1841, and 1843–1844, Collector of Customs at Boston 1845–1849.

merce of the Senate. He said he had not seen it. I told him Mr. Morton was a good officer; that he had been Governor of Massachusetts, and twenty years a Judge of that State; and that the rejection of my prominent nominations by the Senate at the opening of my administration was calculated to weaken my administration before the country, and destroy my power to carry out any of my recommendations of measures before Congress. I told [him] the Senate of course had a right to reject any of my nominations, and I would not complain; but if they were good men & qualified, and were rejected by a few democrats uniting with the whole Whig party, he could well see the embarrassment to all the measures of my administration which it would produce.

I gave Mr. Healey, the artist, who is painting my portrait, another sitting of two hours today.

After night the Vice President of the U. S. & Hon. Charles A. Wickliffe [1] of Ky. called. I had a long conversation with Mr. Wickliffe about Texas affairs.

TUESDAY, *3rd February, 1846.*— Held a regular Cabinet meeting today; all the members present except the Attorney General. Mr. Buchanan read the draft which he had prepared of an answer to Mr. Pakenham's second proposal [2] to refer the Oregon question to arbitration. All concurred in the con-

[1] Charles A. Wickliffe, 1788–1869, Governor of Kentucky 1839–1841; Postmaster General under Tyler, 1841–1845; sent by Polk on a secret mission to the Republic of Texas in 1845.

[2] Pakenham's proposal was made January 16, 1846; Buchanan's

clusion that the offer to refer to arbitration should be rejected. Parts of the paper were discussed at considerable length, but no definitive action was had.

The answer which should be made to the two Resolutions, one of the Senate and the other of the House, calling for information on the Oregon question, was also considered; but both subjects were postponed until to-morrow morning at 9 O'Clock, when it was agreed that a special meeting of the Cabinet should be held and that the Atto. Gen'l should be notified to attend.

WEDNESDAY, *4th February, 1846.*— The Cabinet met this morning at 9 O'Clock, as was agreed on on yesterday, all the members present. The consideration of the answer to Mr. Pakenham's second offer to refer the Oregon question to arbitration was resumed. Several changes of Mr. Buchanan's original draft were made, after discussion, by my direction. The first was to insert as one of the reasons for declining the proposition, the intrinsic difficulty of selecting a suitable arbitrator; the second was to strike out a paragraph which declared in substance that the President did not doubt that [the] Brittish Government were as serious in the belief that they were entitled to a part of Oregon as the U. S. were in the conviction that they were entitled to the whole territory; the third was to strike out a paragraph which declared in substance, as one of the reasons for declining arbitration, that if the President were

reply was given February 4, 1846. Moore, *Buchanan,* VI, 357 and 370.

to agree to it a Treaty to that effect would not probably meet the sanction of the Senate; the fourth was to strike out a paragraph at the close of the paper expressing the opinion in substance that the question could be better adjusted by direct negotiation between the parties than by arbitration; these several amendments, with some others which were either verbal or of minor importance, were made by my direction. Mr. Buchanan took the original draft and retired with it to my Private Secretary's room and made the amendments as directed. He returned and read it over again as corrected, and in that form it was unanimously agreed that it should be communicated to Mr. Pakenham this day.

The answer which should be made to the Resolutions of the Senate and the House calling for any correspondence which had taken place on the Oregon question since the date of the Annual Message, and which in the opinion of the President could be communicated without prejudice to the public interest, was next considered. All except the Secretary of the Treasury were of opinion that all the correspondence which had taken place between Mr. Pakenham and Mr. Buchanan on the subject of arbitration should be communicated. Upon the question whether that portion of the correspondence between Mr. Buchanan and Mr. McLane, the U. S. Minister at London, which related to the military and naval preparations in England, including an official conversation between Mr. McLane and Lord Aberdeen as to the object of these preparations, and also McLane's opinion on this point, should also be

communicated, there was a difference of opinion. Mr. Buchanan thought parts of this correspondence ought to be communicated. All the other members of the Cabinet, except perhaps the Post Master General, who was silent, differed with him in opinion. The Attorney General gave his views at some length. The Secretary of the Navy did so also. The Secretary of the Treasury adhered to his opinion that the communication of any portion of the correspondence, either at Washington or London, would have a bad effect on the action of Congress on the pending question of notice to abrogate the convention of 1827. My first impression was in favour of sending in the correspondence with Mr. McLane, as insisted on by Mr. Buchanan, and I had in conversation with Mr. Buchanan intimated that opinion. I was brought, however, by the discussion which took place, to entertain serious doubts of the correctness of my first impressions. I expressed these doubts, and finally decided with a majority of the Cabinet not to communicate to Congress the correspondence with Mr. McLane, but to send in that relating to arbitration between Mr. Pakenham and Mr. Buchanan. The Cabinet adjourned with this understanding.

The President's Mansion was open for the reception of visitors in the evening, it having been previously announced that they [it] would be so. The company commenced assembling about 8 O'Clock, and a very great crowd were present. Foreign Ministers, the members of the Cabinet, members of Congress, Judges of the Supreme Court, citizens, & strangers were present. The East room & all the

parlours and halls were crowded with ladies and gentlemen. About 11 O'Clock the company retired, no act of disorder or impropriety having occurred.

THURSDAY, *5th February, 1846.*— Saw company until 12 O'Clock to-day as usual. Shortly after that hour Gen'l Cass, with whom Mr. Buchanan had conversed on the subject, called and strongly urged that it was due to Congress & the American people that the correspondence with Mr. McLane on the subject of the Military and Naval preparations in England should be communicated to Congress. In the course of the day he addressed me a note on the same subject, which I have placed on file among the letters which I preserve.

Gave Mr. Healey, the artist, who is taking my portrait, another sitting of 2½ hours to-day. It was very inconvenient to me to lose the time, and I think I am resolved not to sit again for any artist during a Session of Congress. Mr. Senator Turney called after night & held a very friendly conversation, and seemed to be ardent in support of my administration.

FRIDAY, *6th February, 1846.*— Saw company to-day until 12 O'Clock. Among others who called after that hour was Senator Yulee, & held a conversation on various public subjects, and among others [on] his own course on Mr. Woodward's nomination as Judge, and other nominations. He said he had voted against Mr. Woodward because of a letter about the tariff which he had written, and because he was not a free-trade man, and said he would ad-

vise that I should appoint none other than free-trade men to office in the North, & by that means make them feel the necessity of reducing the tariff. I thought this was very weak, though I did not say so to him. I told him that judge Woodward was sounder on that subject and on all the great constitutional questions than any man who was qualified for Judge whom I knew in that Circuit. I told him mine was the power of nomination, & the Senate's of confirmation or rejection, and that I had no right to complain of or find fault with their action, and that I did not do so; but that he must perceive that by rejecting my principal nominations, especially when they were pure, honest, and qualified men, he was weakening the power of my administration to carry out the great measures, reduction of the tariff and others, which he professed to approve. He said in the course of the conversation that if Mr. Buchanan was nominated he would vote against him, for the same reason that he had voted against Mr. Woodward.

I saw Mr. Buchanan to-day, and told him that after much reflection I had changed my opinion in reference to the propriety of sending into Congress, in answer to their Resolutions, the correspondence with Mr. McLane relating to the Military and Naval preparations in England. He said he was very clear that it ought to be sent in. I then told him to have the copies of the correspondence prepared, and I would bring the subject again before the Cabinet, at their regular meeting on to-morrow.

The young ladies of my household & some other

young persons, having obtained Mrs. Polk's assent, had arranged it that Herr Alexander, the juggler or performer of tricks of slight of hand, should visit the President's Mansion and exhibit before a select company. They mentioned it at dinner to-day at 4 O'Clock P. M. About 8 O'Clock P. M. I was in my office with Mr. Senator Allen, when Mr. Bancroft and Mrs. Judge Catron came to my office and said they were deputed by the company in the parlour below to come up & bring me down. I went down, & found some forty or fifty ladies & gentlemen, before whom Mr. Alexander exhibited his art greatly to their wonder and amusement, but as I think not much to their edification or profit. It was, however, innocent in itself, but I thought the time unprofitably spent. I, however, was thinking more about the Oregon & other public questions which bear on my mind that [than] the tricks of the juggler, and perhaps on that account the majority of the company might think my opinions entitled to but little weight.

SATURDAY, *7th February, 1846.*—The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present. I informed them that I had reflected much, since the special meeting of the Cabinet on wednesday, in relation to the propriety of withholding from Congress the correspondence with Mr. McLane in relation to the Military & Naval preparations making in England; that I had on wednesday some doubts on the subject, and had therefore acquiesced in the opinion expressed by a majority of the Cabinet, but

that my subsequent reflection had satisfied me that the correspondence ought to be sent in to Congress. I told them that by sending [it] in I should discharge my duty, and not subject myself to the charge of having improperly withheld it. The subject was again discussed. Mr. Bancroft intimated that his opinion was unchanged. Mr. Buchanan was clear and decided that it ought to be sent in. It being decided by me that a part of the correspondence should be communicated, it was carefully read over & the parts to be communicated agreed on. The copies which Mr. Buchanan had had prepared in pursuance of my directions to him on yesterday were compared with the original. I prepared a short message to the House of Representatives (the Senate having adjourned over on thursday last to Monday next) and my Private Secretary left about 1½ O'Clock P. M. with the message and documents & delivered them to the House.

SUNDAY, *8th February, 1846.*— Attended the first Presbyterian church to-day in company with Mrs. Polk and my two nieces, Miss Rucker and Miss Walker.

MONDAY, *9th February, 1846.*— Saw company to-day until 12 O'Clock as usual. At 1 O'Clock I gave Mr. Healey, the artist, who is painting my portrait, another sitting. He finished the painting and I am heartily rejoiced at it.

Among others who called to-day was Mr. Senator Turney of Tennessee. Mr. T. manifests every dis-

position to be friendly & to give to my administration a zealous support.

TUESDAY, *10th February, 1846.*— The Cabinet met to-day; all the members present except the Attorney General, who was understood to be attending to official duty in the Supreme Court of the U. States. Recent despatches received from Mexico and Brazil were read and considered. Various other matters of minor importance were also considered.

This evening Martin, my porter, delivered to me a sealed letter which, on breaking the seal, was found to be from Henry H. Gilbert, dated at New Hartford, Feb'y 6th, 1846, which he stated was delivered to-day while the Cabinet were in session by the Hon. John Quincy Adams, who informed the porter that he was requested to hand it to me in person. Mr. Adams, as the porter informed me, drove to my door, but did not get out of his carriage. The letter contains nothing remarkable [except] the fact, [which I regard] as a singular one, that it was brought by Mr. Adams in person. I have made an endorsement on the letter, and placed it on my files of letters to be preserved.

WEDNESDAY, *11th February, 1846.*— Saw company as usual until 12 O'Clock to-day. Mr. Cameron of the Senate remained in my office after the balance of the company had retired. He said he wished to have a conversation with me. I told him I would hear him. He commenced by professing friendship for the administration. He said he had

opposed the nomination of George W. Woodward as Judge of the Supreme Court of the U. S. and went on to assign his reasons, which were unsatisfactory though I did not deem it to be necessary to tell him so; indeed I did not think they were the real reasons. I told him that mine was the power of nomination & the Senate's of confirmation or rejection; and when the Senate chose to reject any of my nominations it was their constitutional right to do so, and I had no right to complain, especially if it was done for good reasons or proper motives and not factiously. I told him I was satisfied that Mr. Woodward was the best appointment I could have made in Pennsylvania; that the Senate had rejected him and now I would take my own time in selecting a judge. I reminded him of the conversation he had with me before Mr. Woodward was nominated, in which the names of all the persons presented for the Judgeship had been mentioned; that I had told him I had considerable difficulty on the subject, and that he had replied, "Well, make a nomination and we will support it." He admitted that he had said so, but as I had spoken of Mr. Woodward in the past tense, *viz.*, "that I had thought of him," that his impression was that I was not then looking to him, and with that impression he had made the remark. I told him as he had sought the conversation I would talk frankly to him. He said he desired that I should. I then told him that the public understood that there was a Democratic majority of six in the Senate, and that the effect of rejecting my principle nominations at the commencement of my administration, and especially

as the Senate sat with closed doors & the public could not know the reason of the rejection, was calculated to weaken my administration, and destroy or impair my power and influence in carrying out the influence [influential measures] of my administration. The truth is Mr. Woodward's rejection was factious, Mr. Cameron and five other professed democrats having united with the whole Whig party to effect [it]. And now those by whose votes he was rejected refuse, as the Executive Journal proves, to remove the injunction of secrecy, so that the public may know by whose votes he was rejected. I told Mr. Cameron that since the rejection it had been communicated to me that a coarse and vulgar remark had been made and applied to me, in reference to his nomination, by a professed democrat, at which I had felt indignant, and that remark was, applying it to me for having nominated Judge Woodward, in substance; that the way to treat an ugly or stubborn negro when you first got him, was to give him a d—nd drubbing at the start and he would learn how to behave himself. He immediately denied that he had used such language, although I had not said that he was the person who had used such language. He showed in his manner some confusion. I told him that the first use of these vulgar terms had not been attributed to him; but that afterwards they had been familiarly repeated among members of Congress and others as applied to me. I told him I had done nothing to merit such epithets of reproach; that I had exercised my constitutional power in making the nomination of Judge Woodward, and the Sen-

ate had a right to reject him, but that no man had a right to use such terms. In the after part of the conversation on this point, with a countenance and manner still confused and embarrassed he admitted that such language had been used, but did not say by whom, but denied that it had been applied to me. That it was applied to me, I refer to the statement made to me by the Hon. Mr. Wilmot of Pennsylvania, a member of the House of Repts., some days ago, and recorded in this diary, and also to the note of Mr. Wilmot to me, which I attached to the statement in this diary, Vol. 3.[1]

Mr. Cameron next spoke of my nomination of Mr. Horn as collector at Philadelphia and of his opposition to him. I told him I had long known Mr. Horn; that he was honest & capable and made a good officer; that I had done my duty to the country in nominating him, that there was no good reason for rejecting him, but that the Senate could do as they chose. He admitted that Mr. Horn was honest and qualified, but said he was opposed [to] him, &c. He assigned not a single reason why he should not be confirmed by the Senate. Believing, and indeed knowing beyond all doubt, that Mr. Cameron's real objection to Mr. Horn's [nomination] was that he did not belong to his particular clique in Pennsylvania, I concluded to give him a brief statement of the circumstances under which he had been appointed. I told Mr. Cameron that I knew he was the special friend of Mr. Buchanan, and that he supposed Mr. Horn was unfriendly to Mr. Buchanan

[1] See Diary entry for January 29, 1846.

politically. I told him that early after I came into office that Mr. Buchanan had requested me not to appoint Mr. Horn collector, assigning as a reason that he did not consider him his friend, and that Mr. Buchanan being a member of my cabinet, and desiring to make no appointment, and especially in Pennsylvania, which he could consider as unkind or unfriendly to him, I had promptly yielded to Mr. Buchanan's request & told him I would not appoint him if he desired that I should not; but told him at the same time that I thought well of Mr. Horn; that I had been associated with him in Congress, that he was an unswerving democrat, a uniform and ardent supporter of Gen'l Jackson, that the Gen'l took great interest in his appointment, and that I would like to appoint him, if it had been agreeable to him. I told Mr. Cameron that the matter stood in this way until some weeks afterwards when the Philadelphia appointments were about to be made, when great difficulty was found to exist in deciding between the conflicting claims of different applicants; that in endeavoring from the best lights before me to fill the different offices with good men, and at the same [time] to produce harmony in the party, I had many consultations with Mr. Buchanan and had presented to him the names of three gentlemen of high character and standing, either of whom I was willing to appoint; and that Mr. Buchanan was not satisfied with either of them. The matter was postponed, and in a day or two after I had presented these three names to Mr. Buchanan he called at my office, and in a pleasant way, and voluntarily and without my

request, he said to me, I see your difficulties, and I have come to yield with a good grace my objections to the appointment of Mr. Horn; I know you want to appoint him, and I have no objection; that I told Mr. Buchanan I was rejoiced to hear it, that it would give me pleasure to appoint Mr. Horn, and I knew it would be highly gratifying to our good old friend Gen'l Jackson, and now that objection to him was withdrawn I would appoint him. When I had made this statement Mr. Cameron said Mr. Buchanan had not treated him well not to have communicated these facts to him; & he (Buchanan) had never made a greater mistake in his life than when he had yielded to Mr. Horn's appointment. I told Mr. Cameron that in the other appointments at Phil'a, *viz.,* Mr. Welsh, the Naval Officer; Gen'l Davis, the Surveyor; Mr. Patterson, the Navy Agent; & Dr. Lehman, the P. M., Mr. Buchanan had been gratified; that in the appointment of U. S. Attorney a bitter contest had grown up between the friends of Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Dallas, between Mr. Brewster and Mr. Philips who were candidates for that office, and to settle it I had determined to appoint Judge Pettit who was friendly to both and stood indifferently between them. Mr. Cameron spoke disparagingly of all these appointments except that of Mr. Welsh, and thought Mr. Buchanan had made a mistake in favoring their appointments. He added, too, that Mr. Buchanan had had Mr. Bidlack[1] appointed chargé d'affaires abroad when he

[1] Benjamin A. Bidlack, *chargé d'affaires* to Colombia 1845-1849.

would have been satisfied with an $800 clerkship. I told him it was true Mr. Buchanan had urged his appointment, and I had yielded to it.

Mr. Cameron repeated his determination to support the administration & said Mr. Horn had it in his power by a kind word to have opposition to his confirmation by the Senate withdrawn. He said he was going to Phil'a on to-morrow, & if Mr. Horn would call on him in a friendly way and give him an excuse, he would not continue his opposition to his confirmation; and he said that Mr. Horn might be written to by some friend here to do so. Mr. Cameron then left. I certainly shall not write to Mr. Horn but leave Mr. Cameron to take his own course. I have not the slightest confidence in Mr. Cameron's professions of friendship for my administration. He and others, however, find that I have been firm and decided in relation to the Judgeship, and that after Woodward's rejection I have refused to nominate the man they wish nominated, and they are now, no doubt, satisfied that if Mr. Horn should be rejected in the same way that Mr. Woodward was, by a union of half a dozen Democrats with the whole Whig party, I would probably make my own selection to fill his place, in which they are right, and they have become alarmed for their own safety. They undoubtedly fear to make an open issue with me before the people of Pennsylvania, and this is the explanation of Mr. Cameron's visit to me to-day.

THURSDAY, *12th February, 1846.*— Saw company to-day as usual until 12 O'Clock. Attended to the

business on my table until 2 O'Clock P. M. after which I sat an hour for Mr. Chapman,[1] an artist, who at the instance of the Secretary of War is taking my likeness for the purpose of having medals prepared to be presented to the various Indian tribes.

Mr. Mason, the Atto. General, called and informed me that Mr. Buchanan had informed him a day or two ago that a Mr. Saunderson (whom I do not know) had been to Washington, and on his return to Harrisburg had stated that I had said to Mr. Wilmot of the Ho. Repts. that I would not appoint Mr. Buchanan Judge of the Supreme Court of the U. S. I told Mr. Mason that it was a mistake, that I had not made such a declaration; but that I had, since Mr. Woodward's rejection, kept myself wholly uncommitted as to the person whom I would or would not appoint; and that I intended to wait for further developments as to the course of the small faction of the Democratic party in the Senate who had chosen to call the undivided Whig party in to their aid in the rejection of Mr. Woodward. Mr. Mason spoke of the nomination of Mr. Horn as collector at Phil'a & repeated a conversation he had held with Mr. Buchanan on that subject. I told him I wished to see how this faction of Democratic Senators intended to act on that and other nominations, before I would make another nomination for Judge.

FRIDAY, *13th February, 1846.*— Saw company today until 12 O'Clock. Among others who called

[1] John Gadsby Chapman, 1808–1889. He painted the "Bap-

was Col. Atocha, who called on me in June last. He is a spaniard by birth but says he has become a naturalized citizen of the U. States. He has lived at New Orleans and spent many years in Mexico. He was with Santa Anna [1] when his Government was overthrown last year; was himself arrested, but it being made known that he was a naturalized citizen of the U. S. he was ordered out of the country. He called on me in June last to present claims [2] which

tism of Pocahontas" which hangs in the rotunda of the Capitol at Washington.

[1] Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna was overthrown as President of Mexico by the revolution of December, 1844. He sought refuge in Havana, but returned to Mexico in August, 1846, his return being facilitated by the Polk administration in the hope that when he should become possessed of political power he might yield more readily than the existing government of Mexico to the demands of the United States. On regaining control, however, he disappointed this expectation by adopting a policy of vigorous opposition to our demands and armies. His defeat in the war led to his being discredited a second time and to his retirement from the country in April, 1848.

[2] Atocha was ordered out of Mexico February 26, 1845, because of his supposed political connection with Santa Anna, whose government had been overthrown by the recent revolution. Atocha protested against the order and at the close of the war, as a citizen of the United States, filed a claim for damages before the commission appointed under the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to pass upon the claims of citizens of the United States against Mexico. The commission rejected the claim, and Atocha several times petitioned Congress to reverse its decision and pay his claim, the last time in 1864. On each occasion the Congressional committee, convinced of the injustice of his expulsion from Mexico and of the validity of his claim against the United States for redress, reported favorably upon it.

he had against the Government of Mexico, with a view to have their payment urged by the Government of the U. S.

Col. Atocha stated this morning that since he saw me in June last he had visited Gen'l Santa Anna in his exile at Havannah, and that he had left him a month ago. His conversation with me, he said he desired to be confidential. He represented that Santa Anna was in constant communication with his friends in Mexico, and received by every vessel that left Vera Cruz hundreds of letters. He intimated that the recent Revolution headed by Paredes met Santa Anna's sanction, and that Santa Anna might soon be in power again in Mexico. He said that Santa Anna was in favour of a Treaty with the U. S., and that in adjusting a boundary between the two countries the Del Norte should be the Western Texas line, and the Colorado of the West down through the Bay of San Francisco to the Sea should be the Mexican line on the North, and that Mexico should cede all East and North of these natural boundaries to the U. S. for a pecuniary consideration, and mentioned thirty millions of Dollars as the sum. This sum he said Santa Anna believed would pay the most pressing debts of Mexico, support the army until the condition of the finances could be improved, and enable the Government to be placed on a permanent footing. Col. Atocha said that Santa Anna was surprised that the U. S. Naval force had been withdrawn from Vera Cruz last fall, and that Gen'l Taylor's army was kept at Corpus Christi instead of being stationed on the Del Norte; and that the

U. S. would never be able to treat with Mexico, without the presence of an imposing force by land and sea, and this, Col. Atocha added, was his own opinion. Col. Atocha did not say that he was sent by Santa Anna to hold this conversation with me; but I think it probable he was so. He said he had told Santa Anna he had seen me in June, and that he would see me again as soon as he reached Washington. Col. Atocha requested that this conversation should be considered as confidential. He said he had much more to communicate, but company being in waiting in the Anti-chamber he retired, saying he would call again in a few days.

Gave Mr. Chapman, the artist, who is taking my likeness for an Indian medal, another sitting of 1½ hours to-day.

Mr. Buchanan called, and said, contrary to his rule, he was urged by Mr. Flenniken [?] of Uniontown, Pennsylvania, to see me about an office. He read a letter to himself from Mr. Flenniken. I told him I had been and was desirous to bestow some office on Mr. Flenniken, and was disposed to do so as soon as an opportunity offered and I could do so with propriety. I note the fact of Mr. Buchanan's call because it is the first on the subject of office which he has made since the rejection by the Senate of Mr. Woodward's nomination as Judge of the Supreme Court of the U. S. Since that time Mr. Buchanan has never called except on official business, and has been entirely formal in his intercourse with me. His manner indicates that he has been in a dissatisfied mood.

Gave a Dinner party to-day to about 40 persons. Among the guests were Mrs. Gen'l Alexander Hamilton,[1] now in her 88th year, & George Washington Park Custis, who is the relative of Mrs. Gen'l Washington. The balance of the party consisted of the Secretaries of the Treasury, War, & Navy and their families; of Judges Catron & Woodbury of the Supreme Court & their families; of members of Congress and citizens. Mrs. Gen'l. Hamilton, upon whom I waited at table, is a very remarkable person. [S]he retains her intellect & memory perfectly, and my conversation with her was highly interesting.

SATURDAY, *14th February, 1846.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present. I related to the Cabinet the substance of Col. Atocha's conversation on yesterday. Different members of the Cabinet expressed opinions concerning it. The idea of sending a confidential agent to confer with Santa Anna was mentioned. Mr. Walker was inclined to favour it, & Mr. Buchanan was decidedly opposed to it. I remarked that if such an agent were to be sent, Gov. C. P. Van Ness, former Minister to Spain, would be the best selection in the country. I stated that I did not propose to send such a messenger, but had merely suggested it in view of the information given me on yesterday by Col. Atocha. The subject after a short conversation was dropped. No

[1] Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton, daughter of General Philip Schuyler, 1757–1854. She married Alexander Hamilton in 1780, outliving him half a century.

business of importance was transacted & the Cabinet dispersed at an earlier hour than usual.

Had a small dinner party to-day, consisting of my old college associates & friends, Walker Anderson of Florida, Mr. Senator Haywood, & Mr. Jno. Y. Mason, Attorney Gen'l. Mr. Dromgoole of Va. was invited but did not attend. Mr. Haywood's daughter & niece, Miss Moseley; Gov. Dudley & Daughter; Mr. Henry Ewing of Phil'a & daughter; Mr. Aiken of Nashville; & Mr. Arnold Harris were also of the party.

SUNDAY, *15th February, 1846.*— Attended the first Presbyterian church to-day, in company with Mrs. Polk and my niece, Miss Walker.

MONDAY, *16th February, 1846.*— Saw company to-day until 12 O'Clock. An unusual number of persons called. Among others Col. A. J. Atocha, the Spanish gentleman who held a conversation with me on the 13th Instant, called at an early hour. I gave him an audience of near an hour, when my messenger announced that many persons were in waiting in the Anti-chamber. He had not concluded his conversation, when I told him I would see him at 2½ O'Clock P. M. to-day. After 12 O'Clock I gave to Mr. Chapman a sitting of an hour, who completed the likeness he was taking for Indian Medals.

At precisely 2½ O'Clock P. P. [M.] Col. Atocha called, when I gave him a further audience of more than an hour. He had a long conversation with me

about the present condition of Mexico, and the relations of the U. States with that Government. He repeated that he had left Gen'l Santa Anna at Havanna about a month ago; & repeated also the conversation he had with him as stated in this diary of the 13th Instant. He repeated that Gen'l Santa Anna was in favour of a Treaty between Mexico and the U. States by which the former should, for a pecuniary consideration, cede to the U. States all the country east of the Del Norte & North of the Colorado of the West, and had named thirty millions of dollars as the sum that would be satisfactory. I then remarked that Mexico must satisfy the claims of American citizens, and that if the Government of Mexico had any proposition to make, such as was suggested, it would be considered when made; to which Col. Atocha said no Government or administration in Mexico dared to make such a proposition, for if they did so there would be another revolution by which they would be overthrown. He said they must appear to be forced to agree to such a proposition. He went on to give his own opinion and, as he said, that of Gen'l Santa Anna, that the U. States should take strong measures before any settlement could be effected. He said our army should be marched at once from Corpus Christi to the Del Norte, and a strong Naval force assembled at Vera Cruz, that Mr. Slidell, the U. S. Minister, should withdraw from Jalappa, and go on board one of our ships of War at Vera Cruz, and in that position should demand the payment of [the] amount due our citizens; that it was well known the Mexican Gov-

ernment was unable to pay in money, and that when they saw a strong force ready to strike on their coasts and border, they would, he had no doubt, feel their danger and agree to the boundary suggested. He said that Paredes, Almonte, & Gen'l Santa Anna were all willing for such an arrangement, but that they dare not make it until it was made apparent to the Archbishop of Mexico & the people generally that it was necessary to save their country from a war with the U. States. He said the last words which Gen'l Santa Anna said to him when he was leaving Havanna a month ago was, "when you see the President, tell him to take strong measures, and such a Treaty can be made & I will sustain it." Col. Atocha said the Government of Mexico was indebted to the Archbishop half a million of dollars, and he would be reconciled by an assurance by the Mexican Government that he should be paid, when the consideration should be paid by the U. States. He said Paredes and Almonte were both in favour of such a settlement if they dare make it, and that Gen'l Santa Anna concurring with them would support them in it. He said Gen'l Santa Anna [said] that the state of things could be in such a condition that he could return to Mexico in April or May, and would probably go into power again, but that he & Paredes must have money to sustain themselves. He said that with half a million in hand they could make the Treaty and sustain themselves for a few months, and until the balance was paid. He said that Arista[1] was friendly to the U. States and in

[1] Mariano Arista, commander of the Mexican forces in the

favour of annexation of the Northern Departments to the U. States, and therefore he would favour the arrangement. He said Arista owned a large plantation near Monterey and felt anxious for annexation. He (Col. Atocha) intimated an intention to return to Havanna &, as I inferred, [had] a desire to bear to Gen'l Santa Anna the views of the Government here. To this intimation I gave no reply, my object in the conversation being to obtain information, but not to disclose my own views. Col. Atocha is [a] person to whom I would not give my confidence. He is evidently a man of talents and education, but his whole manner & conversation impressed me with a belief that he was not reliable, and that he would betray any confidence reposed in him, when it was his interest to do so. I therefore heard all he said but communicated nothing to him. He wished me to see Mr. Branch Mars [Brantz Mayer] [1] of Baltimore, formerly secretary of legation to Mexico, with whom he said he was intimate, and who could, he said, give me much information on the subject of Mexican affairs. He concluded by remarking that our difficulties with Mexico never could be settled until we exhibited a strong force on her borders, and showed her that we were determined to demand and to have our rights.

Mr. Buchanan called at my office & submitted to

battles of Palo Alto and Reseca de la Palma, May 8 and 9, 1846; President of Mexico 1850–1853.

[1] Brantz Mayer of Baltimore, Secretary of Legation to Mexico 1841–1843, one of the founders of the Maryland Historical Society and author of several books on Mexico.

me a note from the Prussian Minister dated in January last, proposing to extend the commercial Treaty of 1828 between the U. S. & Prussia, so as to embrace the States of the Zolverin [Zollverein]. I told Mr. Buchanan that I saw no objections to such a Treaty, in which he concurred in opinion with me.

After night to-day I had several visitors; among them Senators Bagby, Atchison, & Sevier. Mr. Bagby held a conversation with me on the subject of Oregon, & Mr. Atchison concerning some appointments in the West. Mr. Sevier said he desired to hold a conversation in reference to himself. He said Gov. Yell [1] had informed him that he had held a conversation with me some days ago in relation to the Mexican Mission. He said that last spring the subject had been mentioned at table at his boarding House, in presence of Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Thompson of Miss., & Mr. Foster of Pennsylvania, with whom he boarded, in which Mr. Buchanan & the other gentlemen had expressed a desire that he should be Minister to Mexico. He said he never afterwards spoke to Mr. Buchanan on the subject, but that the other gentlemen had, and that he at that time had no doubt Mr. Buchanan was friendly to him & desired his appointment. I told him Gov. Yell had spoken to me of him in connection with the Mission some days ago, and that I had told Gov. Yell that Mr. Slidell's nomination had been strongly

[1] Archibald Yell, 1797–1847, Governor of Arkansas 1840–1844, Representative from Arkansas 1845–1846; he became Colonel of the Arkansas Volunteer cavalry in the war and was killed in the battle of Buena Vista.

recommended and urged upon me by Mr. Buchanan; that Mr. Buchanan had requested me, before Mr. Slidell left Washington last Spring, to permit him to communicate to Mr. Slidell that such was my intention if Diplomatic relations should be resumed with Mexico, and that I had declined at that time to give him such authority; that During the summer Mr. Buchanan had repeatedly spoken of Mr. Slidell as the best qualified man in the country for that mission, because among other reasons of his knowledge of the Spanish language. I told Mr. Sevier that his name had not, to my recollection, been brought forward in connection with the Mission. Mr. Sevier said he cared nothing about it, but intimated pretty distinctly that he had reason to believe that Mr. Buchanan was in his favour & would have urged his claims. He was, I thought, not well satisfied with Mr. [B.'s] course, for he said he would not have blamed Mr. Buchanan, if he had preferred Mr. Slidell; but it was clear that he had been under a wrong impression as to Mr. Buchanan's preference. The truth is, I have no doubt, that Mr. S. had been labouring under the impression, until he held the conversation with Gov. Yell, that Mr. Buchanan had desired his appointment, and that I had disregarded his wishes and appointed Mr. Slidell. I told him I had very little personal acquaintance with Mr. Slidell, never having seen him until I came to Washington in Feb'y, 1845, and that I had appointed him on Mr. Buchanan's recommendation. I told him that I was surprised when Gov. Yell had mentioned the subject to me some days ago, & that I had frankly

told the Governor the circumstances under which Mr. Slidell was appointed. I told him that it was due to the good understanding which had existed between us for so many years that he should understand the matter, & that I was glad he had introduced the subject. He expressed a like gratification, and retired apparently satisfied.

TUESDAY, *17th February, 1846.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present except the attorney General, who was understood to be in attendance on the Supreme Court of the U. States. I related to the Cabinet the conversation held on yesterday with Col. Atocha. A conversation in relation to it took place. I expressed the opinion that it would be necessary to take strong measures towards Mexico before our difficulties with that Government could be settled; and I proposed that in addition to Mr. Slidell's present instructions, he should be further instructed to demand an early decision of the Mexican Government, whether they would receive him as Minister or not; and, if they received him, whether they would without unreasonable delay pay the amount due to American claimants; and that if that Government refused to do one or both, that he should leave the country, but instead of returning immediately to the U. States as he had been instructed to do, he should go on board one of our Vessels of War at Vera Cruz, and there remain until he had further instructions from his Government.

I stated that in that event I would send a strong

message to Congress calling on that body to authorize me to cause another demand to be made by Mr. Slidell, from on board the vessel of war, on the Mexican Government to pay our demands, and if this was refused by Mexico, to confer authority on the Executive to take redress into our own hands by aggressive measures. Mr. Buchanan objected to this course and thought Mr. Slidell, in the event he left the country, ought to return to the U. States instead of remaining on board of one of our vessels of War. An animated conversation took place between Mr. Buchanan and myself on the subject. The Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of War, & [the] Secretary of the Navy expressed opinions agreeing with me. The Post Master General inclined to a different opinion, but was willing to acquiesce. It was understood that Mr. Buchanan was to prepare the instructions accordingly. Mr. Buchanan was manifestly in a bad mood, as he has been since Judge Woodward's nomination to the Bench of the Supreme Court of the U. S., and since he has discovered that he can not control me in the dispensation of the public patronage. For several weeks past he has not been pleasant in his intercourse with me; has not heartily co-operated with me, but has been disposed to differ with me, as I think unnecessarily. He is, I am told, deeply mortified that I refused to appoint him Judge of the Supreme Court of the U. States, after Mr. Woodward's rejection by the Senate. I suspect he is seeking some public ground to break with my administration. He knows he cannot be sustained by public opinion if he leaves the

Cabinet because I make my own appointments to office, and am not governed by his wishes when I differ with him in opinion. He knows also that it will not do for him to leave the Cabinet because I would not appoint him Judge of the Supreme Court when he applied to me for that office, after his friends, Cameron, Wescott, & others had united with the Whigs in the Senate & rejected Judge Woodward. I will be careful to give him no other ground of complaint. He may differ with me in opinion on public questions, and when he does, having myself to bear the responsibility, I will control. As long as he will carry out my policy and act faithfully I am willing he shall remain in the office of Secretary of State; when he ceases to do so, he must cease to occupy that position. His melancholy and dissatisfied manner and conversation is already embarrassing to the public interest, and is becoming exceedingly disagreeable to me. I will bear & forbear much in the hope that he may consider better of his course. If I would yield up the Government into his hands & suffer him to be in effect President, and especially in bestowing the public patronage so as to advance his own political aspirations, I have no doubt he would be cheerful and satisfied. This I cannot do.

In less than an hour after he retired from the Cabinet room [he] sent to me by his messenger the rough draft of a very laconic despatch commencing, " I am directed by the President &c." It was not full enough; & I was not satisfied with it. It was accompanied by a note requesting me to make " any

corrections I might think proper in pencil, & return it in time for the mail." I cast my eye over it and told the messenger to tell Mr. Buchanan I would attend to it on to-morrow. In about an hour after the messenger left my office, he returned with a note from Mr. Buchanan assigning reasons against the decision made by me in the Cabinet, and for his dissent. To this note I made no reply; and within an hour the messenger came back with another note on the same subject, to which I made no reply. The draft of the despatch and the two notes, Numbered 1 & 2, I will preserve.

WEDNESDAY, *18th February, 1846.*— Had company as usual to-day until 12 O'Clock. After that hour I was engaged in disposing of the business on my table.

The President's mansion was opened for the reception of company this evening. The Halls and parlours were all densely crowded with ladies & gentlemen, consisting of the Cabinet, other officers of the Government, civil, military, & Naval, members of Congress, Foreign Ministers, citizens, and strangers. The Marine Band were in attendance in the outer Hall. The crowd was very great, but the evening passed off very pleasantly, and between 11 & 12 O'Clock the company retired.

To-day at 1 O'Clock P. M. The French Minister called according to appointment & delivered to me two letters from Louis Phillippe, the King of the French, announcing the birth of two princes,[1] his

[1] The princes whose birth is referred to were Louis Philippe,

grand-children. The Minister was in full Court dress, and delivered the letters with great form. I confess the practice of announcing officially the birth of Foreign Princes to the President of the United States, has always appeared to me to be supremely ridiculous. It has repeatedly occurred since I have been President, and I have found myself constrained to yield to the long practice of my predecessors, and to receive them and make civil & suitable answers to them.

THURSDAY, *19th February, 1846.*— Saw company as usual until 12 O'Clock to-day. Among others who called was the Rev'd Mr. Dean, who had been many years a Christian Missionary in China. He had with him a native Chinese man, who had been converted to the Christian religion. He spoke but little English. I held some conversation with him through Mr. Dean who interpreted. He was about 23 years of age, and appeared to be intelligent. On taking leave of him, and while shaking hands, he expressed in his own language, which was interpreted by Mr. Dean, that he had seen the King of this country, and said he would tell it to his countrymen when he got home. I told him through Mr. Dean that there was no king in this country, but that he had seen a citizen who had been chosen by the people to manage the Government for a limited time. This was explained to him by Mr. Dean, but I am not sure that he comprehended it. There were

Count of Paris, and Robert, Duke of Chartres. The French minister at Washington was Alphonse Pageot.

a number of ladies & gentlemen in my office during the interview, which was an interesting one. He afterwards called on Mrs. Polk in the parlour, but I was not present. I understood that he had said to her, he was glad he had seen the Queen.

Received to-day despatches from the U. S. Consul at Vera Cruz.

On yesterday I did not see Mr. Buchanan, and took no step in relation to the proposed despatch to Mr. Slidell, U. S. Minister at Mexico, an account of which is given in this Diary of the 17th Instant. To-day I addressed a short note to Mr. Buchanan informing him that I had concluded to take no action on the subject for a few days, in the expectation that we must very soon receive further information from Mr. Slidell. I had not changed my opinion, but as Mr. Buchanan dissented from me in opinion I concluded a short delay would not be prejudicial, & especially as I was in daily expectation of hearing again from Mr. Slidell.

About 2 O'Clock Mr. Buchanan called and read to me a note from Mr. Lisboa, the Brazilian Minister, written under instructions from his Government, advising that the United States should without delay acknowledge the Independence of Paraguay. We had some conversation on the subject, & it was agreed that Mr. Buchanan should have an interview with General Alvier [Alvear], the charge d' affaires of the Argentine Republic, who had expressed a desire some weeks ago that the Independence of Paraguay should not be recognized by the U. States. It

was deemed proper therefore to consult him further before acting on the subject.

Mr. Buchanan's manner was formal and our conversation altogether official.

Saw a number of gentlemen on business in my office after night.

FRIDAY, *20th February, 1846.*— Saw company until 12 O'Clock. The Secretary of War called & spent some time with me, examining the credentials of applicants for cadet's warrants to West Point, and consulting with me in regard to the selections to be made. Mr. Walker, Sec. of the Treasury, called and read to Gov. Marcy and myself a letter which he had addressed to the Committee of Commerce of the Senate, to whom has been referred the nomination of James H. Tate of Miss. as Consul at Buenos Ayres. It was in answer to charges preferred before the Committee by Hon. Jacob Thompson of the Ho. Repts. against Mr. Tate, in which Mr. Walker had been indirectly assailed. Mr. Walker's answer is a full & triumphant vindication of himself and Dr. Tate. It was read to me merely to satisfy me of the true state of the facts, & and not for any action on my part. Mr. Walker informed me that since Dr. Tate's arrival in Washington a few days ago, Mr. Thompson had withdrawn the charges against him. Mr. Thompson's course in this matter is not to be justified. In Dr. Tate's absence he made his *ex-parte* charges before the Committee of the Senate in secret session, when no one knew at the time that he

would return. Dr. Tate unexpectedly arrived from Buenos Ayres in Washington, in consequence of the blockade of that port by the combined forces of England & France which had destroyed the commerce of the place and consequently the profits of the office. He returned unexpectedly to every one, with the intention, as he declared, to resign. On reaching Washington he informed me that finding he had been assailed in his absence he determined not to resign, and showed me a correspondence between Mr. Thompson and himself last summer which placed Mr. Thompson in a very awkward situation. He said he felt that his character was now at stake; that he would not resign, but that the Senate must decide on his nomination. Mr. Walker (the Secretary of the Treasury) informs me to-day that Mr. Thompson, since Dr. Tate's arrival at Washington, has withdrawn the charges which in his absence he had made against him before the committee of commerce of the Senate. Mr. Thompson's conduct in this affair was vindictive & without excuse. I refer to the notice of his conduct recorded in this diary before Dr. Tate's return to the U. S., and before his return was anticipated.

Mr. Buchanan called in on business before Mr. Walker had finished reading his letter addressed to the committee of commerce. He remained an hour in conversation, & was more pleasant in his manner than he had been for several weeks past.

SATURDAY, *21st February, 1846.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members pres-

ent. Nothing of importance occurred. Several public matters of minor importance were spoken of. The late news brought by the Steamer Cambria was the subject of conversation, and opinions were expressed concerning it. The impression of all was that it was pacific. Nothing however had been received except what was contained in the Foreign newspapers, no despatches from our Ministers abroad having come to hand. The Cabinet adjourned at an early hour.

About 9 O'Clock P. M. Mr. Buchanan sent to me a despatch received by this evening's mail from Mr. McLane, the U. S. Minister at London. The information communicated by Mr. McLane was not altogether of so pacific a character as the accounts given in the English newspapers had led me to believe. Mr. Senator Turney of Tennessee called in company with Mr. Matlock after night.

SUNDAY, *22nd February, 1846.*— Attended the first Presbyterian church to-day in company with Mrs. Polk, my niece, Miss Rucker, and my nephew, Marshall T. Polk, who had come over from Georgetown College to spend the day with my family.

Immediately after church Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, and Mr. Bancroft, the Secretary of the Navy, called to see the despatch received last night from Mr. McLane, the U. S. Minister at London. About 6 O'Clock P. M. Mr. C. Johnson, the Post Master General, called for the same purpose.

MONDAY, *23rd February, 1846.*— Saw company as usual to-day until 12 O'Clock. Among others Col. Tod[1] of Ohio, the Democratic candidate for Governor of that State, accompanied by the Hon. Mr. Farson of Cincinnati. Col. Tod informed me that he feared the Brittish Government would renew to me the offer which I made last summer to settle the Oregon question on the parallel of the 49th degree of North Latitude, and he said if such a proposition was offered and accepted the Democratic party in Ohio would be defeated. He said that was all he feared in the coming political contest in Ohio. He added further, that if the question of War or peace were submitted to the popular vote in Ohio, a large majority would be in favour of war. I simply replied that no such proposition had yet been made, and that upon the Oregon question I stood precisely where I did at the date of my Message on the 2nd of December last; that all the proposition which had been made since that time was that of arbitration, which he knew had been rejected. I did not inform him what I would do in the event such a proposition as he apprehended would be made by the Brittish Government.

At 1 O'Clock Mr. Bancroft called in & a few minutes afterwards Mr. Buchanan came in, the latter by appointment. Mr. McLane's despatch was carefully read over, and the question considered whether, in view of the additional information communicated of the war-like preparations making by

[1] David Tod, 1805–1868, minister to Brazil 1847–1852, Governor of Ohio 1862–1864.

Great Brittain, it would be proper for me to send a message to Congress recommending similar preparations on our part. After a free conversation on this point, all agreed it was proper to postpone any decision until the meeting of the Cabinet on to-morrow. Mr. McLane, in his last despatch of the 4th Instant, is entirely silent in relation to the receipt of Mr. Buchanan's despatch which was sent out by the Steamer from Boston of the 1st of January, and in relation to the receipt of my private letter to him of the 29th of December last, sent out by the same Steamer, from which the irresistible inference is that he could not have received them. Mr. Buchanan left, and returned in about an hour with a letter from Mr. Hubbard, the despatch agent at Boston, under date of the 1st of January, 1846, stating that he had delivered the despatches from the State Department to Mr. Messer. I told Mr. Buchanan to write immediately to Mr. Hubbard for an explanation, and to know who Mr. Messer, to whom he delivered them, was.

At 9 O'Clock P. M. I [was] waited on by the Hon. Mr. Chapman of Va. and the Hon. Mr. Bauldin[1] of Missouri as a committee to accompany me to the Birth Night Ball in honor of Gen'l George Washington. At about 10 O'Clock I was conducted into the ball-room at Carusi's Saloon. There was a numerous assembly, and among them the Foreign Ministers, with one or two exceptions, all in their Court dresses. It was remarked by several persons in my

[1] Probably James Butler Bowlin, Representative from Missouri 1843–1851.

hearing that neither the VicePresident of the U. States nor any member of my Cabinet were present. This undoubtedly happened from inadvertance, and not from any thought of manifesting from their absence any disrespect to the memory of the great and good Washington. As soon as supper was over I retired.

TUESDAY, *24th February, 1846.*—The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present. Mr. McLane's despatch of the 3rd Instant was read. Mr. Buchanan declared his opinion to be that an answer should be forwarded to Mr. McLane by the packet which will leave Boston on the first proximo, in substance to the following effect, *viz.*, that Mr. McLane be instructed to inform Lord Aberdeen in conversation that the door was not closed by anything which had heretofore occur[r]ed on the Oregon question against any further proposition of compromise which that Government might wish to make; he proposed that Mr. McLane should be informed also that if the Brittish Government made a proposition for the 49th parallel of latitude, reserving for a limited term of 7 or 10 years, as suggested by Mr. McLane in his despatch, the free navigation of the Columbia, and the occupation of their establishments for a like term of years, that such a proposition would be submitted by the President to the Senate in Executive Session for their previous advice. The proposition was discussed at length by the Cabinet. I called upon each member of the Cabinet individually for his advice before I expressed

any opinion of my own. All of them except Mr. Johnson, the P. M. Gen'l, concurred with Mr. Buchanan that such a despatch should be forwarded to Mr. McLane. Mr. Johnson agreed with them that if such a proposition was made by the Brittish Government the President ought to submit it to the Senate for their advice before he acted upon it, but his objection was to communicating this fact to Lord Aberdeen, because it would have the appearance of inviting him to make the proposition, and would be exposing our hand to him; and that seeing it, he would insist that we would take something less. It was answered that this would be no exposure of our hand from which Lord Aberdeen could infer that we would take anything less, but on the contrary might have the effect of preventing him from proposing less, such as that we should concede the free navigation of the Columbia without limitation as to time, a proposition which if made we could not accept. Mr. Johnson did not object to the submission of such a proposition as had been suggested by Mr. Buchanan to the Senate, and even if the Brittish Government insisted that we should concede to them, in addition to the navigation of the Columbia for 7 or 10 years, the Southern Cap[e] of Vancouver's Island below 49°, he thought the President should submit that proposition to the Senate for their advice, but his objection was to making known to Lord Aberdeen what proposition, if made, we would consider or submit to the Senate. Mr. Buchanan finally remarked that he thought he could prepare a despatch which would harmonize the opinions of the Cabinet, and not be objected to

by the Cabinet. It was agreed that he should prepare a draft of a despatch, and that the Cabinet would hold a special meeting to consider it at 8 O'Clock to-morrow night. After a protracted meeting, and without transacting any other business of importance, the Cabinet adjourned to meet at 8 O'Clock to-morrow night.

After night Mr. Senator Haywood called and informed me that there was a scheme on foot on the part of Mr. McDuffie, Mr. Calhoun, and perhaps other Senators to bring forward a Resolution in Executive Session of the Senate advising the President to re-open the negotiation on the Oregon question, and settle it by compromise. He informed me that Col. Benton, to whom it had been made known, had declared to him (Mr. Haywood) that he would oppose it, upon the ground that it would be taking the question out of the President's hands, and that those who moved in it wished to have the credit of settling it. Mr. Haywood told me that Mr. Calhoun & those who followed him would be willing to settle it upon any terms, even if all Great Brittain demanded was yielded to her, whilst Mr. Senator Allen and others from the North West would be satisfied with nothing less than our extreme demand of 54°-40′, and he thought each of these sets of gentlemen had their ulterior or personal objects to accomplish, and were endeavouring to make political capital for themselves in the next Presidential election. He declared that he was himself in favour of compromise, by running a line on the 49° of latitude or something that would approximate that line; that he was in

favour of the notice and after consultation with Senators on both political sides had resolved at the conclusion of Mr. Dickinson's speech, Mr. D. now having the floor, to move the reference of the whole subject to a select committee of nine members, with a view to put the resolution of notice into a shape that would command a large majority of the Senate, without distinction of parties. He informed me that Col. Benton among others approved this course. He informed me also, that he had sought this interview at this time to give me information of what was contemplated by Mr. Calhoun, Mr. McDuffie, and other Senators because he understood that Mr. McDuffie intended to call on me soon on the subject, and he thought I ought to be apprised beforehand of the object of his visit. He suggested also that it would be agreeable to Col. Benton, he knew, if I would at such time as I might select, send for him & consult him on the subject, and I thought Mr. H. seemed to desire that I would do so. He added that Col. Benton had said to him, when enquired of on the subject, that he would with pleasure call on me, at any hour of the day or night I might indicate to him that I desired it. Mr. H. informed me also that when the nomination of Romulus M. Saunders as En. Ex. & minister Plen. to Spain was read in Executive Session of the Senate to-day, he had gone to Col. Benton, knowing that he had no friendly feelings towards Mr. Saunders, and requested him not to oppose his confirmation, and that before the Senate adjourned Col. B. [said] he would make no opposition to him, although he did not like him.

Mr. Haywood then told him that he was heartily glad of it, because he knew that the President had refused to nominate a gentleman as Secretary of Legation because he had learned that he had made a brutal attack on the character of him, Col. B. Col. B. replied that he had known nothing of that, and that he would vote to confirm Mr. Saunder's nomination.

After Haywood left I spent one or two hours in the parlour where there were a number of visitors, ladies and gentlemen. About 9½ O'Clock Mr. Allen of the Senate called, and after holding a conversation with Mr. Stanton and Cullom,[1] who had also called on other matters, I saw Mr. Allen. Mr. Allen had learned something of the contemplated movements in the Senate, of which Mr. Haywood had spoken. He expressed his views on the Oregon question as he had often done before freely. He was for our extreme right to 54° 40′ and nothing less. He said there were certain men in the Senate, alluding evidently to Mr. Calhoun and others, who wished to induce me to compromise the Oregon question by dividing the territory, and that if I did so they would accomplish one object they had in view, which was to break me down and destroy my popularity. He said if I made such a compromise by any division, I would encounter the opposition of nine or ten States in the West and South West. I replied that so far as I was personally concerned that would not affect me, because I was no candidate

[1] Alvan Cullom and Frederick P. Stanton, Representatives from Tennessee; Stanton was Governor of Kansas 1858–1861.

for re-election, and there was no future for me in politics. I remarked further to him that I thought I would seek an opportunity in answer to some 4th of July invitation next summer, or some other fit occasion, to repeat in a letter my determination not to be a candidate. [Mr.] Allen insisted I should not. I repeated that I would do so. Mr. Allen had before expressed to me his wish that I should be a candidate, and I had told him then, and now repeated, that I would not be. I reminded Mr. Allen that I had before consulted him as to my course if the Brittish Government should propose to accede to my offer last summer to compromise by the 49th degree of latitude which had been withdrawn, and [or] a proposition approximating to it, and that he had advised me in that case to submit it to the Senate for their advice before I acted upon it, & that that was the course I had resolved to pursue. When Mr. Allen left it was near 12 O'Clock at night.

WEDNESDAY, *25th February, 1846.*— Saw company for an hour this morning. At about 10½ O'Clock Mr. Calhoun of S. C. and Mr. Colquitt [1] of Geo. were announced. After the company who were with me retired, which was within a few minutes, I received them in my office. Mr. Calhoun handed me a letter marked Private, from Mr. McDuffie, which I opened and read. In the letter he regrets that the state of the weather (there being a snow storm) prevents him from calling on me this morn-

[1] Walter T. Colquitt, 1799–1855, Senator from Georgia 1843–1849.

ing. It relates to the present state of the Oregon question, and his opinions on the subject. It is an important letter and I have placed it on my files.

Mr. Calhoun, as soon as I had read the letter, opened a conversation on the Oregon question. He said he thought it important that some action of a pacific character should go out to England by the Steamer of the 1st proximo, and he asked my opinion of the policy of the Senate in Executive Session passing a Resolution advising the President to re-open negotiations on the basis of the 49th degree of North Latitude. He said Mr. McDuffie was very anxious to present such a Resolution, and went on to advocate the policy of such a movement. I told him that there were many members of the Senate of more age and experience in public affairs than I possessed, and of course they would act upon their own views, but that as he had called on me for my opinion I must frankly say that I could not in the present state of the question advise such a course. For this opinion I assigned my reasons, and asked him if he knew that such a resolution as Mr. McDuffie proposed to offer would command a vote of two-thirds of the Senate, and pointed out to him the fatal consequences of bringing forward such a Resolution if it should receive a smaller vote. I told him that though the proceeding proposed would be in Executive Session with closed doors, we all knew that it would be known in the streets and to the Brittish Minister in less than 24 hours. I told him further that if such a proposition was brought forward by a Senator, there might be members of the Senate who would

vote against it on the ground that the negotiation was in the hands of the Executive, and that on that account it was inexpedient if not improper. I told him I could say to himself and Mr. Colquitt, as members of the Senate and my constitutional advisers, in the confidence of that relation between us, what I had thought it probable I would do if the Brittish Government should propose the 49° or a proposition, if not for that parallel as a compromise, with slight modifications of it. I told him if such a proposition were made by the Brittish Government, I would probably feel it to be my duty to submit it to the Senate in a Confidential communication and ask their advice, before I decided on it. I assigned my reasons for this course. One of the reasons why I did not advise the course proposed to be taken in Executive Session of the Senate by Mr. McDuffie, I did not assign. It was the fact communicated to me on yesterday by Mr. Haywood, that Col. Benton and other Senators would not vote for it, for the reasons assigned by Mr. H., if the movement was made by an individual Senator, when they might vote for it if asked for their advice by the President. I did not feel authorized to assign this reason, Mr. Haywood's conversation with me having been confidential. Mr. Calhoun[1] continued the conversation on the Oregon question, and intimated that I could, without national dishonor, repropose the 49° as the basis of compromise. I told him I

[1] For Calhoun's views at this time see his letter to Thomas G. Clemson, February 25, 1846, in *Annual Report American Historical Association,* 1899, II, 683.

would not do so, and that if a further proposition was made it must come from the Brittish Government. The free navigation of the Columbia River was spoken of, and I repeated to him what I had said in my annual Message, that I would not yield it. He said he regretted I had expressed that opinion in the Message, and spoke of granting to Brittish subjects the right of transit down the river with their furs, to which he thought there could be no objection. I expressed the opinion strongly that the notice should be given, and that until it was given, and we thereby indicated to Great Brittain that we were in earnest in asserting our rights, no proposition for settlement would be made by that Government. The whole tenor of Mr. Calhoun's conversation satisfied me that he was uneasy in his present position on the question, and that he would be willing to make very large concessions to Great Brittain in order to settle the controversy and relieve himself from his position, which was manifestly embarrassing to him. Mr. Colquitt remained a few minutes after Mr. Calhoun retired, and said to me that he had not desired to visit me with Mr. Calhoun this morning, but that he had been induced to do so. He expressed himself to be in favour of the notice in its naked form, but thought it had better be accompanied by some conciliatory expression of opinion on the part of Congress.

After Mr. Calhoun & Mr. Colquitt left I sent for Mr. Buchanan, & related to him the substance of the conversation with Mr. Calhoun. Mr. Buchanan approved what I had said to him.

At 8 O'Clock P. M. the Cabinet held a special meeting, all the members present. Mr. Buchanan read the draft of a despatch [1] which he had prepared to Mr. McLane. It was modified in some of its paragraphs. It was approved by all the Cabinet except the P. M. Gen'l, who repeated his objections as stated at the last regular meeting of the Cabinet, but finally acquiesced in it. The Cabinet adjourned about 11 O'Clock P. M.

THURSDAY, *26th February, 1846.*— Saw company until 12 O'Clock to-day. Gave Mr. Healey, the artist who painted my portrait some days ago, a sitting of between 2 & 3 hours, to enable him to finish a copy of the portrait, which he desired to retain for himself and take with him to France.

About 9 O'Clock P. M. Mr. Senator Haywood called, and gave me a long account of the debate which took place in the Senate to-day on the motion of Mr. Colquitt to modify the resolution of Notice on the Oregon question. He said there was a combination between Mr. Calhoun and a few Democratic Senators with the body of Whig Senators to take the subject out of the hands of the Executive, and that Mr. C. desired to relieve himself from the embarrassment in which his previous course on the subject had placed him. Mr. H. was excited and spoke in strong terms of disapprobation of the course taken by Mr. Calhoun and some other Senators. He avowed himself to be in favour of a compromise on the 49th degree of latitude. He was op-

[1] Moore, *Buchanan,* III, 377.

posed to conceding the permanent free navigation of the Columbia River to Great Brittain, but [said] that he would not object to granting some few ports, or any other easement not materially affecting the settlement at 49°. Beyond this he was unwilling to go, and would fight before he would do so.

Mr. Haywood, who had on a former occasion stated to me objections to the appointment of Mr. Greenhow of Va. as Secretary of Legation to Spain, upon the ground that when editor of a newspaper at Petersburg, Va. a year or two ago he had made a direct personal attack on Col. Benton, had a further conversation on the subject with me. I had committed myself to Mr. Greenhow for the appointment during the last summer, without any knowledge that there were any such objections to him. Mr. Haywood had avowed to me, when he informed me of the objection some days ago, his intention to vote against his nomination if I made it, and had added that his nomination would be regarded by Col. Benton as a personal insult to him, especially after I had been informed what the objection was. I stated that my embarrassment was this, that I had committed myself to Mr. Greenhow last summer, and if I did not nominate him he & his friends in Va., who had taken great interest in him, would consider that he had been treated with bad faith, and if I did nominate him with the knowledge I now possessed, it seemed I would give personal offence to a Senator, & that he would probably be rejected. After some further conversation on the subject, Mr. Haywood suggested that if I could send him abroad

as bearer of despatches or place him in some situation in which it would not be necessary to nominate him to the Senate, it would relieve me of the difficulty. He finally suggested that the matter should rest as it was until he could write to Mr. R. M. Saunders, the Minister to Spain recently appointed, to come to Washington, upon the belief that upon a conference with him the embarrassment might be removed. I assented to the suggestion and he wrote a letter to Mr. Saunders accordingly, at my table, and took it away with him to put into the Post Office. Mr. Haywood left about 12 O'Clock at night.

FRIDAY, *27th February, 1846.*— Saw an unusually large number of visitors to-day. Many called to pay their respects, and many to annoy me about office. The pressure upon me for office has not in any degree abated. It is one of the most painful of my duties to hear these applications, and especially when I have no offices to bestow. There is at present an unusual number of office seekers in the City, who are so patriotic as to desire to serve their country by getting into fat offices. The truth is I have become greatly disgusted with the passion for office, which seems to be increasing.

At the request of Mr. Shank of Cincinnatti, Ohio, who was taking Deguerreotype likenesses of the ladies of the family in one of the parlours below stairs, [and] requested to take mine for his own use, and I gave him a sitting. He took several good likenesses.

At 7 O'Clock Mr. Archer of the U. S. Senate from

Virginia called by previous appointment. His object was to hold a conversation with me on the Oregon question. He expressed himself as being most anxious for a settlement of it, and to avoid war, the horrors of which he depicted in strong terms. I heard his views, which were not new to me, being those entertained by the Whig party generally. I responded to him in general terms maintaining the grounds I had taken in the annual message. He insisted that if the Brittish Government should make another proposition for compromise, I should submit it to the Senate for their advice. I told him if such a proposition was made I would judge of its character, and consider of the propriety of taking the course which he recommended. He was very earnest on this point, and thought it would be my duty to do so. I told him if such a proposition was made by the Brittish Government as in my judgment might with propriety be submitted to the Senate I would see him on the subject before I decided. With this he seemed to be much gratified. He spoke of conversations he had held with Mr. Pakenham on the subject, and in this connection, said he had told Mr. Pakenham to write to his Government not to insist on the free navigation of the Columbia. I told him the perpetual free navigation of that River to British subjects could never be yielded by the U. S., and should any proposition containing it be made it would certainly be rejected. I was cautious in my conversation with him; spoke in general terms, and was careful not to commit myself as to my future course.

This being an evening for re[ce]iving company informally, I accompanied Mr. Archer from my office to the parlour at about 8½ O'Clock, where I found 30 or 40 ladies & gentlemen, chiefly strangers on a visit to the City. Several others called in in the course of the evening, & having left, Mrs. Polk & the family retired from the parlour about 11 O'Clock P. M.

SATURDAY, *28th February, 1846.*—The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present. Several public matters of minor importance were considered and disposed of. Our relations with Mexico were also the subject of conversation. The state of the Oregon question was the one of chief deliberation. Mr. Buchanan brought up for consideration the propriety of sending a message to Congress recommending as a precautionary measure that they should make provision for the public defence. I told him I inclined to the opinion that it should be done, and added that I would be pleased to have the opinion and advice of the Cabinet. No distinct vote was taken or opinion expressed, but enough was said to satisfy me that the members of the Cabinet were inclined to favor the suggestion, unless it was Mr. Bancroft and Mr. Mason, who appeared to doubt the policy of such a message. I remarked that the Secretary of War and Secretary of the Navy had with my concurrence made communications to the Military and Naval committees of both Houses of Congress asking additional appropriations to put the country in a better

state of defence, and I had hoped that Congress would have done so in a quiet way, without alarming the country at home or attracting unnecessary attention abroad. I added that the state of our relations both with Mexico and England required that it should be done. It appeared, however, that it would not be done, unless Congress were roused by a special message, and yet I saw if such a message were sent in to Congress, it would be calculated to produce a panic in the country. After some further conversation at Mr. Buchanan's suggestion the question was postponed for further consideration.

Mr. Buchanan's tone on the Oregon question was bolder and more decided to-day than I had heretofore observed it to be. He expressed his opinion that there was great danger of War, and that the country ought to prepare for defence if War should come. He stated that he had information, from a source on which he relied, that the Whig Senators had held a caucus on Wednesday or thursday last, at which he understood they had come to the resolve that if the President called on the Senate for their previous advice on the Oregon question they would not give it, but [would] throw the whole responsibility on the President. I stated a doubt as to the correctness of this information, as Mr. Archer, a Whig Senator, in the conversation with me on last evening [desired] that I should ask the advice of the Senate if the Brittish Government should make a further proposition. The Cabinet after a long sitting adjourned about 4 O'Clock P. M.

After dark Senator Dickinson of New York called on business.

Being greatly exhausted by constant confinement and labour, I directed my porter to admit no more company to-night. There was a heavy snow Storm and it was a very inclement evening. I needed rest, and was rejoiced at the opportunity to be relieved from company.

SUNDAY, *1st March, 1846.*— The snow-storm which commenced on the night of friday, the 27th ultimo, continued until about 3 O'Clock P. M. to-day. The depth of snow was from 12 to 15 inches. The day was so inclement that none of the family attended church. About 5 O'Clock P. M. Mrs. Polk's brother, Major Jno. W. Childress, came to the President's mansion, having arrived at the City about 2 O'Clock P. M. to-day. He left his residence near Murfreesborough, Tennessee, as he stated, on the 16th ultimo.

MONDAY, *2nd March, 1846.*— Saw company as usual until 12 O'Clock to-day. After that hour Mr. Buchanan, Sec. of State, Mr. Marcy, Sec. of War, [and] Mr. Bancroft, Sec. of the Navy, severally called on official business. I disposed of much business on my table. I had less company and a more quiet day than usual. Mr. Edwin Polk, who is the half-brother of my father, and my nephew, Samuel P. Caldwell, both of Tennessee, arrived, and upon my invitation took rooms in the President's mansion.

After night some company called, & among others Senator Dix [1] of N. York and Senator Allen of Ohio.

TUESDAY, *3rd March, 1846.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present except the Attorney General, who was in attendance on the Supreme Court of the U. States. No business of importance was transacted. Several public matters of minor importance were the subject of conversation. The Cabinet adjourned about 1 O'Clock P. M. Mr. Senator Colquitt of Georgia called this morning and held a conversation on the Oregon question. I expressed to him my desire that the Democratic party and the Senate should harmonize and agree upon some form of Notice, for which they could all vote. I told him I regretted the debate which had taken place in the Senate on thursday last on his amendment, because I thought it calculated to do mischief, and suggested to him whether they could not agree on the House Resolutions, which had passed that body by a vote of more than 3 to 1. He said he would vote for the naked notice, or in any other reasonable form, and was willing if necessary to give up his amendment. I told him my great object was to have harmony in the action of the Democratic party and to have the notice passed by as large a majority as possible.

This being reception evening I spent the evening after 8 O'Clock in the parlour. Some 20 or 30 persons called, members of Congress and others.

[1] John Adams Dix, 1798–1879, Senator from New York 1845–1849.

WEDNESDAY, *4th March, 1846.*— Saw company as usual to-day until 12 O'Clock. The number who called was not numerous, but most of them were seeking office for themselves or their friends. I am ready to exclaim, will the pressure for office never cease! It is one year to-day since I entered on the duties of my office, and still the pressure for office has not abated. I most sincerely wish that I had no offices to bestow. If I had not it would add much to the happiness and comfort of my position. As it is, I have no offices to bestow without turning out better men than a large majority of those who seek their places.

About 6 O'Clock this evening Mr. Senator Speight of Mississippi called, and held a conversation with me on the Oregon question. He spoke of the conflicting views taken by Senators of my position. I told him I stood upon the ground occupied in my message of the 2nd of December last, and expressed to him my anxiety that my friends in the Senate harmonize in their action in carrying out the notice and other measures recommended in that message. The conversation led off to other topics, and among other things Mr. Speight informed me that Senator Mangum of N. C. had informed him that Senator Cameron of Penn. had said to him that Mr. Buchanan was opposed to the modification of the tariff recommended by the Secretary of the Treasury and was using his secret influence to prevent a modification; that many persons from the manufacturing districts in Pennsylvania had visited Mr. Buchanan and urged that sooner than suffer a modification of the

tariff the country had better have war by insisting on 54° 40′, and make no compromise on the Oregon question. Mr. [Speight] expressed in strong terms his disapprobation of Mr. Buchanan's course on the tariff & other subjects, and added that Mr. Buchanan had it perfectly in his power to have prevented the rejection of Mr. Woodward as judge of the Supreme Court. Mr. Speight regarded his course as hostile to the policy of the administration, and said sooner than retain him as Secretary of State he would consent to see him placed on the bench of the Supreme Court of the U. States.

At 7 O'Clock Senators Yulee of Florida & Lewis [1] of Alabama were announced as being in my Private Secretary's office; and in a few minutes Mr. Speight retired. I directed my servant to show the gentlemen into my office whilst I retired for a few minutes to my private chamber. As I was returning to the office, Mr. Senator Hanegan of Indiana called to me from the anti-room door, and seemed to be excited. He spoke of Mr. Haywood's speech [2] in the Senate that day, in which he had undertaken to expound my views on the Oregon question, and seemed, without asking the direct question, to desire to know whether he was authorized to do so. I told him no one spoke *ex cathedra* for me, that my views were given in the annual message of the 2nd of December last, and that I had authorized no one to express any other opinions. He said Mr. Allen had requested

[1] Dixon Hall Lewis, 1802–1848, Senator from Alabama 1840–1848; an extreme advocate of the State-rights doctrine.

[2] *Globe,* 29 Cong. 1 Sess. *App.* 369–378.

him to come and see me on the subject. The conversation with Mr. Hanegan was of but a few minutes duration and took place standing in the passage near the door of the anti-chamber.

On going into my office, I found Mr. Yulee & Mr. Lewis there and, as I anticipated, they had called to see me on the subject of Oregon. Unlike Mr. Hanegan they expressed themselves to be greatly delighted at Mr. Haywood's speech in the Senate today. Mr. Lewis spoke of the war-tone of the speeches of Mr. Allen and others, as giving to the notice a War-like aspect, and as Mr. Allen was chairman of the committee of Foreign affairs he was supposed to speak my sentiments. I repeated what I had but a few minutes before [said] to Mr. Hanegan, that my views were contained in my message of the 2nd of December last, and that no one was authorized to speak for me *ex cathedra.* I said that I had truly set forth in that message my opinions & position; that I did not regard the Notice as a war measure, but if passed by a decided majority of the Senate, as it had been in the House, that it would prove to be pacific. I urged harmony in the Democratic party, and expressed the hope that the notice would not be lost in consequence of differences of opinion as to the form the resolution of notice should assume. I told Mr. Lewis that if the notice was lost the Democratic party were in danger [of] being so distracted and divided in Congress that my recommendations for reduction of duties on the tariff and all my other measures would be lost also. I expressed an anxious desire to effect a reduction of the

tariff, and again urged harmony on the Oregon question.

Whilst in conversation my servant announced that the company were assembling in the parlours below, this being leveé evening on which the drawing room was open for the reception of visitors. We accordingly upon the announcement repaired to the parlours. A very large company assembled, filling the East-room & all the other parlours. All the Cabinet, most of the Foreign Ministers, many Senators & Representatives, and many citizens & strangers, ladies & gentlemen, were present. At about 11½ O'Clock the company retired, having been orderly and well-behaved, no circumstance occur[r]ing to disturb the enjoyment of the evening.

Mr. Dallas, the Vice President, mentioned to me during the evening that he understood it was now probable that Mr. Horn, who had been nominated to the Senate as collector of Phil'a, would be rejected, and he wished to put me on my guard, in that event, against a movement which he understood would be made for the appointment of his successor. He intimated that the plan would be to have a dozen or more citizens of Phil'a here, whose object would be to have a successor appointed to suit the views of those who were opposed to Mr. Horn's confirmation. I made no reply, but am resolved, if Mr. Horn is rejected, to disappoint those who cause the rejection.

I venture the remark in reference to the feverish excitement of members of the Senate on the question of Notice on the Oregon question, that it all proceeds from the ambitious aspirations of certain lead-

ing members of that body. For example Mr. Calhoun probably thought by opposing the Notice at the early part of the Session, that he would best advance his views upon the Presidency, by placing himself at the head of the peace party in the country. He now finds his mistake and is struggling to extricate himself from his embarrassment. By his influence he induced 16 Democrats in Va. & So. C. in the House to vote against the notice, and now that he is probably convinced of his mistake, and finds that he will not be sustained by either party in the country, he feels bound not to desert these friends in the House whom he has caused by their votes to commit the same mistake. Mr. Allen, on the other hand, will hear to no compromise under any circumstances, and would probably prefer war to peace, because it might subserve his ambitious views. Mr. Cass takes the same view that Mr. Allen does, as probably his best chance of reaching the Presidency, and therefore he acts with Mr. Allen, but is not so ultra or ardent. Col. Benton feels that he lost cast[e] with Democracy on the Texas question, and feels sore and dissatisfied with his position. In the midst of these factions of the Democratic party I am left without any certain or reliable support in Congress, & especially in the Senate. Each leader looks to his own advancement more than he does to the success of my measures. I am fortunately no candidate for re-election, and will appeal to the people for support. If the notice is defeated it will be by the war between these factions.

THURSDAY, *5th March, 1846.*— Saw company as usual until 12 O'Clock to-day. Among others Gov. Anderson[1] of Maine called, and in the course of a long conversation expressed his conviction that the party would be so divided & distracted in 1848 that I would be compelled to stand again as a candidate for the Presidency, & that the Democracy would demand it of me. I told him that it was not to be thought of; that I desired to harmonize the party if possible, & carry out my measures, but that I was sincere in the declaration which I had often made that I would not be a candidate for re-election.

Mr. Heister Muhlenberg called after 12 O'Clock. He is the son of my old friend Henry A. Muhlenberg[2] of Penn. He complained that Gov. Shunck[3] had proscribed his father's friends in his appointments to office, and he hoped I would not do so. I told him I had not done so and would not do so. He said he wished some one of his father's friends to be appointed Treasurer of the Mint at Phil'a, and had some further conversation on the subject and retired.

Mr. Buchanan called on official business an hour after Mr. Muhlenburg left and I authorized him to say to him that I would appoint him (Mr. Muhlen-

[1] Hugh J. Anderson, Governor of Maine 1844–1847.

[2] Henry Augustus Muhlenberg, 1782–1844, Representative from Pennsylvania 1829–1838, minister to Austria 1838–1840. He was the Democratic nominee for Governor in 1844, but died suddenly just before the election.

[3] Francis Rawn Shunk, 1788–1848, Governor of Pennsylvania 1845–1848.

burg) Treasurer of the mint if he would accept it. Mr. B. said he would request him to call and see me.

Transacted official business with the Secretary of War.

About 8 O'Clock P. M. Mr. Muhlenburg called again, as he said Mr. Buchanan had informed him I desired to see him. I told him I had requested Mr. Buchanan to invite him to call again, for the purpose of saying to him that if he would accept the office of Treasurer of the Mint at Phil'a, I would appoint him. He thanked me & said he was much gratified at the offer, but that he desired no office, & declined it. He said if I would appoint Mr. McCully of Phil'a County, he would be as much obliged as to receive the office himself.

Mr. McKay,[1] chairman of the com. of Ways & Means, called by appointment. I had a long conversation with [him] about the tariff, and urged him in reporting a bill to the House to preserve the ad valorem principle. I had heard that the committee were about to introduce specific duties on iron & a few other articles, it was for that reason that I had requested an interview with him. He agreed to report the Bill retaining the ad valorem principle.

Senator Cass called this evening, and expressed deep regret at the unpleasant & excited debate[2] which occurred to-day in the Senate between Messrs. Haywood, Hanegan, & Allen, and expressed the de-

[1] James J. McKay, 1793–1853, Representative from North Carolina 1831–1847.

[2] *Globe,* 29 Cong. 1 Sess. 458–460.

sire that I would not become excited in consequence of it. I told him certainly not. He said Mr. Hanegan was impulsive and hasty, and without my saying a word to him or any one else he would see that Mr. Hanegan put the matter right and did me justice at the meeting of the Senate on monday, to which day that body had adjourned. I told Gen'l Cass that I regretted such collisions between my political friends. I told him that my opinions on the Oregon question were contained in my annual message, and that no one was authorized to express any other opinion for me; that I thought that message was written in plain English & was easily understood. I told him that gentlemen had a right to discuss that message and draw their own conclusions from its plain import, and that no one had a right to attribute to me any other opinions. Gen'l Cass said he agreed [with] me entirely, that it was in bad taste and all wrong to do so. He said he desired to keep peace and harmony in the party and prevent any outbreak between any of the party and myself, & for that purpose he had called tonight. I learned from Gen'l C. & others that the speech of Mr. Hanegan had been very violent. He condemned it, but said he would endeavour to have the matter put right by Mr. Hanegan himself. I told him I would be very calm and go on and do my duty, and my friends in Congress must discharge theirs according to their views of propriety.

FRIDAY, *6th March, 1846.*— Had company today as usual until 12 O'Clock. Shortly after 12 O'Clock

Mr. McDuffie of S. C. and Mr. Burt[1] of S. C. called, and as Mr. McDuffie walked with difficulty, I met them in the parlour below. Mr. McDuffie spoke to me in behalf of young Mr. Hammond of S. C., the brother of the former Governor of that State, who desired to be appointed a Paymaster of the army or have a commission in the line, if the army was increased at the present Session of Congress.

The debate in the Senate on yesterday on the Oregon question was spoken of. Mr. McD. regretted it. I expressed myself as I had done to Gen'l Cass on last evening and to others on the subject, and repeated that no one in the Senate was authorized to speak for me any other opinions or sentiments than were contained in the message. I urged the importance of harmony in the Democratic party and of giving the notice. Some further conversation took place on the Oregon question & the tariff.

In taking my evening walk I met with Senator Turney of Tennessee, who walked with me. He condemned the debate in the Senate on yesterday, and said if he could have obtained the floor he had intended to have vindicated me from the insinuation that I held any other opinions than in the message and the correspondence of the Secretary of State. I repeated to him what I had said to Gen'l Cass, Mr. McDuffie, and others. He spoke in strong terms of

[1] Armistead Burt, 1802–1883, Representative from South Carolina 1843–1853, author of the Burt amendment to the Oregon Bill in 1847.

his support of my administration on the Oregon & other subjects.

This being an evening for the reception of company, I saw several persons, ladies & gentlemen in the parlour.

SATURDAY, *7th March, 1846.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present. Several public subjects were considered and disposed of. The propriety of my making a communication to Congress recommending that provision be made for the public defence, as a precautionary measure in view of the unsettled state of our relations with England and Mexico, was considered, but after some discussion it was concluded to postpone it until after the arrival of the next Steamer from England, which was expected in about two weeks from this time. The same subject was discussed in Cabinet on saturday the 28th ultimo, and is recorded in this diary of that day.

About dark Senator Speight of Mississippi called and informed me that he had been informed that a caucus had been held by a few democratic Senators from the North West, whom he called the ultras, on the Oregon question, and had appointed a committee of their number to wait on me and demand whether I intended, if it was offered, to accept as a compromise the 49th parallel, or to stand up to 54° 40′. He said several Senators had learned the fact, whigs as well as democrats, and had requested him to come and let me know it. I informed him that I would have no difficulty in answering them if they

called, that I had not heard of any such caucus before, but that my answer would be an easy one, by referring them to my message and the public documents, and that that was all I could or would do. Mr. Speight spoke of Mr. Haywood's speech and the debate in the Senate on thursday last, and said Mr. Haywood's speech and the views which he attributed to me were argumentative, and derived solely from the Message and published documents, portions of which he read, and that in no part of the speech did he undertake to speak for me or to give my views, otherwise than he derived them from the document. I told him he could not have done so, for neither he nor any one else was authorized to speak for me or of my opinions, except as they were contained in my message and the correspondence of the Secretary of State for which I was held responsible.

Mr. Speight left after having been with me about half an hour, and in less than two minutes Mr. Senator Hanegan of In. and Mr. Senator Atchison of Missouri were announced. I took it for granted that they were the committee of which Mr. Speight had given me notice, though in their whole conversation they did not announce the fact that they were so, or that any caucus of Senators had been held. I received them courteously and entered into conversation with them on indifferent subjects. Very soon Mr. Hanegan introduced the Oregon subject and the debate in the Senate on thursday last. He spoke freely and strongly in condemnation of Mr. Haywood's speech. I told him I had not seen Mr.

Haywood's speech as it had not been printed, as far as I knew. He spoke of his having undertaken to speak my views. I told him my views were to be found in my message and the published correspondence, and that no man was authorized to speak for me upon any other authority; that in the message I thought I had spoken plain English, that it was before the Senate and the public and was of course public property and subject to criticism and comment in debate, and that gentlemen had the right argumentatively to form their own opinions of it & draw their own conclusions. I told him that Mr. Senator Allen had made a speech a few days ago, and had drawn his own conclusions and expressed his own opinions of my views, and when interrogated by Mr. Senator Johnson of Maryland whether he spoke my views by authority had answered that his only authority was my message and the published documents; that Mr. Haywood I supposed had done the same thing and had drawn different conclusions. He said Mr. Haywood had been interrogated by himself and Mr. Allen and had refused to answer, to which I remarked I could not of course know Mr. Haywood's reasons for declining to answer, but that some one who had mentioned the subject to me had supposed that it might have been in consequence of the violent and excited manner in which the question was asked. Mr. Atchison remarked that Mr. Allen's manner was so violent that he would not himself have answered it, if he had been in Haywood's place. I told Mr. Hannegan that I deeply regretted these dissentions in the Democratic

party, and expressed a hope that they would yet harmonize and act together in carrying out the recommendations of my message. I told him I had spoken plainly in that message; that I had recommended the Notice, the extension of our laws & jurisdiction over our citizens in Oregon, and the other measures enumerated in the message, and in my judgment it was wiser to act upon these recommendations than to guess or conjecture what I would do in the future, and upon a supposed case condemn and denounce me in advance; that, in other words, what I had done was before the country; act upon that, and if I did anything hereafter it would be time enough to condemn it after I had acted. Mr. Hannegan expressed his friendship for me, and seemed disposed from his tone, manner, and expressions to remove any impressions which might exist on my mind that he intended to attack and denounce me in advance in his speech in the Senate on thursday last. He then propounded in substance this question: Do you go for the whole of Oregon up to 54° 40′ or will you compromise and settle the question at 49°? I answered him that I would answer no man what I would do in the future; that for what I might do I would be responsible to God and my country and if I should hereafter do anything which should be disapproved by himself or others, it would be time enough to condemn me. I told him that what I had done on the Oregon question was before the world, and had, I believed, been approved by himself and, as far as I was able to learn, by the country generally. He replied, yes, that was so. I

responded to him, wait then until I act and then approve or condemn what I may do. Mr. Atchison then said he thought I was right in that, and that what I had said was satisfactory. I said, I am charged with the Foreign relations of the country, and it was unheard of that the President should declare in advance to any one out of his Cabinet his intentions in reference to them. Mr. Hannegan became calm and expressed the friendship which he had ever felt for me. He seemed to be in a good humour and after some general conversation, in which I reiterated that my public message and the published documents contained the opinions which the public had a right to discuss, and protested against declaring what I would do in advance, or to be condemned in advance for what any one might suppose I would do. I urged harmony in the Democratic party, and that the notice and other recommendations in my message concerning Oregon should be carried out by my political friends in Congress. A short time before Mr. Hanegan and Mr. Atchison left, my servant announced that Senator Allen had called. After they left Mr. Allen came in. I received him courteously; and after a few minutes he introduced the same subject upon which I had been conversing with Mr. Hanegan and Atchison. I expressed to him in substance the same views which I had to them. He was much excited and spoke freely of Mr. Haywood's speech, said it was a deliberate attack on him, and that he (Haywood) professed to speak my views. I repeated to him in substance what I had just said to Mr. Hannegan and

Atchison on this point, and added that some who had heard it [him] had said to me that it [he] was altogether argumentative, deriving his conclusions from his construction of the message & published documents. I told him that among others Mr. Buchanan had informed me that a Senator had informed him that he so understood it, and that it was impossible it could be otherwise, for I had not authorized him or any one else to speak for me out [side] of these documents. Yes, said Mr. Allen, that was Senator Dix who had informed Buchanan and that he understood it; & added that Haywood spoke the sentiments of four Senators who were the friends of Gov. Wright[1] of N. York, and repeated that the speech was a deliberate attack on him and intended to degrade him as chairman of the committee on Foreign Affairs. He said he would not stand in that position; and that if he had not been of his party he would have hewed him down in the Senate, but he desired to avoid an outbreak and had abstained. I expressed my deep regret at this state of things among my political friends, and expressed the hope that the difficulty might yet be reconciled. I reminded Mr. Allen that when he himself had made a speech a few days ago on the Oregon question, he had been interrogated by Senator Johnson[2] of Maryland to know whether he spoke by my au-

[1] Silas Wright, 1795–1847, Senator from New York 1833–1844, Governor of New York 1844–1846.

[2] Reverdy Johnson, 1796–1876, Senator from Maryland 1845–1849, and 1863–1868; Attorney General under Taylor, 1849–1850.

thority, and that he had very truly & properly answered that he did not, but that he spoke from my message and the published documents; and that it was impossible that Mr. Haywood could have spoken from any other authority for I had given him none, and that Mr. Haywood would not say that he did so. I expressed the hope that the notice would be passed, and added that if my political friends in the Senate became divided and distracted on this question it was certain that the Whigs would take advantage of it, and that my administration and its usefulness to the country would be destroyed at the first session of Congress after its commencement. I told Mr. Allen that I had done my duty in the recommendations I had made, and it remained for Congress to decide upon them. I told him that Mr. Haywood had been my personal friend from our college days to this time.

At this stage of the conversation I was sent for by Mrs. Polk to go to the parlour to meet company who were there. I still remained and the conversation continued. I reminded Mr. Allen that in the early part of the Session I had consulted him as to the course I should pursue, if the Brittish Government should propose the 49°, which I had offered last summer, or some proposition equivalent to it, and that he had concurred with me that in that event it would be my solemn duty to submit such proposition confidentially to the Senate in Executive Session for their previous advice before I acted. I told him I had in like confidence consulted Gen'l Cass and one or two other Senators on the same

point, who concurred in opinion that I would be bound to submit such a proposition to the Senate for their advice. I told him that Mr. Haywood, with whom my relations had been good from the time I was at College with him until this time, had held a like confidential conversation with me, and I had told him that if such a proposition was made such would probably be my course. Mr. Allen seemed to be much excited, so much so that I inferred from his conversation that he might make it a personal matter with Mr. Haywood. He declared his intention to put the matter right in the Senate on monday. At this stage of the interview the conversation was broken off by the appearance of Maj'r Andrews & Mrs. Stevenson of Nashville in my office, who said they were deputed as a committee from the company in the parlour below stairs to wait on me & take me down. I invited Mr. Allen to accompany us, but he declined; but before he left I agreed to see him on to-morrow at 3 O'Clock, although not in the habit of seeing company on the sabbath.

I found fifty or more persons, ladies & gentlemen, in the parlour; Mr. Demptster,[1] a celebrated musician, entertained the company by singing and playing on the Piano. Among the company I found Mr. Hannegan, who had, as I learned, after he left my office, gone to Mr. Ritchie's and accompanied his daughters back to hear the music. He seemed

[1] William Richardson Dempster, 1809–1871, a popular composer and ballad singer who set to music many of Tennyson's poems.

to be in a good humour and appeared to enjoy the company & entertainment.

My Private Secretary informed me that he had seen Mr. Haywood, who informed him that the opinions expressed in his speech in the Senate were derived from my message and the Documents and not from any other authority from me.

SUNDAY, *8th March, 1846.*— Though somewhat indisposed from cold and constant confinement and attention to business, I attended the first Presbyterian church to-day, in company with Mrs. Polk, my niece, Miss Rucker, and my nephew, Samuel P. Caldwell of Tennessee.

Mr. Edwin Polk of Tennessee was taken ill on yesterday, and was quite so to-day. Dr. Miller attended him. He was confined to his bed all the day.

At 3 O'Clock P. M. Senator Allen called according to the appointment made last night. The subject of the debate in the Senate on thursday last on the Oregon question was renewed by him. He was still much excited towards Mr. Haywood and avowed his intention to vindicate his own honour and reputation on the floor of the Senate. The whole matter was again talked over, as it was last night, in the conversation detailed in yesterday['s] diary, with himself and with Mr. Hannegan and Mr. Atchison, I repeating to him that no one was authorized to speak by authority from me, except from the message and published documents. Mr. Allen took from his hat a written paper which he had prepared, containing what he proposed to say

in the Senate. He read it, and as well as I can remember from hearing it a single time it was in substance that he was authorized to say that I had asserted the U. S. title to Oregon up to 54° 40′ and that I had not changed my opinion, and had not authorized Mr. Haywood to express any other opinion: He read it for the purpose of obtaining my assent to it. I told him I could give no authority to him or any one else to say anything in the Senate; that I had given no such authority to Mr. Haywood and I would give none such to him; that I did not wish to be involved in the matter & that what he said he must say on his own responsibility. I told him that his statement as read embraced only a part of what I had said in the message, and that all I had said in that paper was necessary to a full understanding of my position and opinions. I told him he could say what he pleased on his own responsibility, but not on mine or by my authority. I told him I stood on my published opinions and acts, and that if I should change these opinions or took any further action on the Oregon question, and deemed it proper, I would send a message to Congress. He seemed to be disappointed that I withheld my assent. He became however more calm & rational in his conversation, and left, I thought, in much better feeling than he was last night, or when he came in to-day. Judge Mason called about 6 O'Clock & told me he had held a long conversation with Mr. Haywood last night on the subject of his speech in the Senate & the debate of thursday, and that Mr. Haywood had told him that he had in his speech ex-

pressed his views as he derived them from my message & the documents and that he had no other authority from me, and that he had so expressly declared in the speech itself. He said further that Mr. Haywood read to him a part of his speech, written before it was delivered, to that effect. He said that Mr. Haywood had assigned this fact & the manner in which the interrogatory was put to him in the Senate for not answering it.

This whole excitement in the Senate has grown out of the aspirations of Senators and their friends for the Presidency. Mr. Allen has such aspirations himself. Mr. Haywood probably prefers Gov. Wright of N. York. Gen'l Cass has aspirations but is more prudent than some others. Mr. Calhoun has aspirations. My fear is that these factions looking to the election of my successor in 1848, will so divide and weaken the Democratic party by their feuds as to defeat my measures and render my administration unsuccessful and useless. Each one of the factions doubtless desire[s] to use the administration for their own advancement, and out of this circumstance has grown the excitement & unfortunate collision in the Senate. They will all be disappointed. I am not a candidate for re-election myself and will lend myself to none of them. I will not be identified with any of them. I will do my duty to the country & if my measures fail the responsibility shall rest where it belongs.

MONDAY, *9th March, 1846.*— Saw company today until 12 O'Clock. An unusually large number

called, and among them Mr. Senator Jarnigan of Tennessee, who held a voluntary conversation on the Oregon question, which I heard but to which I did not respond, nor did I express any opinion. He avowed his intention to vote against Mr. Colquitt's amendment [1] to the Resolution of Notice, and to vote for the notice. He said he had differed with his Whig colleagues from Tennessee in the House & he had told them so. He said he thought we had the best title to 54° 40′, but that would not prevent him from agreeing to a compromise at 49° if a Treaty should be made, but that he would not vote to advise such a Treaty before it was made. These declarations were voluntarily made and were not elicited or invited by me.

Mr. Buchanan called on business about 1 O'Clock. He made some inquiry about the debate in the Senate on thursday. I related to him confidentially the conversations I had held on saturday and on yesterday with Senators Speight, Hannegan, Atchison, & Allen. He approved all I had said to them, and expressed the opinion that Mr. Haywood ought to avow in the Senate that he had no authority from me for the opinions he had expressed in his speech.

Hon. Romulus M. Saunders, En. Ex. & Min. Plen. to Spain, called and spent an hour. He expressed a desire that the present Secretary of Legation should be retained for the present. During the last summer I became committed to Mr. Greenhow of Richmond to appoint him, if it was agreeable to the minister, but only on that condition. I informed

[1] *Globe,* 29 Cong. 1 Sess. 466 and 469.

Mr. Greenhow at the time that the wishes of the minister must be consulted. It is perhaps fortunate that the minister desires to retain the present [Secretary of Legation], because objections to Mr. Greenhow which were not known to me last summer have been communicated to me by Mr. Haywood of the Senate which would make it embarrassing to nominate him to the Senate, and if nominated the probability is he would be rejected by the Senate. Mr. Saunders stated to me to-day that he had understood some time ago that his habits were not regular. He mentioned also that as he passed through Richmond he learned that a state's warrant had been issued against him, and that it was an objection to his leaving the country while it was pending. For these reasons he will not be appointed.

TUESDAY, *10th March, 1846.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day, all the members present. Despatches were received last evening from Mr. Slidell, the U. S. Minister to Mexico, which were read, and the character of a despatch to be transmitted to him was agreed upon.

Mr. Buchanan read the instructions[1] which he had prepared for Mr. Harris, the chargé d'affaires of the U. States to the Argentine Republic, which were considered and agreed to.

A letter from the Emperor of Morocco to the President objecting to Mr. Carr, the U. S. Consul appointed during the last year, as not being acceptable to the Government, and also a letter from Mr.

[1] Moore, *Buchanan,* VI, 442–449.

Carr were read & considered. It was agreed that in consequence of other objections to Mr. Carr, his usefulness as consul was impaired if not destroyed, and that it was expedient to recal[l] him, as soon as it could be done without degrading him. He had been imprudent but not guilty of an offence which would justify his removal, but that it would be impossible to explain this to a Barbarian power such as Morocco. It was agreed therefore that as soon as Mr. Carr could with propriety be transferred to some other office another consul should be appointed to Tangiers in his place.

Some other public matters of minor importance were considered.

Judge Mason remained after the cabinet adjourned. He informed me that he had seen Mr. Haywood of N. C. yesterday and again this morning, and that Mr. Haywood had informed him that he would if necessary take a suitable occasion to declare in the Senate that in his speech on the Oregon question he had not spoken by my authority, but from my Message and the published documents on the subject. Mr. Mason told me further that Col. Benton & Mr. McKay of N. C. as well as himself had told Mr. Haywood that it was due to me, to himself, and to the public that he should do so. Mr. Mason informed me also that Mr. Haywood was writing out his speech for the press, in which he said he had expressly disclaimed having spoken by my authority.

This being reception evening I saw company in the parlour.

WEDNESDAY, *11th March, 1846.*— Saw company to-day as usual until 12 O'Clock. At 1 O'Clock I gave Mr. Healey, the artist, another sitting for another Portrait which he desired to take with him to France. Another artist, Mr. Debouser [?], was in the room at the same time, taking my miniature likeness. I was repeatedly called to my office during the sitting by calls of members of my Cabinet on business.

At 2 O'Clock I received Mr. Beaulieu, the Minister resident from Belgium, who called with the Secretary of State to be presented according to Previous appointment. The Minister appeared in his Court dress, and after delivering to me an address to which I responded, he handed to me a letter from his sovereign.

In the course of the morning Col. Benton called & introduced his brother-in-law, Gov. McDowell [1] of Va., who was recently elected a Representative in Congress from Va. He, Col. B., informed me that he had recent intelligence from the army at Corpus Christi representing that great disorganization existed in the camp, growing out of a contest among the officers concerning lineal and brevet rank, which he wished to bring to my attention, and desired to know at what time I could see him on the subject. I appointed 8 O'Clock this evening. At that hour Col. Benton called, and after reading to me a letter from Col. Hitchcock, and a memorial of more than 100 officers of the army at Corpus

[1] James McDowell, 1795–1851, Governor of Virginia 1843–1845, Representative from Virginia 1845–1851.

Christi calling upon Congress to settle by legislation the question in dispute between lineal and brevet rank, Col. B. said that the Committee on Military affairs in the Senate of which he was chairman were unanimously of opinion that no legislation was necessary, but that the President as commander in chief of the Army possessed the power by a General Order to settle it. He called my attention to a General Order issued by President Jackson on the 13th of August, 1829, when the same question had arisen. Gen'l Jackson by that order had decided in favour of giving command to lineal over brevet officers. The present difficulty had grown out of a letter by Gen'l Scott during the month of Nov. last, in favour of brevet over lineal rank. Col. Benton was clear in the opinion that Gen'l Jackson's orders should be re-affirmed, and that all orders or opinions subsequently issued or expressed by Gen'l Scott or others in conflict with Gen'l Jackson's order of 1829 should be abrogated and annulled. Concurring with him in opinion I told him it should be done. This subject being disposed of the Oregon question was introduced, and I remarked to Col. Benton that I regretted the division and excitement which seemed to prevail among the Democratic Senators on the subject of the form of the notice. I told him I regretted also that instead of discussing the recommendations of my message and the opinions expressed in that paper and the published correspondence, the debate seemed to have taken a strange direction; that instead of examining and discussing my views as communicated in these documents, Senators had been

guessing or conjecturing what I might do hereafter, and were approving or condemning what they supposed I might or might not do. I told him that no one was authorized to speak for me out of the message and documents; that these were of course fair subjects of criticism and construction. He concurred in these views, and expressed himself freely on the course of Senators Allen & Calhoun and some others, which he condemned. He expressed a fear that Senator Colquitt's proposition about notice would pass by the votes of a few democrats (Mr. Calhoun & others) and the united Whig party, and that the only way to defeat it was to take Senator Crittenden's proposition.[1] I told him I had but an indistinct recollection of the terms of Senator Crittenden's proposition, having read it casually when it appeared in the City Newspapers. He urged me to examine [it] and if I approved it to speak to some of my friends in the Senate and induce them to accept it. I told him I would examine it on the morrow.

The general question of Oregon was then the subject of conversation. He said he would support a Treaty dividing the country on the 49th parallel of latitude, or some settlement which would make the 49° the basis. I told him in the present state of the matter I would make no proposition, but I would

[1] John J. Crittenden, 1787–1863, Attorney General under Harrison and under Taylor and Fillmore. His proposition was that the President at his discretion should give notice to Great Britain of the termination of the joint occupancy of Oregon. *Globe,* 29 Cong. 1 Sess. 351.

say to him confidentially that if the parallel of 49° was offered, or that parallel with perhaps a modification surrendering the Southern cap[e] of Vancouver's Island to Great Brittain, my present impression was that it would be my duty to submit it to the Senate for their previous advice before I acted on it. This he decidedly approved. I told him if Great Brittain offered 49° and insisted on the perpetual free navigation of the Columbia River, I would reject it without submitting it to the Senate. I told him I would never surrender the perpetual free navigation of that River, but that if the Navigation was desired for a term of 7 or 10 years to enable the Hudson's Bay company to wind up their business that would not be important, and such a proposition might be submitted to the Senate for their advice. In these views he concurred. I told Col. B. that these suggestions were made to him very confidentially, and not [to] be used or spoken of in any way, for if no such proposition were made it would never be necessary to act upon it. Col. B. was in a pleasant temper and spoke in a kind spirit.

THURSDAY, *12th March, 1846.*— Saw company as usual until 12 O'Clock to-day.

Mr. Buchanan called and read the despatch to Mr. Slidell which he had prepared in pursuance of the agreement in Cabinet on tuesday last. Some modification, not on any important point, was made at my suggestion.

I told Mr. Buchanan of the conversation I had held with Col. Benton, particularly in regard to the

form of the notice. I turned to the proposition of notice offered by Mr. Crittenden, which Col. Benton had expressed a desire I should examine. Some parts of the preamble we both thought exceptionable; the resolution itself with some modification we thought might do. The most objectionable part of the Resolution was that which proposed to postpone the time of giving the notice till after the close of the present Session of Congress. It was agreed that Mr. Buchanan should consult Senators Cass and Allen and see if any modification of it could be made which would unite the Democratic Senators. I had 30 or 40 persons, members of Congress & citizens, to dine with me to-day.

FRIDAY, *13th March, 1846.*— Saw company until 12 O'Clock to-day. The Senate was not in session today & several senators called after 12 O'Clock. Mr. Seddon of Va. of the Ho. Repts., accompanied by Mr. Robert G. Scott, called and enquired my opinion upon the Harbour Bill now before the Ho. Repts., & particularly to know if an appropriation were inserted in it to improve James River below Richmond, whether it would in my opinion be subject to any constitutional objection; Mr. Seddon remarking at the same time that he would vote against the whole bill. I told them that I had not examined the item they mentioned for James River nor those in the Bill with care, but that I must remain wholly uncommitted on the subject, should the Bill pass Congress & be presented to me for my signature. Some general conversation took place on the subject

of Internal Improvements. I told them that when in Congress I had voted against all such bills; that the question as to harbours was attended with its difficulties and that I must remain uncommitted until called to act.

SATURDAY, *14th March, 1846.*—The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present. Several public subjects were considered, but none of special interest. Mr. Buchanan told me he had seen Mr. Allen & Mr. Cass concerning Mr. Crittendon's proposition of notice, as it was understood he would do in our conversation on thursday. He said that they agreed with him & myself that a part of the Preamble was decidedly objectionable. He simply mentioned this fact, but went into no further detail of his conversation with them. Senator Lewis called after night and held a long conversation on the subject of the Oregon question, and the notice. I told him as I had others that my opinions were to be found in the message and published correspondence; that these were fair subjects of discussion; but that it was improper to declare what I might or might not do hereafter; that if any proposition was made by Great Brittain, I would be responsible for whatever action I might take upon it. I urged the giving of the notice, and told him the divisions and excitement which had grown up in the Senate were well calculated to weaken & embarrass the Executive. He seemed to be much excited at the course of Mr. Allen, Mr. Hannegan, and others on the subject; approved Mr. Haywood's

speech as [and] said Mr. H. had not professed to speak for me, except from the message and documents. The conversation then turned on the tariff.

Hon. Romulus M. Saunders of N. C., Minister to Spain, called & informed me that he had told Mr. Greenhow of Richmond that he had expressed to me his desire to retain Mr. Livingston, the present Secretary of Legation in Spain, and that he (Mr. Greenhow) would not be appointed.

My brother-in-law, John W. Childress of Tennessee, who had spent near two weeks on a visit and been a part of my family during the time, left this evening for home.

SUNDAY, *15th March, 1846.*— My Private Secretary, J. Knox Walker, had an increase of his family by the birth of a daughter about 3 O'Clock this morning, as I learned from the family.

Attended the first Presbyterian church to-day in company with Mrs. Polk, my niece, Miss Rucker, and my relation, Mr. Edwin Polk of Bolivar, Tennessee.

MONDAY, *16th March, 1846.*— Saw company until 12 O'Clock today, as usual. At 2 O'Clock P. M. gave Mr. Healy another sitting for my portrait. Mr. Debosier was also present taking my miniature. These sittings for artists are becoming very irksome and fatiguing, and I think I will not again yield my consent to sit for any other, at all events during the Session of Congress when my time is necessarily so much occupied by my official duties.

TUESDAY, *17th March, 1846.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting today; all the members present. Mr. Buchanan read the draft of a message [1] which he had prepared and which he proposed I should send to Congress, on the subject of discriminating duties which had been levied by Great Brittain on American rough rice imported into England in violation of the Commercial convention of 1815 between the two countries; and the discriminating duties which had been collected by the U. S. under the tariff act of 1842. The proposition to send a message was approved by the Cabinet. The draft of the message & the correspondence between Mr. Pakenham & Mr. Buchanan on the subjects and other documents were left with me for my examination. No other business of importance was brought before the Cabinet.

At 5 O'Clock P. M. between 70 & 100 members of the Methodist Protestant church, now holding a conference in this City, called on me in a body. On receiving them a short address was delivered to me by one of their members, to which I responded.

WEDNESDAY, *18th March, 1846.*— Saw company today until 12 O'Clock. After my doors were closed Mr. Senator Crittenden of Kentucky was announced, & I received him. He called to introduce some of his friends from Kentucky, a Mr. & Mrs. Jones, whom he remarked very pleasantly were good Democrats. Shortly after Mr. Crittenden retired,

[1] Moore, *Buchanan,* VI, 427–428.

Mr. Senator Webster of Massachusetts called and introduced Mr. Harvey of Boston.

At 2 O'Clock I gave Mr. Healy, the artist, another sitting to take my portrait. Mr. Debousier was also present taking my miniature. Mrs. Polk had given them a sitting in the morning for her Portrait & miniature.

After night several Senators & representatives called. Among them Mr. C. J. Ingersoll, Ch. Com. of Foreign affairs of the Ho. Repts., [who] wished to consult me in relation to our relations with Mexico. I learned tonight that Commodore Crane of the U. S. Navy, committed suicide in his office in the Navy Department this afternoon.

THURSDAY, *19th March, 1846.*— Saw company to-day until 12 O'Clock. Many ladies as well as gentlemen called. After 12 O'Clock saw the Secretaries of State and the Navy on business, and disposed of many small matters of business on my table. At 2½ O'Clock P. M. rode out with Mrs. Polk, and visited West['s] painting [1] of Christ Healing the sick, now exhibiting at the Baptist church in this city; visited also Mr. Healy's full length portrait of Mr. Guizot, the present prime minister of France, now deposited in the American Institute, in the building occupied by the Patent Office.

Received notes from Mr. Senator Lewis & Mr. Dickins, Secretary of the Senate, requesting me to

[1] Benjamin West, famous painter, 1738–1820. His "Christ Healing the Sick in the Temple" was painted in 1802; a copy hangs in the Pennsylvania Hospital at Philadelphia.

withhold the Commission of Mr. Isaac H. Wright as Navy Agent at Boston, of whose confirmation I was officially notified on yesterday. Mr. Dickins called at 5 O'Clock and stated to me that the nomination had not in fact been confirmed, but that the notification of his confirmation had been sent to me on yesterday by a mistake of himself and his clerks. He requested me to return the notification to him, stating that the error had been fully explained in Executive Session of the Senate to-day. I had sent the notification to the Navy Department to have a commission made out, but will send for it and return it to the Secretary of the Senate on to-morrow.

FRIDAY, *20th March, 1846.*— Saw company today until about 11 O'Clock, when I learned from Mr. Heiss, one of the proprietors of the *Union,* that he had received by express the European news by the Steamer which had just arrived. He handed to me "Welmer & Smith's European Times" of the 4th of March, 1846. I closed my office in a few minutes and read to the Attorney General and Secretary of State the news contained in the paper.

At 2 O'Clock P. M. I gave Mr. Healy & Mr. Debousier another sitting for my portrait and miniature.

At 8 O'Clock received visitors informally in the parlour. Forty or fifty persons, ladies & gentlemen, called; among them the Russian Minister, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Navy and several members of Congress. These informal reception evenings twice a week (on Tuesdays & fri-

days) are very pleasant, and afford me moreover an opportunity to devote the other evenings of the week to business.

SATURDAY, *21st March, 1846.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present except the Attorney General. Despatches received by the last Steamer from our Ministers at London and Paris were read, from which it appears, as I had apprehended, that the delay of Congress to act upon the recommendations of my message on the Oregon question had operated prejudicially in England.

The Senate of the U. S. passed on the 17th Inst. a Resolution [1] calling upon the President to know whether in his opinion an "increase of our Naval and military force" was "at this time" necessary. This Resolution was brought up for consideration, and I read to the Cabinet the draft of a message in reply to the call which I had prepared, expressing the opinion that as a precautionary measure such increase was proper. The subject was discussed, and the Cabinet were unanimous in the opinion that the Resolution should be answered, and that the views contained in the message which I had prepared were proper. One or two additional points were suggested by members of the Cabinet as proper to be embraced in the message. It was agreed that the draft of the message should be revised, and as it was

[1] *Globe,* 29 Cong. 1 Sess. 510. The President's message is in Moore, *Buchanan,* VI, 428–431; also *S. Doc.* 248, 29 Cong. 1 Sess.

deemed important that it should be communicated to Congress on monday next, it was agreed that a special meeting of the Cabinet should be held to-morrow night at my office. Mr. Buchanan at my request took my draft of the message for examination, and to make any suggestions which might occur to him as being proper. The Cabinet dispersed about 1½ O'Clock, and at 4½ O'Clock Mr. Buchanan returned to my office with a new draft embodying substantially what I had written, but making the draft more warlike than I had done. He left both drafts with me. I sent for the Attorney Gen'l (who had been detained at his office on official business) and informed him of what had transpired. I requested his attendance at the special meeting of the Cabinet to be held to-morrow night.

I saw at different times to-day and to-night Mr. Douglass[1] of Illinois, Mr. Tibbatts[2] of Ky., Mr. Stanton, and Mr. Chase[3] of Tennessee, and urged upon all [of] them the great importance of acting promptly upon the recommendations of my annual message in relation to Oregon. I called to their recollection that the Democratic party were in a decided majority in both Houses of Congress, that nearly four months of the Session had expired, that very little had been done, and that the Democratic

[1] Stephen A. Douglas, Representative from Illinois 1843–1847, Senator 1847–1861.

[2] John W. Tibbatts, 1802–1852, Representative from Kentucky 1843–1847.

[3] Lucien B. Chase, 1817–1864, Representative from Tennessee 1845–1849.

party would be held responsible by the country for the delay, and for the failure by Congress to act upon these and the recommendations of the message on other subjects. I told them that I desired Congress to approve or disapprove of my measures as recommended in my annual Message, and that I thought it important that they should act promptly upon them. Each of them promised me that they would set to work and if possible induce the Ho. of Repts. to do so.

SUNDAY, *22nd March, 1846.*— Attended the first Presbyterian church to-day in company with Mrs. Polk and my two nieces, Miss Rucker and Miss Walker.

My nephew, Samuel P. Caldwell of Tennessee, who has been for some time a member of my family, received a letter today informing him that his father, who had been ill for some time, was not expected to survive for many days, and containing a request from his mother that he should immediately return. The letter was from Dr. Harris of Whiteville, Tennessee, one of the attending physicians of his father. He received the letter at 3 O'Clock P. M. and left for home by the cars at 5 O'Clock P. M.

Between 7 & 8 O'Clock P. M. the members of the Cabinet came in, agreeably to the understanding on yesterday. The subject of the message to the Senate in answer to their Resolution of the 17th Instant, being that on which they had convened, was taken up. I had made some modifications of my own & Mr. Buchanan's draft, which he had fur-

nished me on last evening as stated in yesterday's Diary. A long discussion took place on the several paragraphs of the two drafts. Mr. Buchanan seemed wholly to have changed the tone he had held during the whole of last year on the Oregon question. Up to within a recent period he had been most anxious to settle the dispute on the parallel of 49° and had often declared that he would take the whole responsibility of such a settlement. Some of the discussions showing this fact are recorded in this diary, and will be remembered by the whole Cabinet. He [his] dread of War & anxiety to avoid it by a compromise has been often expressed to me, in and out of the Cabinet. He recently mentioned to me, that Gen'l Cass, he thought, was making political capital by insisting on our extreme rights on the question, and [by] his course in favour of warlike preparations. Within a few days past it is pretty manifest to me, that Mr. Buchanan has manifested a decided change of his position, and a disposition to be warlike. His object, I think, is to supersede Gen'l Cass before the country, and to this motive I attribute his change of tone and the warlike character of his draft of my proposed message. I think he is governed by his own views of his chances for the Presidency. It is a great misfortune that a member of the Cabinet should be an aspirant for the Presidency, because I cannot rely upon his honest and disinterested advice, and the instance before me is clear evidence of this.

Among other things which Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Walker (and the latter has probably Presiden-

tial aspirations) desired to have inserted in the message, was an implied but strong censure of the Senate for not having passed the notice. This paragraph was opposed by Mr. Bancroft and Mr. Mason. I expressed myself against it as not within the scope of the call of the Senate, as unnecessary, and as bringing me in collision with the Senate. I agreed that the delay to pass the notice was censurable, and had embarrassed the question, but thought it was not my duty or my province to lecture the Senate for it. Its insertion in the message was first suggested by Mr. Walker on yesterday, and was interlined in my draft for consideration merely, and not because I was willing to adopt it. After the discussion I remarked to the Cabinet that I would take both drafts and prepare a message, but was not certain that my engagements on to-morrow would enable me to do so in time to send it to the Senate before tuesday. I will preserve the two original drafts, my own and Mr. Buchanan's, for future reference if need be. I regret the necessity of holding this Cabinet meeting on the evening of the sabbath day, but at the time it was agreed upon, it [was] deemed important to do so.

MONDAY, *23rd March, 1846.*— Saw an unusually large number of visitors to-day up to 12 O'Clock when I closed my doors. After being occupied in indispensible official business until 2 O'Clock P. M., I took up the Subject of the proposed message to Congress in answer to their Resolution of the 17th Instant, which had been discussed at the Cabinet

meetings on saturday and last evening. I prepared a new draft of a message, embodying substantially what was in my first draft and not adopting the strong language of Mr. Buchanan's draft, and leaving out the proposed censure on the Senate for not having passed the notice on the Oregon question.

At 6 O'Clock P. M. Mr. Bancroft, who had been invited to do so, called. I submitted to him the new draft which I had prepared. He approved it, and made one or two suggestions, particularly quotations from General Washington's writings. Mr. Bancroft voluntarily mentioned to me the manifest change of Mr. Buchanan's tone and position on the Oregon question, which he had observed within a few days past. He attributed it, as I did, to his aspirations to the Presidency. About 8 O'Clock P. M. Mr. Senator Allen called, as I had requested my Private Secretary to request him to do. As chairman of the committee of Foreign Relations in the Senate, I thought it proper to apprise him of the message which I intended to send in answer to the call of the Senate. I did so and read to him my revised draft of it. I asked him if he saw any objection to it, and he said he did not, but thought it proper to send it in.

He introduced the subject of Mr. Haywood's late speech [1] on the Oregon question, and taking the *National Intelligencer* newspaper from his pocket, read a part of it which related to him (Mr. Allen), and said it did him great injustice. He was still dissatis-

[1] Speech of March 4 and 5, 1846. *Globe,* 29 Cong. 1 Sess. *App.* 369–378.

fied with Mr. Haywood, & repeated much of what he had said on a former occasion about him. I expressed my sincere regret at the state of feeling between him & Mr. Haywood, as they were both my friends. Mr. Allen said he would be willing to give bond and security that he would not be a candidate for the Presidency in '48, and he added that he was not acting a part to support Gen'l Cass's pretensions, & indicated clearly that he was not in favour of Cass.

He then adverted to my position if Great Brittain should return upon me the offer of 49° which I had made last summer as a compromise of the Oregon question; and admitted that he had said to me in the early part of the Session that if the offer of 49° was returned upon me I ought to submit it to the Senate for their previous advice before I acted upon it. He however insisted that I ought to accompany such submission to the Senate with a decided declaration of my own opinion against its acceptance, but declaring that if twothirds of the Senate advised otherwise, I would conform my action to their advice. I told him I was still of the same opinion I had been at the early part of the Session, of which I had informed him at that time, and that was that if 49° or its equivalent [was offered] I would submit it to the Senate for their previous advice, but did not inform him what message I [would] accompany the submission with, further than the remark that I would probably reiterate what I had said in my annual message. I told him if such an event happened I would show him my message before I sent it in to the Senate. Between 10 & 11 O'Clock P. M. Mr. Allen retired.

TUESDAY, *24th March, 1846.*— I revised the draft of my message this morning before breakfast, and about 9 O'Clock A. M. gave it to my Private Secretary to copy. The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day, all the members present. As soon as my Private Secretary had finished copying the message [1] I read it to the Cabinet. No alteration was made except a verbal one. I signed it & sent it to the Senate.

No other measure of importance came up for consideration in the Cabinet, and about 1 O'Clock it adjourned. I occupied the balance of the day until evening in disposing of the business on my table. This was one of the informal reception evenings & near one hundred persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

WEDNESDAY, *25th March, 1846.*— Saw a large number of visitors to-day. Among them was John Ross [2]; and a delegation of Cherokees [who] called on the business of their Tribe. I held a few minutes conversation with them, and received from them certain papers which they delivered to me relating to the existing difficulties among the Cherokees. In a short time after they retired, The Secretary of War and [the] Commissioner of Indian affairs called & consulted me in reference to the Cherokee difficulties. The Commissioner informed me that he

[1] Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents,* IV, 426.

[2] John Ross, 1790–1866, principal chief of the Cherokee nation and a leading opponent of the sale of the land of the tribe to the United States in 1828.

would have his Report on the subject prepared & ready to submit to me in a few days.

A delegation of the Tonawanda band of the Six Nations of Indians of New York called and held a talk with me in relation to the business of their Tribe, in the presence of the Secretary of War & the commissioner of Indian affairs. I informed them that the Secretary of War & [the] Commissioner of Indian affairs would attend to their business, and after they had investigated it I would, if the delegation desired it, see them again on the subject.

Four Englishmen who were of the Society of friends called. They were intelligent men and informed me that they had just returned from a tour through Indiana & some other of the Western States and that they would soon return to England. They expressed their great desire that peace should be preserved between the U. S. & Great Brittain. They said they spoke as christians and not as Englishmen or partisans or politicians. They urged the great importance of suppressing the African slave trade, and one of them had commenced speaking on the subject of slavery as it existed in this country, but was interrupted by company coming in. I treated them courteously. Among others who came in while they were in my office was Gen'l Waddy Thompson,[1] former minister of the U. S. to Mexico. The four Englishmen left shortly afterwards. Gen'l Thompson expressed a desire to make a communication to me on Mexican affairs which he deemed important,

[1] Representative from South Carolina 1835–1841, minister to Mexico 1842–1844.

and I appointed to meet him at my office at 12 O'Clock on friday next.

At 2 O'Clock P. M. I gave Mr. Healy & Mr. Debousier another sitting for my portrait and miniature. Mrs. Polk gave them a sitting for her likeness this forenoon. These sittings are becoming exceedingly fatiguing to me, and I think I cannot be induced to sit for any other artist during the Session of Congress.

About 8 O'Clock P. M. Mr. C. J. Ingersoll & Mr. Cullum [1] happened to call at my office near the same time. Among other things the policy of moving an appropriation in the House placing a million of dollars at my command to be used in effecting an adjustment of our differences with Mexico, was the subject of conversation. I had some days ago suggested it to Mr. Ingersoll who is chairman of the committee of Foreign affairs of the Ho. Repts., & he had favoured it. We agreed that it was important that such an appropriation should be made, & I left it to their discretion to move it or not as they might judge best. The conversation was strictly confidential.

THURSDAY, *26th March, 1846.*— After receiving company as usual to-day up to 12 O'Clock I closed my doors and was busily occupied the balance of the day in disposing of the business on my table. Among other things which engaged my attention, Mr. Morrison of Memphis, Tennessee, called and delivered to me a letter from Mr. Stanton of the Ho. Repts. complaining that the work on the Memphis Navy Yard had been so long delayed, and was likely to be

[1] Alvan Cullom, Representative from Tennessee 1843–1847.

delayed much longer. I sent for Mr. Bancroft and expressed to him my strong conviction that the work on the Yard should be speedily commenced and prosecuted to its completion. I urged upon him the public importance of closing a contract with some responsible bidder at the lowest cost for the execution of the work, or of causing it to be executed under the superintendance of the Engineers or agents of the Government. Mr. Bancroft said he would give his immediate attention to the subject. Whereupon I called in Mr. Morrison, whom I had requested to wait in my Private Secretary's room. Mr. Bancroft had some conversation with him and requested him to call at the Navy Department in the course of one or two hours. About 4 O'Clock P. M. I saw Mr. Bancroft and learned from him that he had conferred with Mr. Morrison & Commodore Warrington,[1] who was at the head of the Bureau having charge of the subject, and had caused the necessary orders to be issued for the execution of the work, and that Mr. Morrison would take authority home with him to carry the orders into effect.

About 7 O'Clock Mr. Buchanan submitted to me instructions which he had prepared to [for] Mr. Mann[2] (who is to go to Europe as a bearer of despatches by the next Steamer which will sail on the 1st proximo) to conclude a commercial Treaty with

[1] Lewis Warrington of Virginia, Chief of Bureau of Yards and Docks 1842–1846.

[2] A. Dudley Mann. His instructions are in Moore, *Buchanan,* VI, 434: the treaty is in *U. S. Stat. at Large,* IX, 857–868.

the Kingdom of Hanover. I approved the instructions.

The Hon. Mr. Rusk,[1] one of the Senators from the State of Texas, I learned took his seat in the Senate of the United States to-day.

FRIDAY, *27th March, 1846.*— Company called to-day as usual until 12 O'Clock, when I closed my doors. Among others Maj'r John H. Bills of Boliver, Tennessee, called with his daughter, Mary, on his return to Tennessee from the North. His daughter had been at school in Pennsylvania. Being my relations I invited them to take rooms in the Presidential mansion and they did so.

I was engaged until 2 O'Clock in disposing of the business on my table, when I gave Mr. Healy and Mr. Debousier another sitting for my portrait and miniature. At 8 O'Clock P. M., this being reception evening, I received company in the parlour. More than an hundred persons, ladies & gentlemen, called. Among them was Gen'l Rusk, the Senator recently elected from the new State of Texas.

SATURDAY, *28th March, 1846.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present. After some unimportant matters of business were disposed of I brought before the Cabinet the State of our relations with Mexico. Despatches received from Mr. Slidell rendered it probable that he would very soon be received by the existing Government of Mexico in his character of Minister of the

[1] Thomas Jefferson Rusk, 1802–1856, Senator from Texas 1846–1856.

U. States. I stated to the Cabinet that I apprehended that the greatest obstacle to the conclusion of a Treaty of boundary, such as he had been instructed if practicable to procure, would be the want of authority to make a prompt payment of money at the time of signing it. The Government of Gen'l Paredes, having recently overthrown that of President Herrera, was a military Government and depended for its continuance in power upon the allegiance of the army under his command, and by which he had been enabled to effect the late revolution. It was known that the Government of Paredes was in great need of money, and that in consequence of the deficiencies in the Treasury and the deranged state of the finances, the army upon whose support Gen'l Paredes depended to uphold him in power, being badly fed and clothed and without pay, might and probably would soon desert him, unless money could be obtained to supply their wants. I stated that if our minister could be authorized upon the *signing* of the Treaty to pay down a half a million or a million of dollars, it would enable Gen'l Paredes to pay, feed, and clothe the army, and maintain himself in power until the Treaty could be ratified by the U. S., and the subsequent installments which might be stipulated in the Treaty be paid. Indeed I thought that the prompt payment of such a sum might induce him to make a Treaty, which he would not otherwise venture to make. In these views there seemed to be a concurrence. The question followed how an appropriation could be obtained from Congress without exposing to the public and to Foreign Governments its object. That ob-

ject, as may be seen from Mr. Slidell's instructions, would be in adjusting a boundary to procure a cession of New Mexico & California, & if possible all North of latitude 32° from the Passo [El Paso] on the Del Norte & West to the Pacific ocean; or if that precise boundary cannot be obtained, then the next best boundary which might be practicable so as at all events to include all the country East of the Del Norte and the Bay of San Francisco. For the boundary desired, see Mr. Slidell's instructions.[1] The Cabinet thought it important that Mr. Slidell should have the command of the money to make a prompt payment on the Signature of the Treaty. Mr. Buchanan thought it impracticable to procure such an appropriation from Congress, and was disinclined to favour any effort to obtain it. I suggested that in informal consultations with leading Senators it could be ascertained whether such an appropriation could pass that body, and expressed the opinion that if it could pass the Senate, it could be passed through the Ho. of Repts. I called their attention to an act[2] appropriating two millions, which had been passed in 1806 in Mr. Jefferson's administration. I afterwards learned that this appropriation had been passed to enable Mr. Jefferson to purchase the Floridas. Mr. Buchanan had still no confidence in the success of such a movement; but finally agreed, as did all the other members of the Cabinet, that I should consult Col. Benton,

[1] *H. Ex. Doc.* 60, 30 Cong. 1 Sess.

[2] Approved February 13, 1806. *Annals of Cong.*, 9 Cong. 1 Sess. *App.* 1226–1227.

Mr. Allen, Gen'l Cass, and, if I chose, other Senators on the subject. As soon as the Cabinet adjourned I sent my Private Secretary to request Col. Benton to call on me at 8 O'Clock this evening. At that hour Col. Benton called & I explained to him fully my views and object. He at once concurred with me in the importance of obtaining if practicable such a boundary as I proposed, and in the propriety of such an appropriation by Congress to enable me to do it. I suggested to him that it might be proper, if the subject was brought forward in the Senate, that it should be first considered in Executive Session of the Senate, and if it was deemed proper by the Senate, it should be afterwards moved in open Session and passed without debate. In this he also concurred. I turned his attention to the act of 1806, passed in Mr. Jefferson's time, and to the practice of Congress in placing a secret service fund at the discretion of the President. After a very free conversation, and finding that there was a concurrence of views, I told Col. Benton that I would consult Mr. Allen, Ch. of the Committee of Foreign Relations, on the subject. This he thought would be proper, and he suggested that I should consult Gen'l Cass and Mr. Haywood also, and perhaps some Southern Senator. I told [him] I would do so, and see him again on the subject. Col. B. entered very fully into all my views.

I showed Col. Benton an endorsement made by Gen'l Scott of the army on a letter from Gen'l Worth on the subject of brevet rank and my order of the 12th Instant. Col. B. thought, as I did, that Gen'l

Scott's endorsement on the letter was highly exceptionable and amounted to insubordination. The letter and the endorsement made on it by Gen'l Scott was laid by him before the Secretary of War, and by the Secretary of War communicated to me. Col. B. said there was no use for the commander in chief of the army at Washington, and he advised that he should be forthwith ordered to some post on the Northern frontier, as a merited rebuke for his resistance of my order of the 12th Instant, and other exceptionable matter in his endorsement on Gen'l Worth's letter. This he thought would be the mildest punishment which should be inflicted.

SUNDAY, *29th March, 1846.*— Attended the first Presbyterian church to-day in company with Mrs. Polk and my relations, Maj'r John H. Bills and his daughter Mary of Bolivar, Tennessee.

At 6 O'Clock this evening Gen'l Samuel Houston, [1] late President of Texas and now a Senator in Congress, called. I was much pleased to see him, having been with him in Congress twenty years ago and always his friend. I found him thoroughly Democratic and fully determined to support my administration.

At 8 O'Clock Mr. Senator Allen called & I consulted him fully in relation to our Mexican policy, and especially in reference to the adjustment of a boundary. I explained to him my views fully, as I had done to Col. Benton on last evening (see Diary of

[1] President of Texas 1841–1844, Senator from Texas 1846–1859.

yesterday). He fully concurred with Col. Benton and myself. He entered fully into the importance of procuring from Congress the appropriation suggested of one or two Millions, to be placed at my disposal for the purpose of enabling Mr. Slidell to negotiate such a Treaty if it was practicable. At my request he agreed to see Col. Benton on the subject, and advised me to see Gen'l Cass, and he inclined to think that I should consult Mr. Calhoun also. He entered as fully as Col. Benton had done on yesterday into the propriety of making such a movement. On examining the laws, it was found that an appropriation of $2,000,000 had been made in 1803,[1] to enable Mr. Jefferson to purchase Louisiana; and that Mr. Jefferson in his message of October, 1803, had referred to this law as giving the sanction of Congress to the Treaty which he subsequently made purchasing Louisiana; so that there was a precedent in 1803 as well as in 1806, as mentioned in yesterday's Diary, for such a procedure.

MONDAY, *30th March, 1846.*— Saw company until 12 O'Clock to-day as usual. Among others I saw and had a free conversation with Gen'l Cass on the subject of our relations with Mexico, in substance of the same import with the conversation I had held with Col. Benton on saturday and Mr. Allen on yesterday. He fully concurred with me and with them in the importance of procuring an appropriation

[1] Approved February 26, 1803. *Annals of Cong.*, 7 Cong. 2 Sess. *App.* 1560. Message of October 17, 1803, *ibid,* 8 Cong. 1 Sess. 11–15.

from Congress such as was made in 1803 & 1806, placing at the President's disposal at least a million of dollars to enable him to negotiate a [treaty] with Mexico and to procure the boundary desired. For a more full statement of the object of the appropriation and the manner of procuring it from Congress so as not to expose it to the knowledge of Foreign Governments, and especially that of Great Brittain, I refer to this diary of yesterday and the day before. I told Gen'l Cass that I had consulted Col. Benton and Mr. Allen, and he advised me to consult Mr. Calhoun also. He left me with the understanding that he would consult with Col. Benton and Mr. Allen on the subject.

About 2 O'Clock Mr. Allen called and informed me that he had this morning consulted with Col. Benton on the subject, and that both he and Col. Benton thought it advisable in order if possible to secure unanimity of action in the Senate in regard to the proposed appropriation, that I should consult Mr. Calhoun. He said if Mr. Calhoun on being consulted agreed in the policy of the movement it would go far towards securing unanimity of action in the Senate, and if he did not concur it could do no harm, because hi[s] opposition in that event would have to be encountered whether he were consulted or not. I accordingly directed my Private Secretary [to ask him] to call this evening at 7 O'Clock. About that hour Mr. Calhoun called, and I explained to him as I had done to Col. Benton, Mr. Allen, and Gen'l Cass the object which I had in view, and asked his confidential opinion on the subject. He concurred with

me in the great importance of procuring by a Treaty with Mexico such a boundary as would include California. He said he had contemplated, when Secretary of State, as a very desirable boundary a line running from a point on the Gulf of Mexico through the desert to the Northward between the Nueces & the Del Norte to a point about 36° or 37° and thence West to the Pacific so as to include the Bay of San Francisco, and he said he would like to include Monterey also; and that for such a boundary we could afford to pay a large sum, and mentioned ten millions of dollars. I told him that I must insist on the Del Norte as the line up to the Passo in about latitude 32°, where the Southern line of New Mexico crosses that River, and then if practicable by a line due West to the Pacific; but if that could not be obtained then to extend up the Del Norte to its source, including all New Mexico on both sides of it, and from its source to the source of the Colorado of the West and down that River to its mouth in the Bay of California. I showed him these proposed lines on the map. He said if it was practicable either [of] these were boundaries which he would prefer to that suggested by himself. I asked him, if I could procure such a boundary, if I could not afford to pay $25,000,000 for it. He said I could & that the amount would be no object. I then explained to him as I had done in Cabinet and to Col. Benton, Mr. Allen, & Gen'l Cass, as recorded in this diary on saturday and on yesterday, the importance of having a sum of money appropriated by Congress, to be paid down on the Signature of the Treaty. I pointed him to the

precedents in 1803 & 1806, and asked his advice on the subject. He said with the utmost care to prevent it the object of the appropriation would become public, and he apprehended would embarrass the settlement of the Oregon question. Much conversation on the subject occurred, the result of which was that he did not yield his assent to the movement to procure the appropriation from Congress, but said he would reflect upon the subject and turn it over in his mind. He said if I had no objection he would converse with Mr. McDuffie confidentially on the subject. I told him I had no objection to his doing so. Mr. Calhoun several times in the course of the consultation turned the conversation on the Oregon question, and was much disposed to dwell on that subject. He insisted that the two Governments ought to settle it, and that they could do it on the basis of 49°. He said that a question of etiquette ought not to prevent either from reopening the negotiation by a new proposition. I told him I could make no proposition. He asked me if I had any reason to think that Great Brittain would make a proposition. I told him that I had no certain knowledge that she would, but one thing I thought certain, that if she did it would not be until after she saw the result of the action of Congress on the notice and the other measures which I had recommended. He said he was inclined to that opinion, and but for that opinion he would be in favour of postponing the decision. As it was he thought the question on the notice would be taken in the Senate this week. He seemed to intimate a desire to know, without asking the direct question, what

I would do if Great Brittain did make a proposition. I was very careful in my reply, and said if a proposition was made I would probably consult the Senate before acting on it, if it was in my judgment such a proposition as ought to be submitted to the Senate.

This evening about 5 O'Clock, Maj'r John H. Bills & his daughter left for home at Bolivar, Tennessee. At the same time Mr. Edwin Polk left on a visit of a few days for Phil'a, New York, & Boston. I gave him letters of introduction to friends in these Cities. Mr. Buchanan called at 9 O'Clock P. M. and informed me that he would leave on to-morrow morning on a visit to his residence in Pennsylvania, and expected to be absent a week or ten days. He requested me to appoint Mr. N. P. Trist, Ch. Clk. in the State Department, to be acting Secretary of State during his absence. I informed Mr. Buchanan of the result of my conversation with Mr. Calhoun.

TUESDAY, *31st March, 1846.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present except Mr. Buchanan, who is absent on a visit to his residence in Pennsylvania. The Secretary of War consulted me as to his answer in reply to a call made upon him by Col. Benton as chairman of the committee of Military affairs for a project of Bills for the public defence, in the event of a rupture with England. I advised him to cut down and reduce the estimates made to him by the Heads of Bureau[s] of his Department. He said he would do so and submit to me his answer to the call before he sent it to

the Committee. Some other public matters of no great interest were considered and disposed of. I stated to the Cabinet the result of the conversations which I had held with Col. Benton, Mr. Allen, Gen'l Cass, and Mr. Calhoun on the subject of our Mexican relations since the last meeting of the Cabinet. Before the meeting of the Cabinet to-day Mr. Senator Allen called and I informed him of the conversation with Mr. Calhoun last evening. I told Mr. Allen to consult Col. Benton and Gen'l Cass on the subject of the proposed movement in the Senate in relation to Mexico. I told him I left it entirely to them upon consultation to move or not in the matter, and at such time and in such manner as they might judge best, with a view to obtain the appropriation proposed. I told him also, that if on further consultation they thought it best to abandon the matter, to do so and I would acquiesce in their decision.

This being one of the evenings on which my mansion is open for the reception of visitors informally, between 50 & 100 persons, ladies & gentlemen, called. They consisted of citizens, strangers, members of Congress, &c.

WEDNESDAY, *1st April, 1846.*— I saw a number of visitors to-day up to 12 O'Clock. I think the pressure for office has abated. My answer to all applicants is, there are no vacancies.

At 2 O'Clock P. M. gave Mr. Healy and Mr. Debousier another sitting for my portrait and miniature. I am becoming heartily tired of these sittings.

Mrs. Polk & myself paid a visit this evening at 7 O'Clock to Mr. Johnson, the P. M. Gen'l, & sat an hour with the family. It is the first visit of the kind which I have made since I have been President, except to call on Mrs. Madison,[1] and on Mr. Atto. Gen'l Mason when he was sick last summer, and to dine with Mr. Bancroft the past winter. My time has been wholly occupied in my office, in the discharge of my public duties. My confinement to my office has been constant & unceasing and my labours very great.

THURSDAY, *2nd April, 1846.*— Saw the usual round of company to-day until 12 O'Clock, when I closed my doors. After 12 O'Clock saw the Secretaries of War and the Navy on business. Devoted the balance of the day until my dinner hour at 4 P. M. to disposing of the business on my table. After night saw & held conversations on public affairs separately with the Hon. C. J. Ingersoll & Senator Samuel Houston of Texas. At 9 O'Clock Hon. Aaron Vanderpool[2] of N. Y. called and sat an hour. He is an old acquaintance, having served several years with him in Congress.

FRIDAY, *3rd April, 1846.*— Saw the usual round of company till 12 O'Clock to-day. Occupied from 12 until 2 P. M. in disposing of the business on my table. At 2 P. M. gave another sitting to Mr. Healy

[1] Dorothy Payne Madison, 1772–1849, wife of President Madison; noted for her beauty and her rare accomplishments.

[2] Representative from New York, 1833–1837, and 1839–1841.

and Mr. Debousier, who are painting my portrait and miniature.

This morning Mr. Calhoun of S. C. called and in reference to the proposed appropriation of a Million of dollars to enable me to adjust our differences of boundary &c. with Mexico, concerning which I held the conversation with him (which is noted in this diary) some days ago, he expressed the opinion that it would be inexpedient at present to move in the matter in Congress. He approved the object which I had in view, but assigned reasons for the opinion which he had expressed. I told him I left it to my friends in the Senate & would acquiesce in whatever they might determine on the subject, but repeated to him my conviction that if I could have command of a million of Dollars (to be accounted for of course) that I might be enabled to settle our Mexican difficulty speedily, and that without it I had doubts whether I could do so.

Mr. Senator Allen called a few minutes after Mr. Calhoun had retired, and I informed him of Mr. Calhoun's opinion. He at once said that without Mr. Calhoun's cooperation the measure would meet with serious embarrassments in the Senate, and advised that the movement contemplated be postponed for a few days.

This being reception evening an hundred or more persons, ladies & gentlemen, called & were received in the parlours by Mrs. Polk & myself.

I heard to-day that my brother-in-law, Dr. Silas M. Caldwell of Haywood Co., Tennessee, died at his residence on the 20th March, 1846.

SATURDAY, *4th April, 1846.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present except the Secretary of State, who is absent from the City on a visit to his residence in Pennsylvania. Several subjects of public interest, but none of them of great importance were considered.

At 8 O'Clock P. M. Senator Jarnegan of Tennessee called, and spent two hours with me in conversation about the domestic troubles existing in the Cherokee nation of Indians, and the proper remedies to be adopted by Congress. I informed him that the Commissioner of Indian affairs had prepared a Report on the subject, which I would communicate with a message to Congress in two or three days. Mr. Jarnegan entered into free conversation about various other public subjects, and manifested, as he has done throughout my administration, a friendly feeling towards me personally.

SUNDAY, *5th April, 1846.*— Attended the first Presbyterian church to-day in company with Mrs. Polk. My two nieces, Miss Walker and Miss Rucker, attended divine service at the Capitol.

MONDAY, *6th April, 1846.*— Saw a large number of persons to-day, members of Congress and others, some on business, some seeking office, and some on visits of ceremony. Closed my doors at 12 O'Clock. At 2 O'Clock P. M. I gave another sitting to Mr. Healy and Mr. Debousier, who are painting my portrait and miniature. They finished their paintings to-day and I am heartily glad of it. It is, I think, the

last sitting I will give to an artist to take my likeness during a Session of Congress, because it interferes too much with my business hours. After night Mr. C. J. Ingersoll of the Ho. Repts. & Senator Sevier of Arkansas called to see me in reference to public matters.

TUESDAY, *7th April, 1846.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present except the Secretary of State, who is still absent on a visit to his residence in Pennsylvania. A despatch was received by last night's mail from our consul at Vera Cruz, which renders it probable that Mr. Slidell, our minister to Mexico, will not be received by that Government, & will return to the U. States. The despatch was read & I stated that in the event Mr. Slidell was not accredited, and returned to the U. S., my opinion was that I should make a communication to Congress recommending that Legislative measures be adopted, to take the remedy for the injuries and wrongs we had suffered into our own hands. In this there seemed to be a concurrence on the part of the Cabinet, no one dissenting. Several other subjects of minor importance were considered and disposed of.

Senator Turney called at my office this evening about 6 O'Clock P. M. to see me about an appointment, an Indian Agency or something of the kind, for his nephew Gideon C. Matlock. I was about to take my accustomed walk when he called, and invited him to walk with me. During our walk around the President's square he inquired of me if I

had seen the last Nashville *Union*. I told him I had not. He said that there was an article in it which had excited Mr. Stanton of Tennessee, and that he (S.) had written to Lewis H. Coe on the subject of the article. I asked Mr. Turney what the article was and he told me that it contained, as I understood him, an article abusing or censuring Mr. Stanton for franking to his District Mr. Turney's late speech [1] in the Senate, charging that Mr. Nicholson, the editor, had in 1839 attempted to defeat Mr. Grundy's [2] election to the Senate of the U. S. by a union of a few Democrats for himself united with the Whig vote in the Tennessee Legislature. Mr. Turney went on to say that the fact that Mr. Nicholson had attempted to do so had been stated to him by Mr. Coe, Judge Dunlap, Gen'l Armstrong,[3] and Mr. Grundy in his lifetime. Mr. Turney said that he hoped to get Mr. Coe's statement of the fact, and if he did he would in his place in the Senate expose Mr. Nicholson. I said nothing but heard what Mr. T. had to say; except that I remarked that in 1839, pending the Senatorial election, I had been for Mr. Grundy, and that Mr. Nicholson had kept away from me. Mr. Turney said I had once mentioned it to him, to which I made no reply. He said that Mr. Coe had informed him that he (C.) had informed

[1] *Globe,* 29 Cong. 1 Sess. 386–388.

[2] Felix Grundy, 1777–1840, Senator from Tennessee 1829–1838, and re-elected in 1839, having been Attorney General of the United States in the interval.

[3] Robert Armstrong, consul at Liverpool during Polk's administration.

me of Mr. Nicholson's attempt to defeat Mr. Grundy by Whig votes, and that Nicholson had informed him (Coe) that Mr. Foster had promised him the undivided Whig vote if he could get Democratic votes united with them to elect him. To all this I made no reply, not desiring to be involved in the controversy between Mr. Nicholson and Mr. Turney. The truth however is, that I remembered distinctly that my belief was at the time that Mr. Nicholson did make an effort to defeat Mr. Grundy by the union of a few Democrats with the whole Whig party, and that he failed. I remember, too, that I talked freely with a number of the Democratic members of the Legislature on the subject, and probably prevented him from accomplishing his purpose. I remember to have talked with Barkley Martin [1] and T. H. Laughlin among others, but have at this time no recollection of talking with Mr. Coe, though it is probable I did so. I did not inform Mr. Turney of these facts because, occupying the position I do, I desired not to be involved as a witness or otherwise in the controversy between Mr. Turney and Mr. Nicholson.

This being reception evening between fifty and an hundred persons, ladies & gentlemen, called. These informal reception evenings are very pleasant. Members of Congress, strangers, and others call without ceremony and without invitation, and retire when they are disposed to do so. By setting apart two evenings in the week (tuesdays & fridays) I can de-

[1] Barclay Martin, Representative from Tennessee 1845–1847.

vote the balance of the evenings of the week to business in my office.

Received despatches from Mr. Slidell, U. S. Minister to Mexico, to-night, announcing that the Mexican authorities had refused to receive him & that he had demanded his passports.

WEDNESDAY, *8th April, 1846.*— Received company until 12 O'Clock to-day. After that hour devoted my time to the business on my table, which accumulates daily and keeps me constantly employed. At 5½ O'Clock P. M. I had a dinner party of about 20 persons among whom were Senators Houston and Rusk of Texas, Thos. Jefferson Randolph of Va., Go[v]. McDowell of Va., Mr. Senator Crittenden of Ky., & Madison Caruthers of New Orleans.

Mr. Senator Haywood of N. C. called about the time the dinner party were dispersing and was engaged with me in conversation until between 11 & 12 O'Clock.

My Private Secretary informed me this afternoon that Col. Benton had informed him at the Senate Chamber to-day, that he desired to have an interview with me & that he would call on me at 8 o'clock P. M. on to-morrow.

THURSDAY, *9th April, 1846.*— Saw the usual round of company until 12 O'Clock to-day. Some were begging money, others seeking office, and others on visits of ceremony. At 12 O'Clock I was glad to close my doors and attend to the business on my table. At 6 O'Clock P. M. I took my usual

evening's walk, it being my habit to walk every morning shortly after sunrise and every evening about sunset. During my walk this evening I met Senator Turney, who resumed the conversation about an appointment in the Indian Service which he desired to obtain for his nephew, Gideon C. Matlock. I told [him] I thought it would be in my power shortly to appoint Mr. Matlock an Indian commissioner to be associated with Ma[j]'r T. P. Andrews to negotiate a Treaty with the Pottawatimie Indians for cession of their lands in Iowa, and to give them in exchange a part of the country recently obtained from the Kansas Indians, if the Treaty now before the Senate recently concluded with the latter Tribe should be ratified. With this Mr. T. expressed himself to be satisfied.

At 8 O'Clock P. M. Col. Benton called according to his appointment communicated to me through my Private Secretary on yesterday. The first subject he mentioned was to inform me that Isaac T. Preston,[1] Esqr., of New Orleans, wished the appointment of U. S. Attorney for Louisiana in place of Mr. Downes,[2] who was recently elected to the U. S. Senate. I informed Col. Benton that Mr. Downes had written to the Secretary of State that he would retain the office of U. S. Attorney until the 4th of March next, when his Senatorial term would commence. I expressed a favourable opinion of Mr. Preston, but

[1] Isaac Trimble Preston, 1793–1852, Judge of the Supreme Court of Louisiana.

[2] Solomon W. Downs, U. S. District Attorney 1845–1847, Senator from Louisiana 1847–1853.

made no promise to appoint him. I enquired of Col. B. if Mr. Preston was in any way interested in the large Spanish grants to land in Louisiana, for which the U. S. had directed suits to be brought, and stated that if he was so interested he could not act as U. S. Attorney. Col. B. said he did not know how that was but would write to him on the subject.

Col. Benton introduced the Oregon question, submitted a map which he had brought with him published by Congress with [the report of] Capt Wilkes's exploring Expedition[1] in 1841, on which was marked in dotted lines the parallel of 49°. Col. B. repeated the opinion which he had before expressed to me that our title was best to the valley of the Columbia & he would fight for it before he would give it up. He thought the Brittish title best to Fraser's River. His opinion was that the basis of 49° was the proper line of settlement. I repeated what I once before said to him, that if Great Britain offered that line, or if she offered it retaining to herself the Southern cap[e] of Vancouver's Island & the temporary navigation of the Columbia River for a term of years, that in either case I would submit the proposition to the Senate in Executive Session and take their advice before I acted on it. Col. B. said that in either case he would advise its acceptance. I expressed to him as I have uniformly done to others that the

[1] Charles Wilkes, 1798–1877; from 1838 to 1842 he was engaged in exploring the islands of the Southern Pacific and the western coast of North America. Captain Wilkes became prominent later in connection with the Trent affair, at the beginning of the Civil War.

Notice should be given speedily & regretted the delay. I told Col. B. that I had no expectation that Great Brittain would make any proposition until Congress passed the Notice; that as long as she calculated on our divisions she would make no movement & there would be no prospect of a settlement. Col. Benton then said he had another proposition to submit to me for my consideration. It was this: that when the notice was passed, I should consult the Senate in Executive Session, whether at the time I gave it I should not renew the offer of 49°, which I had made and withdrawn last summer. He said he would advise me to do so. I told him I had not contemplated doing so. He said he thought it important I should do so, and asked me to consider of it. I told him I would do so. He said, after having repeated his views of title & his conviction that the question ought to be settled on the basis of 49°, he would if I thought it best make a speech to that effect in the Senate; or he would reserve himself and make his speech in Executive Session if I should consult the Senate. I told him I could not advise him to speak in open Senate; that I thought the great error of the whole debate in both Houses had been that whatever had been said was spoken not only to our own people but to the Brittish Government; that we thereby exposed our hand, whilst our adversary kept hers concealed. He concurred in this view. I told him if he chose to speak he had better do so after the notice was given, in Executive Session.

I informed Col. B. that Mr. Slidell, the U. S. Minister to Mexico, had been rejected by the Mexi-

can Government, which had refused to receive him, & that he had demanded his passports, and that unless the Mexican Government reconsidered their refusal to receive him he would return immediately to the U. States. We had a full conversation in reference to our relations with Mexico, & the steps proper to be taken, and especially if the principal Powers of Europe should attempt to force a Foreign Prince on a throne in Mexico. In the course of the conversation Col. B. remarked that his opinion was that our ablest men should be Ministers to the South American States; that we should cultivate their friendship and stand with them as the Crowned Heads of Europe stood together. He considered the missions to Europe less important than those to South America, and incidentally he stated a fact of which I had never heard before. It was that Gen'l Jackson had offered him the first mission to Europe which he had declined. He did not mention to which of the Courts he had been offered the mission.

Col. B. spoke throughout in the most friendly terms and the interview was a pleasant one. I told him as he was about to leave that I would send for him when I next heard from Mexico.

FRIDAY, *10th April, 1846.*— Saw company until 11 O'Clock this morning. I had important business on my table and therefore closed my doors an hour earlier than usual. Nothing I suppose was lost to the public by this, as all the visitors I had this morning appeared to be office seekers. The passion for office seems to increase. I tell all who call that I

have no vacancies to fill, but still I am annoyed by constant application.

Senator Houston of Texas called at 1 O'Clock. I had sent for him to consult him in reference to our relations with Mexico. Senator Allen, ch. of com. of Foreign affairs of the Senate, for whom I had also sent, called at 2 O'Clock P. M. I consulted him also in relation to Mexico. After consulting these gentlemen I determined to make no communication to Congress on the subject until the facts should be certainly ascertained that Mr. Slidell had received his passports and left Mexico. This was the opinion I had formed before seeing them, and I was confirmed in it after consulting with them. Saw company in the parlour this evening, this being one of the evenings set apart for receiving company informally. The company was not large, probably not exceeding fifty persons, consisting of ladies and gentlemen.

SATURDAY, *11th April, 1846.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present except the Secretary of State, who was still absent on a visit to his residence in Pennsylvania.

Despatches received from Mr. Slidell, our Minister to Mexico, announcing that the Mexican Government had a second time refused to accredit him, and that he had demanded his passports, were read, and it was unanimously agreed that before it was proper to make any communication to Congress on the subject we should wait until he had actually returned to the U. States. Some other business was

transacted, but of no great importance. At about 1½ O'Clock P. M., the Cabinet having finished the business before it, the Secretary of War and the P. M. General retired. The other members of the Cabinet remained in my office in conversation, when about 2 O'Clock P. M. Mr. Buchanan, the Secretary of State, came in, having returned to-day from his visit to Pennsylvania. He remained with the other gentlemen of the Cabinet, who had not retired when he came in, for near an hour, during which time what had occurred in his absence was the subject of conversation. I told him among other things that I was glad he had returned, and took his opinion in reference to our Mexican affairs. He concurred in opinion that we should wait until Mr. Slidell actually returned to the U. States before it would be proper for me to make any communication to Congress on the subject. I called Mr. Buchanan's attention to a call made by the House of Representatives for information in relation to the expenditure of the Secret Service fund during the period Mr. Webster was Secretary of State, and requested him to prepare the information and Report it to me to be communicated to Congress.

Had a dining party to-day at 5 O'Clock P. M. consisting of Senator Turney and Representatives Cullom, Jones,[1] Chase, B. Martin & wife, Stanton & wife, and Col. T. H. Laug[h]lin and Miss Johnson, daughter of Hon. Andrew Johnson[2] of the Ho.

[1] George W. Jones, Representative from Tennessee 1843–1853, and 1855–1859.

[2] Representative from Tennessee 1843–1853, President of the United States 1865–1869.

Repts., all from Tennessee, and being the old Democratic members of Congress from Tennessee and their families who were in Washington. Mr. A. Johnson was prevented from attending by indisposition. I invited Col. Laughlin to dine with them. It was a very pleasant party.

The Secretary of the Senate brought me a Resolution of the Senate passed to-day announcing the confirmation of several nominations, and among others of James H. Tate of Mississippi as consul to Buenos-ayres [Buenos Ayres]. Strenuous opposition had been made by Hon. Jacob Thompson against the confirmation of this nomination shortly after it was made in the early part of this Session of Congress, a full account of which is recorded in this diary & to which I refer. Mr. Thompson called this evening to introduce some friends, appeared to be friendly but did not allude to Dr. Tate's nomination. The truth is he acted badly on the subject, and probably now regrets it. The Treaty[1] negotiated by my brother, Wm. H. Polk, with the King of the Two C[S]icilies was ratified by the Senate to-day.

SUNDAY, *12th April, 1846.*— Attended the First Presbyterian Church to-day, in company with Mrs. Polk, my niece, Miss Rucker, & my nephew, Marshall T. Polk.

MONDAY, *13th April, 1846.*— Was much engaged this morning in preparing & having copied two messages to Congress, the one relating to the

[1] *U. S. Stat. at Large,* IX, 833–842.

Cherokee Indians and the other in answer to a call of the Senate in relation to the Oregon question. Sent both messages about 12½ O'Clock. I was repeatedly interrupted during the morning, by calls of Senators, Representatives, and others. Devoted the balance of the day to the business on my table. Had Gen'l Jacobs of Knoxville, Tennessee, and Mr. James H. Piper of Virginia to take a family dinner with me to-day. After night saw Mr. Senator Pennybacker, for whom I had sent to inform him that I would on to-morrow nominate James H. Piper of Virginia as ch. Clerk of the Gen'l Land Office. Mr. Pennybacker had some conversation with me on the Oregon [question], the result of which was that he would vote for the Ho. Resolutions to give notice to Great Brittain.

TUESDAY, *14th April, 1846.*—The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present. It having been decided on consultation with the Secretary of State on yesterday that it was necessary to send a special bearer of despatches to Naples to exchange the ratifications of the Commercial Treaty concluded and signed at Naples between the U. S. & the Kingdom of the Two C[S]icilies, Washington Greenhow, Esqr., of Richmond, Va., was employed to go out as bearer of despatches. The Secretary of State and myself saw Mr. Greenhow in my Private Secretary's office, and he agreed to leave this evening so as to take the packet of the 16th Instant at New York. The Treaty was signed by Wm. H. Polk, chargé d' affaires of the U. S., and the Pleni-

potentiary of the Government of the two C[S]icilies on the 1st of December, 1845, and stipulated that the ratifications should be exchanged at Naples in six months after its date. It was deemed unsafe therefore to wait until the Steamer of the 1st proximo or to entrust it to the ordinary conveyance, lest it might not reach Naples within the time s[ti]pulated, and therefore a bearer of despatches was employed. The Treaty was not ratified by the Senate until the 11th Instant. Several public subjects, but not of general interest, were considered and disposed of by the Cabinet. The Cabinet adjourned about 2 O'Clock P. M.

Saw an unusually large number of visitors in the parlour this evening, there being between one and two hundred persons, ladies & gentlemen, who called in the course of the evening. I find these informal evenings of reception twice a week pleasant. They afford all strangers who desire to do so an opportunity [to] call in an informal way. By setting apart two evenings in the week, too, to receive company, I am enabled to devote the other evenings of the week to my public duties.

WEDNESDAY, *15th April, 1846.*— Saw the usual round of company until 12 O'Clock today.

After 12 O'Clock Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Trist, Ch. Clk. of the State Department, called with copies prepared in answer to the call of the Ho. Repts. of the 9th Instant for information in relation to the expenditures of the fund. "for contingent expenses of foreign intercourse" settled on President's certificates between the 4th of March, 1841, and the retire-

ment of Daniel Webster from the Department of State. The propriety of answering such a call, and exposing the secrecy of the expenditure of this fund settled on President's certificates was discussed. So much doubt was created upon my mind on the subject, that I told Mr. Buchanan that I would call a meeting of the Cabinet this evening at 7 O'Clock. I directed my Private Secretary to wait on the members of the Cabinet and invite them to attend at that hour. At 7 O'Clock P. M. the Cabinet assembled, except the Atto. General who was detained by indisposition. I brought the subject of the call of the Ho. of Repts. before the cabinet, & after a full discussion it was the unanimous advice of the Cabinet that I shall not give the information called for, but that I should send a message to the House assigning the reasons for declining to do so. The Post Master General at first hesitated as to the correctness of this course, but finally acquiesced in the advice given by the other members of the Cabinet. I then told the Cabinet that my mind was convinced that it would be a most dangerous precedent to answer the call of the House by giving the information requested, that I doubted whether I would not violate the spirit, if not the letter of the existing law if I did so; and that I would prepare a message to the House to that effect. I requested Mr. Buchanan who had taken a leading part in the discussion in favour of this course, to prepare the draft of such a message as he would approve. I told him that I would prepare one also, and that when prepared we would

compare them. The Cabinet adjourned about 10 O'Clock P. M.

THURSDAY, *16th April, 1846.*— I closed my doors this morning and saw no company. I prepared the draft of a message to the House of Representatives assigning the reasons why I declined to respond to their Resolution of the 9th Instant, according to the advice of the Cabinet in special meeting last evening. I had finished my draft about half an hour when Mr. Buchanan called about 1 O'Clock P. M. with a draft which he had prepared as I had requested him. They were both read and there was a remarkable coincidence of views. Mr. Buchanan said he would take his draft with him and after revising it he would send it to me. In the course of the evening he sent it to me. The Secretary of the Treasury in the course of the day furnished me a paragraph embodying his views upon a single point.

About 8 O'Clock P. M. Mr. C. J. Ingersoll of the Ho. Repts., who was the author of the House Resolution, called, but not on business connected with the Resolution. After conversing on other subjects, the subject of the Resolution was mentioned. I told him the difficulties I had in responding to the call; that if he had called for the public accounts or those settled on vouchers there would have been no difficulty in giving the information. He seemed to be surprised to learn that his Resolution did not embrace a call for the greater part of the information which he wished to obtain, and that I had doubts as to the

propriety of answering the call which had been made to expose the expenditure of the Secret Service fund.

I saw Gen'l Cass in the course of this forenoon, and on laying the subject before him he concurred in opinion with the Cabinet, that I ought not to give the information called for [in] the Resolution of the House.

FRIDAY, *17th April, 1846.*— Saw company this morning until 12 O'Clock. After 12 O'Clock I was subjected to many interruptions, but devoted what time I had to preparing a revised draft of a message in reply to the Resolution of the House of the 9th Instant. I had before me my own draft, that of Mr. Buchanan, and the paragraph prepared by the Secretary of the Treasury mentioned in this diary on yesterday.

The Secretary of State and Secretary of War called on business. They were both of opinion that the vote [1] of the Senate on yesterday on the subject of notice on the Oregon question, though not so acceptable as the Resolution of the House which they had amended, ought to be accepted by the House for the purpose of settling the question & putting an end to it. I acquiesced in their views. I as well as they preferred a naked notice; I was content with the Resolution which had passed the House. I was not altogether satisfied with the terms of the amended Resolution as it passed the Senate, but still it authorized the notice to be given & that was the main object. With these views I was of opinion that it was

[1] *Globe,* 29 Cong. 1 Sess. 683.

safest for the House to concur with the Senate in their amendment to the House Resolution. I feared if the House non-concurred in the amendment of the Senate or sent it back to that body with an amendment, it might be postponed by the Senate indefinitely, or laid on the table to await the arrival of more Brittish Steamers. Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Marcy, entertaining the same views, said they would see some of the members of the House from N. York & Pennsylvania & express these opinions to them. I saw Mr. Martin of Tennessee (my immediate Representative) and expressed these opinions to him.

Received company in the parlours this evening. About an hundred persons, ladies & gentlemen, attended; among them several members of the Ho. of Repts., to whom I expressed the same opinions in reference to the Senate's amendment to the Resolution of notice that I had done to Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Marcy this morning. I remember to have spoken to the following gentlemen on the subject, *viz.,* Mr. Stanton of Tennessee, Mr. Nivin [1] & Mr. Demott [2] of N. Y., Mr. Foster of Penn., and Mr. Owen [3] of Indiana. To each of them I expressed the decided opinion that I preferred the House Resolutions of Notice to the amendment of the Senate, but, under the belief that nothing better could be had and for the reasons stated in my conversation with Mr. Buchanan & Mr. Marcy on yesterday, I advised

[1] Archibald C. Niven, Representative from New York 1845–1847.

[2] John De Mott, Representative from New York 1845–1847.

[3] Robert Dale Owen, 1801–1877, Representative from Indiana 1843–1847.

them to take the Senate amendment. I feared if the House non-concurred or amended the proposition of the Senate, that the measure of notice in any form might be postponed, and possibly fail between the two Houses upon a difference as to the form of notice. The notice was the thing desired and if it could not be had in the form most acceptable it was better to take it [in] any form than not to get it at all.

SATURDAY, *18th April, 1846.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present except the Atto. General, who was absent in consequence of indisposition.

I read my message to the Ho. Repts. in reply to their Resolution of the 9th Instant, on the subject of expenditures of the appropriation for contingent expenses of foreign intercourse, under the authority of President's certificates. It was approved by the Cabinet & I gave it to my Private Secretary to be copied, so as to have it ready to have it communicated to the House on monday next.

The subject of the Senate's amendment to the House Resolutions of notice on the Oregon question was discussed, and all the members of the Cabinet agreed in opinion that it was best under the circumstances, and to avoid the danger of defeat of any notice at all, to advise the Democratic members of the House to concur in it. There being no business of importance to be brought before the Cabinet to-day, the Post Master Gen'l & Secretary of State left with the intention of visiting the House and conferring with some of the members on the subject.

My Private Secretary returned from the House about 2 O'Clock P. M. and informed me that the House had amended the Senate's proposition of notice and asked their concurrence in their amendment, the effect of which is to return the subject to the Senate. The P. M. Gen'l called at 7 O'Clock and informed me that the vote had been taken before he reached the House. The P. M. Gen'l left and Mr. Calhoun called. After speaking to me about some appointments & among others of his son, who is in the army and whom he desired to have promoted in the new Regiment about to be authorized by Congress, he inquired about the state of our relations with Mexico. I told him that Mr. Slidell had, on being rejected as Minister of the U. States, returned, and that our relations with Mexico had reached a point where we could not stand still but must assert our rights firmly; that we must treat all nations whether weak or strong alike, and that I saw no alternative but strong measures towards Mexico. Mr. Calhoun deprecated war & expressed a hope that the Oregon question would be first settled, and then we would have no difficulty in adjusting our difficulties with Mexico. He thought the Brittish Government desired to prevent a war between the U. S. & Mexico, and would exert its influence to prevent it. I told him I had reason to believe that the Brittish Minister in Mexico had exerted his influence to prevent Mr. Slidell from being received by the Mexican Government. He said the Brittish Government desired to prevent a war, but did not desire a settlement between the U. S. and Mexico until

the Oregon question was settled. He then expressed an earnest desire to have the Oregon question settled. I told him that as long as Congress hesitated and refused to give the notice he need not expect a settlement of the Oregon question; that until Congress authorized the notice Great Brittain would calculate largely on our divisions & would make no proposition. I expressed the opinion also that if Congress had given the notice in the early part of the Session & shown that we were united & firm, I thought it probable the question would have been settled before this time. I told him that until the notice was given Great Brittain would make no proposition. He said that some of the Foreign ministers of other countries now at Washington by acting as a common friend of the parties could bring them together, and have a Treaty agreed upon, without either party making a proposition. I told him I could not invite any such agency. He said they might act voluntarily. I repeated that what was wanting was for the Senate to agree to the notice promptly, and expressed the hope that they would not delay action on the amendment of the House passed today on their Resolution. He said the Senate would act on it on monday. He expressed a strong desire that I would send in no message on Mexican affairs until the Oregon question was settled. I told him that I would delay a reasonable time, but that whatever the settlement of the Oregon question might be, I would feel it to be my duty to lay the Mexican question before Congress, with my opinion on the subject, in time for their action at the present Session.

At about 9 O'Clock P. M. I was informed that Col. Benton & his two daughters were in the parlour below stairs. Mrs. Polk & the young ladies found it inconvenient to go down. I went down. Col. Benton told me whenever I wished to see him to let him know, and he would be ready to act with me on the Oregon question. I understood him to have allusion to the news expected to be received by the next Steamer now looked for daily. I told him I would do so. I expressed to him the hope that the Senate would act on the amendment of the House to their resolution of notice promptly. He said he thought they would concur with the House in their amendment on Monday next.

Senator Allen called to-day and expressed himself highly gratified at the House amendment of the Senate proposition of notice.

SUNDAY, *19th April, 1846.*— Attended the First Presbyterian church to-day in company with Mrs. Polk and my niece, Miss Rucker.

A despatch was received today from Mr. McLane, U. S. Minister at London, dated 18th of March last. The Secretary of State and Secretary of war called after night to converse on the subject of the Foreign news.

MONDAY, *20th April, 1846.*— Saw company today until 12 O'Clock. An unusually large number attended. I sent my message[1] to the Ho. Repts. in

[1] Dated April 20, 1846. Printed in *H. Ex. Doc.* 187, 29 Cong. 1 Sess.

answer to their Resolution of the 9th Instant, in relation to the secret service fund.

Andrew J. Donelson, Esqr., of Tennessee, U. S. Minister to Prussia, called shortly after 12 O'Clock. He informed me he reached Washington with his family on last evening on his way to Prussia to enter on the duties of his Mission. At 7 O'Clock P. M. my brother-in-law, James Walker of Tennessee, and his wife & son Marshall arrived and took lodgings upon my invitation in the President's mansion.

I learned from Mr. Cullom of Tennessee, whom I met on my evening walk, that the Senate had disagreed to the amendment of the House to the Senate's proposition of notice on the Oregon question. Mr. C. also informed me that the House by a vote had refused to recede & resolved to insist, and that a motion was pending at the adjournment of the House to ask a free conference with the Senate. Mr. Cullom asked my advice in the matter. I told him I feared that if the subject was returned to the Senate it would be lost between the two Houses, and that the great measure of notice would be lost upon a difference of opinion between the Houses as to the form of giving it. I stated to him that if the House sent the subject back to the Senate, they thereby lost all control over it, because the Resolution would be in the possession of the Senate. I told him the Senate might hold the subject in their hands and refuse a committee of conference; that if the Senate granted a conference, the conferees might not agree, or if they agreed the two Houses might not ratify their agreement, & that in either event there was

great danger of the notice being lost. I told him I had a strong suspicion on my mind that a majority of the Senate would be glad to see [the] notice in any form defeated, and that they would probably avail themselves of the disagreement of the two Houses on a matter of form to effect their object. For these reasons I told him I thought the hazard of sending it back to the Senate would be very great. I repeated to Mr. Cullum what I had said to others within a few days passed [past], that I would have preferred a naked notice; that next to that I preferred the House Resolutions; but it being now ascertained by repeated votes in the Senate that neither could be had, I decidedly preferred the Senate form of notice to no notice at all. Under all the circumstances I advised as the safest course that the House should recede and suffer the Senate proposition to pass. I told him I feared if this was not done no notice would be authorized, and the great leading measure of my administration would thus be defeated. I told him I came to this conclusion reluctantly as the best that could be done.

On returning from my walk I saw Mr. Buchanan who agreed with [me] in these opinions, left saying he would see some of the members to-night. Mr. Bancroft called at my office shortly afterwards. He also agreed with me in my views. I sent for Mr. Marcy & Mr. Cave Johnson. They also agreed with me, and both left between 9 & 10 O'Clock, & said they would see [some] of the members of the House in the morning. Mr. Speaker Davis, for whom I had sent, called. He agreed also in these

opinions, as did also Mr. Wilmot & Mr. Foster of Pennsylvania, who called in the course of the evening. I repeated to these gentlemen severally in substance the views which I had expressed to Mr. Cullom this evening.

TUESDAY, *21st April, 1846.*— Mr. Black of the Ho. Repts. from S. C. called. He held a conversation with me on the subject of the notice, and the course proper to be taken by the House. I repeated to him in substance the opinions I expressed to Mr. Cullom and others last evening, and Mr. Black fully and entirely concurred in their correctness. Mr. Black stated that he had seen Mr. Calhoun this morning, and that he was satisfied from the conversation he had held with him that if the resolutions of notice were sent back again to the Senate, they would be lost. He did not repeat the conversation which he had held with Mr. Calhoun.

The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present. Mr. Buchanan brought before the Cabinet the state of our relations with Peru, and particularly a letter addressed to him by the Secretary of Foreign affairs of that Government, complaining of the conduct of Mr. J. [A] G. Jewett, U. S. chargé d'affaires to that Government, in relation to the indemnity stipulated to be paid by Peru in pursuance of the Convention of 1841 between the two Governments. The correspondence held by Mr. Jewett with the Peruvian Government was read, as also his communication to the Department of State. After considering the subject, the Cabinet

was unanimously of opinion that Mr. Jewett had acted unwisely and had committed a great error. I directed Mr. Buchanan to address a despatch to him informing him that his conduct was not approved, and to address also a proper letter to the Secretary of Foreign affairs of the Peruvian Government. Some other business of minor importance was considered, when I stated to the Cabinet that the state of our relations with Mexico could not be permitted to remain in *statu quo,* that I thought they should be brought before Congress at an early day accompanied with a message strongly and decidedly recommending that strong measures be adopted to take the redress of our complaints against that Government into our own hands. I gave my views at some length on the subject, in which there seemed to be a concurrence of opinion in the Cabinet. At least no dissenting opinion was expressed. I stated that I thought it prudent to wait the arrival of the next Steamer from England, now daily expected, before a communication in relation to Mexico should be made to Congress. In this also there was a concurrence of opinion.

The Cabinet adjourned about 2 O'Clock P. M. Shortly afterwards my Private Secretary returned from the Capitol & informed me that the Ho. Repts. had appointed a committee of conference on the Oregon question; that the Senate had also appointed a committee consisting of two Whigs & one Democrat, & that considerable excitement prevailed among the Democratic party on the subject. The danger is that the Resolution of notice may fail be-

tween the two Houses in consequence of the disagreeing votes as to its form.

Received company in the parlour this evening. Had an unusually large party, consisting of ladies & gentlemen, members of Congress, citizens and strangers.

My relation, Edwin Polk of Tennessee, returned from a visit to the North to-day and took up his lodgings at the Presidential Mansion.

I learned to-night that the Senate by the votes of Mr. Calhoun and his wing of the Democratic party united with the whole Whig party had rejected the nomination of Dr. Amos Nourse as collector at Bath in Maine. This is, in addition to other evidence, a pretty clear indication that Mr. Calhoun intends to oppose my administration. He has embarrassed the administration on the Oregon question. He is playing a game to make himself President and his motives of action are wholly selfish. I will observe his future course & treat him accordingly.

WEDNESDAY, *22nd April, 1846.*— Saw company until 11 O'Clock to-day; at which hour the English mail which left Liverpool on the 4th Instant was brought in. I closed my doors and shortly afterwards the Secretary of State called. A despatch received from Mr. McLane was read. He communicated his opinion that no step would be taken by the Brittish Government on the Oregon question until the decision of the Senate on the question of notice was known. The long delay in the Senate and our divided councils in Congress have added greatly to

the embarrassments of the question. Had the notice been authorized in December the question would either have been settled or it would have been ascertained that it cannot be settled before this time. The speech of Mr. Webster, Mr. Calhoun, and others in the Senate advocating peace and the Brittish title to a large portion of the country, have made the Brittish Government & people more arrogant in their tone and more grasping in their demands. If war should be the result, these peace gentlemen & advocates of Brittish pretensions over those of their own country will have done more to produce it than any others.

The truth is that in all this Oregon discussion in the Senate, too many Democratic Senators have been more concerned about the Presidential election in '48, than they have been about settling Oregon either at 49° or 54° 40′. "Forty-eight" has been with them the Great question, and hence the divisions in the Democratic party. I cannot but observe the fact, and for the sake of the country I deeply deplore it. I will however do my duty whatever may happen. I will rise above the interested factions in Congress, and appeal confidently to the people for support.

I learn that the committee of conference between the two Houses met last night, and without coming to any conclusion adjourned to meet again to-night.

The Secretary of the Treasury called at 1 O'Clock P. M. to-day, as I had requested him to do. My purpose was to show him a list of very obnoxious Whig clerks which had been furnished to me, who

are now employed in his department. I informed him that members of Congress were daily complaining to me that so many bitter Whigs were retained in the offices here, whilst worthy and competent Democrats who desired the places were excluded. I gave him the list and charges attached to it & requested him to investigate the matter & make such removals as were proper.

I availed myself of the occasion to say to Mr. Walker that his brother-in-law, Mr. Irwin[1] of Western Pennsylvania, appointed charge d'affaires to London by the last administration, was exceedingly obnoxious to the Democracy of Western Pennsylvania. The Democracy of that part of the State represented him as a violent and bitter Whig, and did not recognize him as representing the Democracy of that part of the State. They desire to have him recalled and have a Democrat appointed in his place. I told Mr. Walker that it was unpleasant for me to make this communication to him, but that I thought that the fact that Mr. Irwin happened to be his brother-in-law ought not to prevent me from saying to him frankly that in my opinion Mr. Irwin ought to ask to be recalled. Mr. Walker gave a history of Mr. Irwin, and I soon saw that he desired him to be retained. After a conversation of some length I told him I would see him again on the subject.

Maj'r Donelson, his wife and two daughters, and

[1] William W. Irwin of Pennsylvania was appointed chargé d'affaires to Denmark by Tyler March 2, 1843; the reference to London is an error.

Cave Johnson took a family dinner with me to-day.

At 9 O'Clock P. M. Hon. Robert Dale Owen, a member of the committee of conference of the Ho. Repts. on the Oregon question, called and informed me that the joint committee of the two Houses had held a meeting to-night and unanimously agreed upon a compromise on the disagreeing votes between the two Houses, and would report their agreement to their respective Houses to-day. He entertained no doubt that the agreement would be sanctioned by both Houses.

THURSDAY, *23rd April, 1846.*— My relation, Edwin Polk, Esqr., left at 6 O'Clock this morning for his residence in Tennessee.

I saw company as usual until 12 O'Clock to-day. Many persons called but nothing worthy of note occurred.

Mr. Buchanan called about 2 O'Clock on business; & shortly afterwards Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, came in. Montgomery Blair[1] & Martin Van Buren jr. sent up their card and [I] directed them to be shown in. The Secretary of the Treasury had been to the capitol and stated the fact that the committee of conference between the two Houses on the disagreeing votes on the question of notice on the Oregon question had reported an agreement which had been concurred in by both Houses by large majorities, there being but 10 dissenting

[1] Montgomery Blair, 1813–1883, member of the famous Blair family, Postmaster General under Lincoln 1861–1864.

votes in the Senate and 46 in the House.[1] I would have preferred a naked notice without a preamble, and think it unfortunate that such a notice had not been authorized early in the Session of Congress. After all, however, Congress by authorizing the notice, have sustained the first great measure of my administration, though not in a form that is altogether satisfactory or one that was preferred.

After night several members of Congress called, bringing with them a large number of their constituents, who called to pay their respects. Among other members who called were Senator Cameron, Mr. Wilmot & Mr. Foster of Pennsylvania, Mr. Sykes of N. Jersey [and] Gov. Yell of Arkansas. Allen Luklett of Murfreesborough, Tennessee, was among those who called.

FRIDAY, *24th April, 1846.*— Saw company to-day until 12 O'Clock. Shortly after that hour Senator McDuffie of S. C. called. I met him in the parlour below stairs, the decrepit state of his health being such as to make it inconvenient for him to ascend the stairs and see me in my office. His object was, as he said, to express to me his own opinion freely upon the Oregon question, without asking me to declare what course I intended to take. He proceeded to say that in his opinion it would be wise for me when I gave the Notice to accompany it with a renewal of the American offer of 49° made last summer. He thought this would manifest our desire to settle the controversy & to preserve the peace, and

[1] *Globe,* 29 Cong. 1 Sess. 717 and 721.

that there was no point of honor as the question now stood to prevent me from doing so. After expressing his opinion fully upon these points I told him I would give the notice as I was authorized to do by the joint Resolution of Congress, but that I would not accompany it with any offer on our part. I called his attention to the various steps which had been taken by the last and the present administrations in the late negotiation, and that the U. S. having made the last offer, an offer which had been rejected by the Brittish Plenipotentiary, the next offer, if one was made, must come from the Brittish Government. I told him I had no expectation that G. B. would make any offer until the final action of Congress on the notice was known in England. I told him I had been satisfied of this for the last two months. I then stated to him confidentially that if G. B. made an offer of 49° or what was equivalent to it, or with slight modifications, I would feel it to be my duty to submit such proposition to the Senate for their previous advice before I took any action on it. With this course he appeared to be satisfied. We had a long conversation about our Mexican relations, the tariff, the Independent Treasury, &c.

After Mr. McDuffie retired, I was prevented from attending to my regular business on my table by several persons whose importunities to see me out of my regular hours induced me to yield to their wishes. Their business was chiefly about office & the day was unprofitably spent. At 5 O'Clock the Attorney General called with his carriage and I took

a ride with him and Majr. A. J. Donelson, U. S. Minister to Prussia, across the Potomac to see the fishermen drawing the seine. On our return I spent half an hour at Judge Mason's residence.

This was reception evening, and about an hundred persons, ladies & gentlemen, members of Congress, foreigners, citizens & strangers called. Among them was the French Minister, who brought with him and introduced to me the Baron de Suypar,[1] late Minister of France to Mexico. It was this person who by his intervention with the Mexican Government induced that Government to agree to recognize the independence of Texas last year, upon condition that Texas would agree not to annex herself to any other country. It happened that A. J. Donelson, Esqr., late U. S. Chargé d'Affaires to Texas, who had contributed largely to defeat the French and English policy in regard to Texas, and Ex President Houston of Texas, now U. S. Senator, were in the room and I introduced them to the Baron d'Cuypre and had a hearty laugh on the subject with Mr. Pageot, the French Minister. We agreed that it was a little remarkable that these persons should have met in the President's mansion so soon after the events had transpired in which they had borne so prominent a part.

The Hon. Romulus M. Saunders, U. S. Minister to Spain, called on me to-day. He had proceeded thus far on his mission.

The Post Master General called on me early this morning and expressed apprehensions that the arti-

[1] Baron Alleye de Cyprey.

cle in last evening's *Union* on the question of the passing of the Notice Resolutions in Congress would give dissatisfaction to some of the Democratic members. I told him I had known nothing of the article until it had appeared in the paper, and upon a casual reading of it this morning there were portions of it which I did not approve. Mr. Ritchie called afterwards & I told him the article I thought was exceptionable. He was much concerned about it, & said it had been prepared in hurry and confusion at a late hour of the night. Mr. Buchanan afterwards called and informed me that there was extensive dissatisfaction among some of the Democratic members of Congress whom he had seen. Mr. Buchanan said if Blair could be associated with Ritchie in conducting the paper it would be a strong paper; and that Blair would whip in Democrats in Congress, who were disposed to fly off from their party and join the Whigs. I told him that such an arrangement would never do, for that neither Ritchie [n]or Blair would be willing to yield the control of the paper to the other. I told him also that I had no doubt, if such a suggestion was made to Mr. Ritchie, that he would instantly retire from the paper, under the impression that his management of it was not satisfactory to the administration. I told him Mr. Ritchie meant well, but might occasionally make mistakes, but he was always ready to correct them when informed of them. I had on yesterday spoken to Mr. Buchanan to prepare a proper article, on the passage of the notice resolutions, and the proceedings in Congress in relation to

them. Mr. Buchanan now informed me that he had this morning early written part of an article, but that before he finished it the *Union* was brought to him and he was so much dissatisfied with it that he had written no more. I expressed my regret that he had not finished it. He told me also that he had an article in his pocket written by Judge Shields, which at my request he read. It was very severe upon Mr. Calhoun and the minority of Democratic Senators who had united with the Whigs & defeated the House Resolutions of notice. I told Mr. B. that though I disapproved the course of Mr. Calhoun and the minority of Democrats who had acted with him, I could not approve the article because I thought it too denunciatory and severe. Mr. B. on reflection concurred with me that it was so, and ought not to be published. At my request Mr. Buchanan walked to his office & brought his own unfinished article which he read. It, too, was harsh and severe upon Mr. Calhoun & the minority who had acted with him. Mr. B. said he had written it under strong feelings of disapprobation of their course, but on reading it over it would not do, and immediately tore it up and threw it into the fire. I then read the commencement of an explanatory article of that in yesterday's *Union,* which I had hastily sketched during the few minutes Mr. B. had been absent. Mr. B. approved it and requested me to finish it. I told him I would do so, and requested him to call at six O'Clock. I finished the article & gave it to Col. Walker, who copied it. Mr. Ritchie called at dark & talked over the matter, and

I gave him the article copied by Col. Walker to make what out of it he pleased. It is the second or third time since I have been President that I have sketched an article for the paper. I did so in this instance to allay if possible the excitement which I learned the article in yesterday's *Union* had produced among the Democratic members.

Mr. Buchanan, I learned from a note which he left on my table, had called during my ride with Judge Mason.

SATURDAY, *25th April, 1846.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present. I brought before the Cabinet the subject of the Joint Resolution of Congress authorizing me "in my discretion" to give to the Government of Great Brittain notice to abrogate the Convention of the 6th of August, 1827, concerning the Oregon Territory. I stated that I had determined to give the notice without delay, and that in my judgment it was proper to give it to the Brittish Government in England and not to the Brittish Plenopotentiary here. In this the Cabinet were agreed. Mr. Buchanan had suggested to me on yesterday that the notice should be given to the Earl of Aberdeen, Her Brittanic Majesty's Minister for Foreign affairs. To this I had objected upon the ground that as the Executive Chief Magistrate of the U. S. I could hold no communication with a subordinate minister of the Government of Great Brittain, but that any communication from the President must be addressed directly to the Sovereign of that country.

In this the Cabinet were agreed, Mr. Buchanan having yielded his suggestion made to me on yesterday. It was agreed that Mr. Buchanan should prepare the form of notice, to be submitted to the Cabinet at their next meeting so as to be in time to be transmitted to Mr. McLane at London by the Steamer of the 1st proximo, to be by him delivered to the constituted authorities of the Government of Great Brittain.

I next brought before the Cabinet the state of our relations with Mexico, and stated that I thought it was my duty to make a communication to Congress on the subject without unnecessary delay. I expressed my opinion that we must take redress for the injuries done us into our own hands, that we had attempted to conciliate Mexico in vain, and had forborne until forbearance was no longer either a virtue or patriotic; and that in my opinion we must treat all nations, whether great or small, strong or weak, alike, and that we should take a bold and firm course towards Mexico. I first asked Mr. Buchanan his opinion. He concurred with me, and thought I [should] recommend a declaration of war. The other members of the Cabinet did not dissent, but concurred in the opinion that a message to Congress should be prepared and submitted to them in the course of the next week. I then stated the points which should be presented in the message, and requested Mr. Buchanan to collect the materials in his Department & prepare the draft of a message for my consideration.

The case of Lieut. Hurst, who was dismissed from

the Navy for fighting a duel with a junior officer under his command during the last year, was brought up for consideration. It appeared from numerous testimonials of many officers of the Navy and others that the universal opinion was that he had been properly dismissed from the service, but that having already suffered severely and there being mitigating circumstances in his case, it would be proper to restore him. The Secretary of the Treasury, who upon a former occasion when the question of his restoration was before the Cabinet, had objected, withdrew his objections and gave his assent to his restoration. The Secretary of State, who upon the same occasion had expressed doubts on the subject, was now satisfied and earnestly recommended his restoration, as did also the Secretary of War, the Secretary of the Navy, & the Attorney General. The Post Master General was not present when this case was considered. After these opinions had been expressed I stated that I would nominate him to the Senate for his former rank.

The Cabinet adjourned about 2 O'Clock P. M. Senator Allen called shortly after the Cabinet retired. I had a long and interesting conversation with him in reference to our Mexican relations and the Oregon question. Upon the latter I told him I should give the notice to terminate the Convention of the 6th of Aug., 1827, without delay, and for that purpose would send the official notification to that effect to the U. S. Minister at London to be delivered to the proper authorities, by the Steamer of the 1st proximo. I told Mr. Allen that the au-

thority to give the notice had not passed Congress in a satisfactory form or in one that I preferred, as he knew from what I had before told him. I told him that failing to have authority to give a naked notice, or in the form of the House Resolutions,. I preferred to have the authority in the form in which it had been passed to no notice, and that in this I had differed with him. He preferred no notice rather than have it in the form in which it passed, and had voted against it, whilst I preferred to have it come in that form rather than to have no notice.

Mr. Allen spoke strongly against Mr. Ritchie's course in conducting the *Union,* and said the Democratic party were broken up unless there was a new Editor of that paper, and went so far as to say that Mr. Ritchie could not now get five votes for public printer out of the Calhoun faction in either House of Congress. I told him that Mr. Ritchie was honest in his efforts to sustain our doctrines and our party, & that he had not identified himself either with the Calhoun or any other faction of the party, but that he had been labouring to keep the whole party united and harmonious; that doubtless he had committed errors as all other men in his situation would, but that he readily corrected them when he discovered them. He said he ought, if he remained at the head of the paper, to have some bold and strong man associated with him, and suggested Francis P. Blair as the man, as Mr. Buchanan had done on yesterday. I told him Mr. Blair would not do; that in addition to public reasons which ex-

isted for making it, there were reasons of a personal character which made the change proper when Mr. Ritchie succeeded Blair last year. These reasons were in substance, that Mr. Blair's course as Editor of the *Globe* for several years had indicated anything rather than personal or political friendship for me. I told him that if he had continued to be the Editor of the *Globe* I had every reason to believe that he would have labored more to advance the ambitious aspirations of others than to promote the glory and success of my administration, and that on this account, as well as for the reason that he had rendered himself odious to a large portion of the Democratic party, I did not desire him to remain the Editor of the *Globe*. If he had remained I could not have regarded him as my friend & could have had no confidential communication with him. Mr. Allen said that he had always heard Blair speak well of me. I stated to him some facts which satisfied me that I was not mistaken. Among others I stated that when I was nominated by the Tennessee Legislature in 1840 and by a Democratic State convention in the same year as Vice President on Mr. Van Buren's ticket, he had not even published these proceedings in his paper; that he had been requested to do so by my friends & had failed to do so. I told him this was not all, but that numerous other public meetings in different parts of the Union had named me for Vice President and no notice whatever had been taken of them, while at the same time similar notices of others were readily inserted in his paper. I told him the studied omission in my case whilst

similar notices of others were readily inserted in his paper could not have been accidental. I told Mr. Allen that this systematic neglect continued up to the period of my nomination to the Presidency, and that for two months after that nomination the *Globe* was cold and lukewarm in its support. I reminded Mr. Allen that when I was defeated for Governor of Tennessee in 1843, the *Globe* coolly laid me on the shelf by stating that when I redeemed my own State the Democratic party would remember me, & this, too, after I had fought three hard battles in Tennessee in sustaining Mr. Van Buren & our principles; and again, in January, 1844, the *Globe* had published a violent article disparaging my claims to the Vice Presidency; I stated [to] him other facts which satisfied me that Mr. Blair was no friend of my advancement, and I had reason to believe that he would not have given a hearty support to my administration if he had continued to edit the *Globe*. I repeated to Mr. Allen that Mr. Ritchie was honest and faithful to the Democratic party, & that he would very soon procure an assistant Editor. Mr. Allen suggested Col. Medary[1] of Ohio as a proper [person]. I remarked that Col. M. was [an] efficient editor, but that I could not tell whom Mr. Ritchie would procure. It strikes me as Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Allen have both, the one on yes-

[1] Probably Samuel Medary, editor of the Ohio *Sun*, founded in 1828 as a Jackson paper; editor of the Ohio *Statesman* 1836–1857; chairman of the Ohio delegation to the Baltimore Convention, 1844, where he read Jackson's letter urging Polk's nomination.

terday and the other to-day, suggested Blair as associate Editor of the *Union,* that there must have been some understanding and concert between them on the subject. The truth is, the desire to get control of the *Union* has reference to the next Presidential election. Mr. Ritchie will not answer the purpose of aspiring politicians because he will not lend himself to any of the factions who look more to their own advancement than to the public good. These schemings of politicians do more to embarrass my administration than all other causes.

Col. Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky called to-day and was received in my office before the Cabinet dispersed. He remained but a few minutes.

In the course of my conversation with Mr. Allen to-day I expressed my regret at having learned that some members of the Democratic party in Congress had indulged in unworthy expressions of doubt as to my sincerity in my course on the Oregon question. I told him they were doing both themselves and me injustice; that as I had told him (Mr. Allen) at the beginning of the session of Congress, my course was settled. I told him I could but repeat to him what I had then said, and that was, that I would make no proposition to G. B.; that if G. B. made to me a proposition for 49° I would submit it to the Senate for their previous advice before I acted on it. I told him I would give the notice & then act as I had told him I would, a course of action which he had himself approved. I told him that I deeply regretted the divisions of the Democratic party on the subject, & I might have added, but I

did not, that these divisions grew out of aspirations for the Presidency in 1848.

SUNDAY, *26th April, 1846.*— Attended the 1st Presbyterian church to-day with Mrs. Polk and my brother-in-law, Mr. James Walker, and my sister, Mrs. Walker, of Columbia, Tennessee.

MONDAY, *27th April, 1846.*— Saw company as usual until 12 O'Clock to-day. After that hour devoted myself to the business on my table until my dinner hour. In the course of the day a committee of Congress called and presented to me the Joint Resolution passed by Congress authorizing the notice to be given to Great Brittain to Abrogate the convention of 1827 on the subject of the Oregon Territory. I approved & signed the Resolution.[1] It was not in the form which I preferred, but still it authorized the notice to be given. I would have preferred a simple naked Resolution. Mr. Buchanan called and as it had been unofficially known that the Resolution had passed on thursday last, he had, as I had requested him, prepared the form [of] a notice to be given to the Brittish Government. I caused the form which he had prepared to be changed by striking out all except the recital [of the resolution] itself, and the formal announcement to the Brittish Government that the notice was thereby given. Mr. Buchanan also read a draft of a despatch[2] to Mr. McLane which he had prepared

[1] U. S. *Stat. at Large,* IX, 109–110.

[2] Moore, *Buchanan,* 471–472.

to accompany the notice. I suggested modifications of the despatch, which were made. The principal of the modifications was that if any further proposal was made for the adjustment of the Oregon question it must proceed from the Brittish Government.

At 6 O'Clock P. M. I took a ride on horseback with the Secretary of War and my nephew, Marshall Walker. On my return I met Senator Cass near my door, who said he had called to see me but would call again at some other time. I told him I would see him then, and invited him to my office. When in the office he stated his business, which he said he wished me to regard as confidential. He said that Senator Allen had called on him that day and told him that he and many of the Democratic members of Congress desired to start a new Democratic paper at Washington; that Blair & Rives were the persons that they wished to conduct it by converting the *Congressional Globe* into a daily paper. Gen'l Cass said he had evaded a direct answer to Mr. Allen, but that he was opposed to the project. He said the reasons of this movement was the course of Mr. Ritchie on the Oregon question. I told Gen'l Cass that the only effect of establishing a Democratic paper at Washington would be still more to distract and divide the Democratic party, and would, if persisted in, result in the defeat of the party and the success of the Whigs in 1848. Gen'l Cass said he entirely concurred with me in this opinion, and urged me to bring the matter before the Cabinet on to-morrow, and take means to defeat or

prevent the movement if possible. He added that he would use his exertions in a prudent way to prevent it. I told Gen'l Cass that if such a paper were established under the auspices of Blair & Rives he could readily see that it would be a Van Buren and Wright paper & would be so understood by the country at the outset, and would be regarded as the beginning of the next Presidential campaign. He agreed that this was so. I told him that it could not be, in the nature of things, honestly the supporter of my administration, and that the only effect would be to divide still more than it now was the Democratic party and to enable the Whigs by our divisions and internal feuds to triumph in 1848. To all this Gen'l Cass agreed.

I learned to-night that the nomination of J. Geo. Harris [1] of Tennessee had been brought up in Executive Session of the Senate, and had been violently opposed by Mr. Jarnegan and Mr. Turney, the Senators from Tennessee. I was not surprised at Jarnegan's opposition, but was greatly so that Turney had opposed him.

TUESDAY, *28th April, 1846.*— Gen'l Cass called before the meeting of the Cabinet this morning, and requested me not to bring the project of establishing

[1] Editor of the Nashville *Union,* Polk's organ in Tennessee. Upon the defeat of the Jackson-Polk faction in Tennessee in 1836 most of the Democratic papers of the state went with the victorious faction. As a part of the preparation by the defeated faction for the recovery of the state in 1839 the *Union* was purchased and Harris was called from Boston to conduct it.

a new paper under the auspices of Blair & Rives before the Cabinet to-day, as he had requested me to do last evening. I told him I would not do so. He said he thought he could induce Mr. Allen to abandon it.

The Cabinet held a regular meeting; all the members present except the P. M. Gen'l who came in between 1 and 2 O'Clock, and after the business of the meeting had been chiefly transacted. The notice to Great Brittain to abrogate the Convention of 1827 on the Oregon question in the form in which it had been agreed upon by Mr. Buchanan & myself on yesterday, was read by Mr. Buchanan and was concurred in by the Cabinet. I signed the notice in duplicate. Mr. Buchanan read the despatch containing instructions to Mr. McLane in relation to the delivery of the notice, which had been prepared in accordance with my consultation with him on yesterday.

The Mexican question was next discussed, & it was the unanimous opinion of the Cabinet that a message should be sent to Congress laying the whole subject before them and recommending that measures be adopted to take redress into our own hands for the aggravated wrongs done to our citizens in their persons and property by Mexico. I requested Mr. Buchanan to prepare from the archives of the Department of State a succinct history of these wrongs as a basis of a message to Congress, at his earliest convenience.

I received to-day about twenty Methodist clergymen in a body, chiefly from the West, who were in-

troduced by the Rev. Mr. Slicer.[1] They were on their way to the general conference of the Methodist Church of the Southern States, to be holden at Petersburg, Va., the latter part of this week.

This being reception evening an hundred or more persons, ladies and gentlemen, members of Congress, citizens and strangers called. Among others a number of clergimen of the Methodist clergimen [Church] called, among whom were the Rev. Mr. Payne, Pres't of La Grange College, Alabama, the Rev. Mr. McMahon of Mississippi, & the Rev. Mr. Harris of Trenton, Tennessee.

Mr. Senator Allen called this morning on business, but said nothing of his movements to establish a new paper at Washington as had been mentioned to me on yesterday by Gen'l Cass. He was more solemn in his manner than usual, but was still apparently friendly.

WEDNESDAY, *29th April, 1846.*— Saw company until 12 O'Clock to-day as usual. Among others saw Senator Turney of Tennessee, for whom I had sent by my Private Secretary on yesterday. I had a long conversation with him concerning the nomination of J. Geo. Harris as purser in the Navy, in which I urged him to give up his opposition to his confirmation. He could assign no satisfactory reason for opposing him. All the reason he finally assigned was the stale and often repeated charge of abolitionism,

[1] Henry Slicer, elected chaplain of the Senate in 1837 and again in 1846.

which had been used for political effect by the Whigs of Tennessee for the last five or six years. This I considered a mere pretext for opposing him, but I did not think it prudent to excite him by telling him so. He finally said he would give a silent vote against [him], but would say if called on that he had no specific charges to make against him, that he was a man of fair private character, of good talents, and a consistent democrat. He said he would state further in conversation with Democratic Senators that he had no objection to his confirmation. The real cause of Mr. T.'s opposition to Mr. Harris's confirmation I suspect grows out of the belief that Harris was opposed to Turney's election to the Senate of the U. S.

Gen'l Cass called again this morning and informed me that he had held another conversation with Senator Allen on the subject of his (A.'s) project to establish a new paper at Washington, and he thought he would finally abandon it.

Despatches were received to-day from the army [of] occupation on the Del Norte in Texas; and a private letter from Mr. McLane in England of the 10th Instant, brought out by the Great Western. Mr. Buchanan called & I had a conversation with him on both subjects.

I devoted the balance of the day to the business on my table and, what is rare with me, had no calls after night.

Mr. Senator Allen called this morning on business but made no mention to me of his intention to estab-

lish a new paper at Washington, as had been mentioned to me by Gen'l Cass on yesterday and the day before.

Several clergimen of the Methodist Church called on me this morning, on their way to the General Conference at Petersburg, Va. Among them was the Rev. John McFarrin[1] and his brother & the Rev. Mr. Hannah, of Tennessee.

THURSDAY, *30th April, 1846.*— Saw company this morning until 12 O'Clock. The Ho. of Repts., I learned, met at 9 O'Clock A. M. and immediately adjourned. Many members called immediately after that hour. A few minutes after 12 O'Clock between 100 & 200 mail contractors or persons bidding for contracts, preceded by the Post Master Gen'l and his assistants, the Auditor of the Post Office and chief Clerks, attended by the Mayor of Washington, entered the Presidential Mansion in a body. They were received by me in the East Room, and I was introduced to them individually. After spending half an hour in conversation with them they retired. The contractors in attendance were from the Southern and South Western section of the Union.

The principal instructor of an institution in New York for the instruction of the blind, accompanied by his assistant instructors and between 20 and 30 blind pupils, male and female, called on me at 1½ O'Clock P. M. I received them in the Circular

[1] John Berry McFerrin, editor of the *Christian Advocate* 1840–1858, author of a *History of Methodism in Tennessee,* published in 1870.

parlour, and witnessed an exhibition of the blind in literature. They read from the bible printed in raised letters with facility. In arithmetic some of them were well educated. They conversed intelligibly. The most remarkable person among them was a female named Bridgman [1] who had been taught by signs with the hands and fingers to understand and communicate ideas and to write. She was about 16 years old and was deaf and dumb as well as blind. Altogether it was an interesting exhibition, and impressed me sensibly with the benevolence and great value of the discovery by which these unfortunate persons could be taught to understand and communicate their thoughts. The[y] conversed intelligibly and read the Scriptures well. One of the females performed on the piano; one of the males (a boy) on the violin, and several of them sung well. Col. Richard M. Johnson of Ky., who was in my office when they called, and several other persons who happened to call were present during their visit. Among others, Mr. Pakenham, the Brittish Minister, called and introduced two friends from Nova Scotia. A. J. Donelson, U. S. Minister to Prussia, also called to take leave, as he was about to leave the City this afternoon for New York whence he would embark on his mission. Mr. Senator Lewis of Alabama also called. After spending near an hour the blind pupils and their instructors retired, as did the visitors who had called except Mr. Lewis, who accompanied me to my office. Mr. Lewis had at my request been invited to call on me by my Private Secretary a day

[1] Laura Dewey Bridgeman, 1829–1889.

or two ago. Mr. Lewis is Chairman of the Committee of finance in the Senate. I told him my object in requesting him to call was to converse with him about two leading measures now before Congress in charge of his Committee. They were the Constitutional Treasury and the Tariff. I told him I had observed from the published proceedings in the Senate that he had announced in reply to an interrogatory from Webster that he intended to postpone action on the Constitutional Treasury Bill until after the Ware-House Bill and the Bill to establish a Branch Mint in New York & Charleston, S. C., were acted on, and that I feared if that was done that both the Treasury Bill & the reduction of the tariff would be postponed to so late a period of the Session as to endanger their passage. I told him I was in favour of the Ware-House and Mint Bills, but I respectfully suggested to him not to give them precedence over the other two more important measures, *viz.*, the Constitutional Treasury & Tariff Bills. My suggestions seemed to strike him forcibly, and he said if he perceived any danger of the result which I apprehended he would press action on the two more important measures first. I then told him that I had great anxiety for the passage of the Constitutional Treasury Bill and the reduction of the Tariff, which I had recommended in my annual message. I told him that I considered them as administration measures and that I intended to urge them upon Congress as such, and that I considered the public good, as well as my own power and the glory of my administration, depended in a great degree upon my success

in carrying them through Congress. He agreed with me in these views. I then told him that in minor matters I hoped such a course would not be taken as to irritate members of Congress and put their success in jeopardy. Among these minor matters I mentioned the appointments to office which were before the Senate on my nomination. I told him I had no personal feeling in relation to these nominations except as to one or two of them, and that I wished him to understand that I did not desire to influence his course in regard to them contrary to his judgment. I told him however that Northern men attached more importance to appointments than Southern men did and that if Southern Senators undertook to defeat nominations in the North made on the recommendation of Northern Senators it would excite them, and impair if not destroy my power to be useful in effecting the passage of the Bill to reduce the tariff and the Constitutional Treasury Bill. I reminded him that Mr. Jefferson's plan was to conciliate the North by the dispensation of his patronage, and to rely on the South to support his principles for the sake of these principles. I told Mr. Lewis that I had appointed to office in the South such persons as Southern Senators and others had recommended, and that Northern Senators had made no resistance to them; that the South had obtained all they desired in this respect. I told him that in the North I had acted in like manner; that I had made the nominations upon the recommendations of Northern Democratic Senators and others, & asked him why Southern Democratic Senators should unite with

the undivided Whig party in the Senate to defeat them. Mr. Lewis [could] not gainsay the truth of these remarks, but said that Mr. Calhoun's friends had been turned out and other Democrats put in in a few instances, and that in this justice had not been done to Mr. Calhoun. I told him I had made no nominations in reference to men and their aspirations for the next Presidency and that I would not do so. I told him he was wholly mistaken in his impression that Mr. Calhoun's friends as such had been proscribed by me, but that on the contrary, the fullest justice had been done them & specified several instances to satisfy him that this was so. He then complained that I had turned Mr. Calhoun out of the Cabinet, and said all Mr. Calhoun's friends condemned it. I told him I had turned no one out of Mr. Tyler's cabinet, but that I had deemed it proper upon my accession to the Presidency to form a new Cabinet, that the country expected this, and that surely it ought to be no cause of offence to any one. I told him that Judge Mason, it was true, had been retained as Attoy. Gen'l but that this was with the full approval of the other members of Mr. Tyler's Cabinet, who knew that he was my College associate and personal friend, and that on these accounts I desired to have him near me. I saw that the reason why Mr. Lewis and other Southern Senators had been joining the Whigs to defeat some of my nominations of men who were unexceptionable was solely because Mr. Calhoun had not been retained in my Cabinet, and because they suspected, but without

cause, that I was favoring the friends of some other aspirant to the Presidency. I told Mr. Lewis plainly that if the Southern Senators continued to pursue this course, they would endanger the passage of the two great measures, the Constitutional Treasury Bill and the reduction of the tariff. I told him that I was, as he conceeded, the first President who had taken bold ground and fully satisfied the South on the tariff, and that whilst I had done this Southern Senators were embarrassing me by their opposition to my nominations simply because they were not supposed to be the friends of particular men for the next Presidency. I submitted to him whether this was wise, and whether instead of thus weakening me, they ought not to cease their opposition upon these small matters in which no principle was involved, for the sake of enabling me to carry out the great measures which did involve principle, which I had recommended in my message. In the course of the conversation I expressed some anxiety that Mr. Horn should be confirmed as Collector at Phil'a, Mr. J. Geo. Harris as purser in the Navy, and Gov. Morton as Collector at Boston.

After Mr. Lewis retired Mr. Brokenbrough [1] of Florida called to see me in relation to appointments in that State.

My nephew, Lucius Marshall Walker, of Tennessee left for West Point, having been appointed a cadet at the Military Academy at that place.

[1] William H. Brockenbrough, Representative from Florida 1845–1847.

FRIDAY, *1st May, 1846.*— Saw company as usual until 12 O'Clock to-day. Among others Mrs. Cass, wife of Senator Cass, called to request me to appoint her son a Chargé d'Affaires abroad. I note this among the numerous applications for office because it struck me with surprise that such a person as Mrs. C. should have called in person.

Mr. Vice President Dallas called shortly after 12 O'Clock and showed me a letter addressed to him by Mr. Richard Rush [1] of Philadelphia. It was in answer to one which Mr. Dallas had addressed to Mr. Rush on the Oregon question. In his letter Mr. Rush expressed the opinion that in communicating the notice to Great Brittain to abrogate the Treaty of 1827, I should renew the offer of the 49° made last summer. After I had read the letter I asked Mr. Dallas his opinion, who said he concurred with Rush. He said, although a 54° 40′ man so far as the abstract question of title was concerned, that yet after all that had occurred in the several negotiations between the two Governments he thought I ought to renew the proposition of 49° which I made last summer. I told him that the notice had been despatched to England; that I had given it in terms of the Resolution of Congress, but had not accompanied it with any proposition for negotiation. I told him if any proposition of the kind was made it must proceed from the Brittish Government. Mr. Dallas still thought it would have been proper for me to have

[1] Richard Rush of Pennsylvania, 1780–1859, minister to England 1817–1825, Secretary of the Treasury under John Quincy Adams 1825–1829, minister to France 1847–1851.

taken the initiative and renewed the offer of 49° as the basis of an adjustment. Col. Todd of Ky., late Envoy Extraordinary & Minister Plenipotentiary to Russia, called and paid his respects to-day.

Received company in the parlour this evening. It was raining and not more than about 50 persons, ladies & gentlemen, attended.

SATURDAY, *2nd May, 1846.*— Though this was Cabinet day a number of persons obtained admission to my office on special request before the Cabinet convened. Among others Mr. Speaker Davis of the Ho. Repts. called. He mentioned to me a project which within the last day or two had been spoken of in conversation among members of the House to adjourn Congress to meet on the first of October. I told him I had observed in the *National Intelligencer* of this morning an article to that effect, and that I understood it as a Whig manœuvre thrown out as a feeler. I told him that I was decidedly opposed to any such movement, and I hoped it would receive no favour from any Democratic member. I told him that the Democratic party were in a majority in Congress and would be held responsible for whatever was done, and that they should never adjourn until they had acted definitely on all the measures, Foreign and Domestic, which I had brought before them in my annual message. I told him if it were possible for the united Whig party aided by a few democrats to pass such a measure that my present impression was that I would put my veto upon it. I stated to him at some length the grounds of my ob-

jections to such a step and urged him to use his influence to prevent it. He expressed his concurrence with me in opinion & said he would do so.

The Cabinet convened at the usual hour. The Post Master General and Attorney General were late coming in. Mr. Buchanan stated that he was much engaged in his office and would retire unless something of importance was to be brought before the Cabinet. I told him I had nothing of much importance to submit to the Cabinet to-day. I stated to him before he retired, that I thought it would be proper for him to inform Mr. Pakenham that the Notice to abrogate the Convention of 1827 with Great Brittain in relation to the Oregon Territory had been sent out by the Steamer of the 1st Instant to Mr. McLane with instructions to deliver it to the Brittish Government. In this the Cabinet concurred, and Mr. Buchanan said he would do so.

The other members of the Cabinet remained after Mr. Buchanan retired and conversed about various matters of minor importance connected with their duties in their respective offices. They retired about 2 O'Clock P. M.

Mr. Pageot, the French Minister, called to-day in full dress to announce to me the birth of a Grandchild of the King of the French, and delivered to me an autograph letter of the King of the French conveying the information. As this was the third or fourth time a similar annunciation had been made, I remarked to the Minister that I congratulated him on these frequent accessions to the number of the Royal family. He pleasantly replied that this was not the

last case of the kind that would occur. To Americans the importance attached to annunciations of this kind appears ridiculous, but as such has been heretofore the practice I must conform to the usage of my predecessors and give to these letters of ceremony a civil answer. Mr. Buchanan was present during this important annunciation.

In the afternoon about 6 O'Clock P. M. the Post Master General called with his carriage and Mrs. Polk and myself took a ride with him.

SUNDAY, *3rd May, 1846.*— Attended the first Presbyterian Church to-day in company with Mrs. Polk and my nieces, Miss Rucker and Miss Walker.

Col. Benton called this evening at 8 O'Clock having been requested to do so, at my instance, by my Private Secretary. I consulted him about the measures proper to be taken in relation to Mexico in the present state of our relations with that country, stating to him that I could not permit Congress to adjourn without making a communication to them on the subject. After stating to him the precise state of the existing relations between the two countries, I asked his views. He said he had not made up his mind, that it was a difficult question to decide, but advised delay until the English question concerning Oregon was either settled or [had] been brought to a crisis, one of which must happen very soon. He expressed a decided aversion to a war with Mexico if it could be avoided consistently with the honour of the country. I told him we had ample cause of War, but that I was anxious to avoid it if it could

be done honourably & consistently with the interests of our injured citizens. I told him I would delay at all events until the arrival of Mr. Slidell, who was expected daily, but that I could not permit Congress to adjourn without bringing the subject before that body.

In reference to the Oregon question I told him that the Notice had been sent to England by the Steamer of the 1st Instant. I repeated to him my purpose if a proposition of the 49° or substantially that line was made by Great Brittain I would ask the previous advice of the Senate. I repeated to him also that I could never concede the perpetual navigation of the Columbia River. He thought the downward navigation might be conceded, in which I differed with him. I expressed the desire that the Bill of the House extending our laws and jurisdiction over our citizens in Oregon should be taken up speedily and acted on by the Senate. I told him I had apprehensions that the Whig party in the Senate with a few Democrats would attempt to suppress that bill and defeat action upon it, and thought it ought by all means to be passed. He told me he would urge action upon it, and that he intended to discuss the whole Oregon subject. I told him I would be gratified if he would take charge of the Bill and urge its passage. He said that incongruous subjects had been blended together in the Bill which ought to be seperated, and each acted on by itself. He said he should go for 49°. I told him that on that point my views were expressed in my annual message, and my course I had already stated [to] him, if the Brittish

Government should make substantially the offer of the 49°. I repeated to him that I would be gratified if he would take the matter in hand and press the jurisdiction Bill through the Senate. I expressed a desire also that the Constitutional Treasury Bill which had passed the Ho. Repts. should receive the early action of the Senate, and told him I had fears that it might be defeated by a combination of a few democrats with the Whig party.

I told him finally that I was preparing an historical statement of our causes of complaint against Mexico, with a view to be prepared to make a message to Congress, but that before I acted on the subject I would show it to him and consult him as to the measures of redress which I should recommend. Col. B. was in a good humour and the interview was a pleasant one.

MONDAY, *4th May, 1846.*— Saw company to-day as usual until 12 O'Clock. Among others saw Gen'l Cass, who informed me that he understood that a Mr. Fisher of Cincinnatti had purchased or was about to purchase the *Times* newspaper of Washington, and that it was to be a Calhoun paper. He told me that he thought that Mr. Allen of the Senate had abandoned the idea of starting another Democratic paper at Washington.

I occupied the day after 12 O'Clock until my dinner hour at 4 O'Clock in disposing of the business on my table.

After night Mr. Senator Haywood of N. C. called, & I had a long conversation with him about various

public subjects now before Congress. I urged upon him the importance of the early action of the Senate on the Oregon jurisdiction Bill which passed the Ho. Repts. some days ago. I found him disinclined to take it up.

I told him that it was one of the series of measures on the Oregon question which I had recommended in my annual Message, that it had been passed by the votes of more than three fourths of the Ho. Repts., and from all the evidences before us I could not doubt was approved by the country. I told him the Whig party in the Senate for party purposes might and probably would oppose it, and that it would be most unfortunate if a small minority of the Democratic Senators should unite with them & succeed in defeating [it.] I told him that I had authorized the Notice to be given to G. B. to abrogate the Convention of 1827 under the authority conferred on me by the Resolution of Congress, and asked him if it was possible that the Senate intended to leave our citizens in Oregon to remain without the protection of our laws. He still resisted the measure, when I became very earnest in urging him to reconsider his course, and stated to him plainly that if this great measure was resisted by a majority of the Senate I would make an issue with that body before the country. He left without giving me any assurance that he would change the views which he had expressed, but said he would examine the subject further. In the course of Mr. Haywood's conversation he expressed the opinion to me that Mr. Calhoun was opposed to my administration. Of this I had suspicions before. I

told Mr. H. that he was an old friend & that I most anxiously desired to save him from uniting with Mr. Calhoun and the Whigs proper in opposing this leading measure of my administration.

TUESDAY, *5th May, 1846.*— The Cabinet met to-day, it being their regular day of meeting; all the members being present. Several matters of minor importance were considered. Our Mexican difficulties, the condition of our army on the Del Norte, and the possibility of a collision between the American & Mexican forces were the subject of Conversation, but as no late advices from Gen'l Taylor (the despatch of the 6th April ult. being the last) had been received definite action on the subject was postponed. The Cabinet dispersed about 1 O'Clock P. M. and I devoted the balance of the day to the business on my table.

The Hon. John Blair of Tennessee, with whom I served many years in Congress, and his son and the Rev. Mr. Doak, President of Greenville College, dined with me to-day.

This being reception evening more than 100 persons, ladies and gentlemen, called, & among them Mr. Calhoun & Mr. Senator Allen.

WEDNESDAY, *6th May, 1846.*— Saw company until 12 O'Clock to-day. At that hour Mr. Morris, P. M. of the City of N. York, and Hon. Michael Hoffman, Naval officer at New York, called. They had both been elected as members of the State convention of New York to revise the constitution of

the State, and they called to consult me & to know whether they could leave their official duties to attend the session of the Convention. They stated that they had deputies who would discharge the duties of their respective offices. I told them that they would be held responsible for the discharge of the duties of their respective offices, and that if with such responsibility resting upon them I would not object to their attendance upon the convention, provided the public business was properly done and they would see that no duty was neglected and that the public interest did not suffer by their absence. They said that they would hold themselves thus responsible, and that they would moreover visit their offices at least once a week during the Session, which would probably continue from 60 to 90 days. This they said they could do conveniently, as it was but six hours run from Albany to New York, and they could come down every saturday evening and return on monday morning. They left about 1 O'Clock P. M. and [I] devoted the balance of the day to the current business on my table.

After night despatches were received from the army under the command of Gen'l Taylor on the Del Norte as late as the 15th ult. Newspaper accounts were also received as late as the 19th ult. No actual collision had taken place, though the probabilities are that hostilities might take place soon. Vice President Dallas, the Secretary of War, Gen'l Cass, and Mr. Buchanan called in the course of the evening, and the Mexican question and the condition of our army were the chief subjects of conversation.

THURSDAY, *7th May, 1846.*— I had the usual round of company until 12 O'Clock to-day. Among them were persons begging money, others seeking office, and quite a number of ladies and gentlemen who called to pay their respects.

Despatches were received last night from the army of occupation on the Del Norte, and I occupied to-day chiefly in examining the present state of our relations with Mexico, with a view to make a communication on the subject to Congress.

I prepared also my decision on a case which has excited uncommon interest on the part of the claimants because of the great value and magnitude of the interests involved. It was an appeal to me from a decision made by the Secretary of War against a claim for leases on Isle Royal in Lake Superior presented by Abel Shanck of Ohio & others. I affirmed the decision of the Secretary of War. (See my opinion in a letter addressed to the Secretary of War in my letter Book.) I attended also to-day to some other current business on my table.

Gen'l R. M. Saunders, U. S. Minister to Spain, called about 1 O'Clock P. M. Gen'l S. has been the warm political friend of Mr. Calhoun, but expressed himself freely in opposition to his course in the Senate, as indicating pretty certainly that he would oppose my administration. He condemned in strong terms his course on the Oregon question; and said he apprehended he would identify himself with the Whigs, & if he did his friends now in the South would abandon him & he would ruin himself. He said he would see Mr. Calhoun and some of his

Southern friends in Congress and talk frankly and freely to them, and induce them, if possible, to change their course.

What is remarkable no one called to see me after dark to-night. It is what has rarely happened since the meeting of Congress.

FRIDAY, *8th May, 1846.*— Saw company until 12 O'Clock to-day. Among others the Hon. John Slidell, late U. S. Minister to Mexico, called in company with the Secretary of State. Mr. Buchanan retired after a few minutes, and Mr. Slidell remained about an hour in conversation concerning his mission and the state of our relations with Mexico. Mr. Slidell's opinion was that but one course towards Mexico was left to the U. S. and that was to take the redress of the wrongs and injuries which we had so long borne from Mexico into our own hands, and to act with promptness and energy. In this I agreed with him, and told him it was only a matter of time when I would make a communication to Congress on the subject, and that I had made up my mind to do so very soon.

Gov. Bright, Senator from Indiana, & Mr. Wheaton of the Ho. Repts., as a committee of Congress called to present two Bills for my approval which had been passed by Congress. They remained a short time in conversation. Mr. Bright among other things stated that Mr. Wescott, the Senator from Florida, was much dissatisfied with my nomination of judicial officers in Florida. I had a few days ago nominated a District Judge, a Marshall,

& [a] U. S. Attorney for Florida. Senator Yulee and Mr. Brokenbrough of the Ho. Repts. were consulted on the subject and united upon the nominations of the judge and Marshall, and did not as far as I know differ much as to [the] U. S. Attorney. The nominee for U. S. Attorney met Mr. Yulee's entire approbation; Mr. Brokenbrough preferred Mr. Scott, but was not dissatisfied at the nomination which was made. Mr. Bright told me that Mr. Wescott had told him that I had turned out his brother-in-law, Mr. Sibley, as U. S. Atto. and that he should join the Whigs, and that hereafter he was a Whig. Mr. Bright said he told him that he (Wescott) had been acting and voting with the Whigs all the Session and therefore it was not necessary for him now to join them. Mr. Bright said that Mr. Turney and other Democrats were rejoiced that I had not nominated his brother-in-law, for he had given my administration no support and deserved nothing at my hands. I told Mr. Bright that it was untrue that I had turned Mr. Wescott's brother-in-law out. I told him the facts were that under the Territorial Government of Florida, there were four or five judicial Circuits in Florida with each a Judge, a Marshall, & U. S. Atto., and that since Florida was admitted as a State they were all consolidated and formed but one Circuit, and that in making the appointments for this one Circuit I had not selected and appointed Mr. Wescott's brother-in-law, Mr. Sibley. Mr. Bright said he was glad I had not done so. He spoke of Wescott as a confirmed Whig. I told him I considered Mr. Wescott a Whig, and that it was a matter of in-

difference to me whether he was dissatisfied with me because I did not nominate his brother-in-law or not.

This being reception evening upwards of 100 persons, ladies and gentlemen, called.

SATURDAY, *9th May, 1846.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present. I brought up the Mexican question, and the question of what was the duty of the administration in the present state of our relations with that country. The subject was very fully discussed. All agreed that if the Mexican forces at Matamoras committed any act of hostility on Gen'l Taylor's forces I should immediately send a message to Congress recommending an immediate declaration of War. I stated to the Cabinet that up to this time, as they knew, we had heard of no open act of aggression by the Mexican army, but that the danger was imminent that such acts would be committed. I said that in my opinion we had ample cause of war, and that it was impossible that we could stand in *statu quo,* or that I could remain silent much longer; that I thought it was my duty to send a message to Congress very soon & recommend definitive measures. I told them that I thought I ought to make such a message by tuesday next, that the country was excited and impatient on the subject, and if I failed to do so I would not be doing my duty. I then propounded the distinct question to the Cabinet and took their opinions individually, whether I should make a message to Congress on tuesday, and whether in that message I should recommend a declaration of War against Mexico. All

except the Secretary of the Navy gave their advice in the affirmative. Mr. Bancroft dissented but said if any act of hostility should be committed by the Mexican forces he was then in favour of immediate war. Mr. Buchanan said he would feel better satisfied in his course if the Mexican forces had or should commit any act of hostility, but that as matters stood we had ample cause of war against Mexico, & he gave his assent to the measure. It was agreed that the message should be prepared and submitted to the Cabinet in their meeting on tuesday. A history of our causes of complaint against Mexico had been at my request previously drawn up by Mr. Buchanan. I stated that what was said in my annual message in December gave that history as succinctly and satisfactorily as Mr. Buchanan's statement, that in truth it was the same history in both, expressed in different language, and that if I repeated that history in [a] message to Congress now I had better employ the precise language used in my message of December last. Without deciding this point the Cabinet passed to the consideration of some other subjects of minor importance. The Cabinet adjourned about 2 O'Clock P. M. Before they separated I directed the Secretary of State to have all the correspondence of Mr. Slidell with the Mexican Government, & such portions of his correspondence with the Department of State as it was proper to communicate copied; and in like manner I directed the Secretary of War to have all his orders to Gen'l Taylor commanding the army in Texas copied, so as to have these documents ready to be communicated to Congress with my message.

About 6 o'clock P. M. Gen'l R. Jones, the Adjutant General of the army, called and handed to me despatches received from Gen'l Taylor by the Southern mail which had just arrived, giving information that a part of [the] Mexican army had crossed to the Del Norte, [crossed the Del Norte] and attacked and killed and captured two companies of dragoons of Gen'l Taylor's army consisting of 63 officers & men. The despatch also stated that he had on that day (26th April) made a requisition on the Governors of Texas & Louisiana for four Regiments each, to be sent to his relief at the earliest practicable period. Before I had finished reading the despatch, the Secretary of War called. I immediately summoned the Cabinet to meet at 7½ O'Clock this evening. The Cabinet accordingly assembled at that hour; all the members present. The subject of the despatch received this evening from Gen'l Taylor, as well as the state of our relations with Mexico, were fully considered. The Cabinet were unanimously of opinion, and it was so agreed, that a message should be sent to Congress on Monday laying all the information in my possession before them and recommending vigorous & prompt measure[s] to enable the Executive to prosecute the War. The Secretary of War & Secretary of State agreed to put their clerks to work to copy the correspondence between Mr. Slidell & the Mexican Government & Secretary of State and the correspondence between the War Department & Gen'l Taylor, to the end that these documents should be transmitted to Congress with my message on Mon-

day. The other members of the Cabinet tendered the services of their clerks to aid in preparing these copies.

Mr. Senator Houston, Hon. Barkley Martin, & several other members of Congress called in the course of the evening, & were greatly excited at the news brought by the Southern mail from the army. They all approved the steps which had been taken by the administration, and were all of opinion that war with Mexico should now be prosecuted with vigor.

The Cabinet adjourned about 10 O'Clock, & I commenced my message; Mr. Bancroft and Mr. Buchanan, the latter of whom had prepared a history of our causes of complaint against Mexico, agreed to assist me in preparing the message.

SUNDAY, *10th May, 1846.*— As the public excitement in and out of Congress was very naturally very great, and as there was a great public necessity to have the prompt action of Congress on the Mexican question, and therefore an absolute necessity for sending my message to Congress on tomorrow, I resumed this morning the preparation of my message. About 9½ O'Clock Mr. Bancroft called, and with his assistance I was engaged in preparing it until 11 O'Clock, at which time I suspended my labours in order to attend church. I left the part of the message which had been written to be copied by my Private Secretary, and accompanied Mrs. Polk, my niece, Miss Rucker, & my nephew, Marshall T. Polk, to church. As we were leaving for church the Hon.

Mr. Haralson & the Hon. Mr. Baker,[1] members of the Committee of Military affairs, called to see me on the subject of the legislative action proper to be had to provide for the vigorous prosecution of the war with Mexico. I told them I would see them at 5 O'Clock this afternoon.

On my return from church about 1 O'Clock P. M. I resumed the preperation of my message. In the course of half an hour Mr. Bancroft & Mr. Buchanan called and the part of the message which had been written was examined & approved. At 2 O'Clock my family dinner was announced. I invited Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Bancroft to dine with me. Mr. Buchanan declined and Mr. Bancroft dined with me. After dinner Mr. Bancroft and myself returned to the preparation of the message. Two confidential Clerks, *viz.,* H. C. Williams from the War Department an[d] —— ——, from the Navy Department were engaged in assisting my Private Secretary in making two copies of my message, one for the Senate and one for the House.

At 5 O'Clock Mr. Haralson & Mr. Baker called according to the appointment made this morning. They informed me that deeming the present a great emergency they had called the Committee on Military affairs of the Ho. Repts. together this morning and that they had unanimously agreed to support a Bill appropriating ten millions of Dollars, and authorizing the President to raise fifty thousand dollars [men] to prosecute the war with Mexico. They

[1] Edward Dickinson Baker of Illinois, killed in the battle of Ball's Bluff, October 21, 1861.

showed to me a copy of the Bill which they proposed to pass. I pointed out some defects in it & advised them to consult with the Secretary and officers connected with the War Department, including Gen'l Scott and Adj't Gen'l Jones. They said they would do so. I discovered in the course of the conversation that both Mr. Haralson and Mr. Baker desired to be appointed to high commands in the army of Volunteers which their Bill proposed to raise. I talked civilly to them but made no promises.

After night and whilst the clerks were still copying my message in my Private Secretary's office, the Secretaries of State, of the Treasury, of the Navy, the P. M. Gen'l, and [the] Atto. Gen'l called, but were not all present at any one time. The Secretary of War was indisposed as I learned, and did not call during the day. Senator Houston & Bartley Martin & Ch. J. Ingersoll called to consult me on the Mexican question, and to learn what I intended to recommend in my message. The two former had retired before Mr. Ingersoll called. I addressed notes to Senator Allen, Ch. of the Comm. of Foreign Affairs of the Senate, & Mr. McKay of N. C., Ch. of the Com. of Ways and Means of the Ho. Repts. requesting them to call at my office to-night. In the course of half an hour they called, and the message being copied, I read it to them and Mr. Ingersoll in presence of some of the members of [the] Cabinet who had remained. They all approved it.

At 10½ O'Clock the company left and I retired to rest. It was a day of great anxiety to me, and I regretted the necessity which had existed to make it

necessary for me to spend the Sabbath in the manner I have.

MONDAY, *11th May, 1846.*— I refused to see company generally this morning. I carefully revised my message on the Mexican question, but had no time to read the copies of the correspondence furnished by the War & State Departments which was to accompany it. I had read the original correspondence and presume the copies are correct.

I addressed [notes] to Senators Cass and Benton this morning requesting them to call. Gen'l Cass called first. The message was read to him and he highly approved it. Col. Benton called before Gen'l Cass left, and I gave him the copy of the message and he retired to an adjoining room and read it. After he had read it I had a conversation with him alone. I found he did not approve it in all its parts. He was willing to vote men and money for defence of our territory, but was not prepared to make aggressive war on Mexico. He disapproved the marching of the army from Corpus Christi to the left Bank of the Del Norte, but said he had never said so to the public. I had a full conversation with him, and he left without satisfying me that I could rely upon his support of the measures recommended by the message, further than the mere defence of our territory. I inferred, too, from his conversation that he did not think the territory of the U. S. extended West of the Nueces River.

At 12 O'Clock I sent my message[1] to Congress.

[1] Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents,* IV, 437.

It was a day of great anxiety with me. Between 5 & 6 O'Clock P. M. Mr. Slidell, U. S. Minister to Mexico, called and informed me that the Ho. Repts. had passed a Bill carrying out all the recommendations of the message by a vote of 173 ayes to 14 noes, and that the Senate had adjourned after a debate without coming to any decision.

My Private Secretary brought me a note from Col. Benton desiring information as to the number of men and amount of money required to defend the country. There was nothing in his note to commit him to any course of policy beyond what he had intimated in his conversation this morning. My Private Secretary informed me that Col. Benton would call for an answer at 8 O'Clock this evening. I immediately sent his note to the Secretary of War and requested him to call at that hour. The Secretaries of War and State called a few minutes before 8 O'Clock but before I had consulted him [the former] in relation to Col. Benton's note, Col. Benton came in. I told Col. B. that the Secretary of War had just come in & that I had no opportunity to consult him on the subject of his note. I told him that my own opinion was that it was at present impossible to say what number of troops would be wanted, and that until Congress acted I could not tell what authority would be given to the Executive; but that if the Bill which had passed the House to-day should also pass the Senate, no more men would be called out and no more money expended than would be absolutely necessary to bring the present state of hostilities to an end. I told him if the war [was] recognized by Congress, that with

a large force on land and sea I thought it could be speedily terminated. Col. B. said that the Ho. Repts. had passed a Bill to-day declaring war in two hours, and that one and [a] half hours of that time had been occupied in reading the documents which accompanied my message, and that in his opinion in the 19th Century war should not be declared without full discussion and much more consideration than had been given to it in the Ho. Repts. Mr. Buchanan then remarked that War already existed by the act of Mexico herself & therefore it did not require much deliberation to satisfy all that we ought promptly and vigorously to meet [it]. Mr. Marcy and Mr. Buchanan discussed the subject for some time with Mr. Benton, but without any change of the opinions which he had expressed to me in conversation this morning. I saw it was useless to debate the subject further with him & therefore I abstained from engaging further in the conversation. After remaining near an hour Col. Benton left. Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Marcy, and myself were perfectly satisfied that he would oppose the Bill which had passed the House to-day, and that if the Whigs on party grounds acted with him the Bill might be defeated.

Gov. Yell of Arkansas, Senator Houston, & other members of Congress called in in the course of the evening, and were highly gratified at the action of the House in passing the Bill by so overwhelming a majority. The part taken by Mr. Calhoun in the Senate to-day satisfies me that he too will oppose the Bill passed by the House to-day if he thinks he can

do so safely in reference to public opinion. The Whigs in the Senate will oppose it on party grounds probably, if they can get Mr. Calhoun, Mr. Benton, and two or three other Senators professing to belong to the Democratic party to join them, so as to make a majority against the Bill. Should the Bill be defeated by such a combination, the professed Democratic members who by their votes aid in rejecting it will owe a heavy responsibility not only to their party but to the country. I am fully satisfied that all that can save the Bill in the Senate is the fear of the people by the few Democratic Senators who wish it defeated.

TUESDAY, *12th May, 1846.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present except the P. M. Gen'l, who was understood to be engaged in his office in examining the bids for mail contracts at the late letting in the Western & S. Western States.

The Mexican question was the subject of conversation, and all had doubts whether the Bill which passed the House on yesterday would pass the Senate to-day. Should it pass, the course of operations was considered. Mr. Bancroft at my request brought from his office all the orders and letters of instruction to our squadrons in the Pacific & Gulf of Mexico, and they were read. This was done 1st, because I desired to refresh my memory of what they were, & 2nd, because they may be called for by Congress.

Some other business of minor importance was con-

sidered; & the Cabinet adjourned about 2 O'Clock P. M.

At 7 O'Clock P. M. my Private Secretary returned from the Capitol and announced to me that the Bill [1] which passed the Ho. Repts. on yesterday, making a formal declaration of War against Mexico, had passed the Senate by a vote of 42 ayes to 2 noes, with some immaterial amendment in its details. He represented to me that the debate in the Senate to-day was most animating and thrilling, and that Mr. Calhoun, who spoke in opposition to the Bill, but finally did not vote, had suffered much in the discussion. Mr. Crittenden and other Whigs, he informed me, had made speeches against portions of the Bill & made indirect opposition to it, [but had] finally voted for it. He represented the whole debate as a great triumph for the administration. The Senate, he informed me, adjourned as soon as the Bill was passed. The Ho. of Repts., he informed me, had adjourned to meet this evening at 7½ O'Clock with a view to receive the Bill from the Senate, if that body should act upon it to-day. At 8½ o'clock P. M. I learned that the House had concurred in the amendments of the Senate to the Bill, so that when the Bill is signed by the President War will be declared against Mexico. This was reception evening and more than 100 persons, ladies and gentlemen, attended. Among others Mr. Bates,[2] formerly a mem-

[1] For the passage of the War bill in the House, see *Globe,* 29 Cong. 1 Sess. 795; for its passage in the Senate, *ibid,* 804.

[2] James Bates, Representative from Maine, 1831–1833; at this time he was connected with the Maine Insane Hospital.

ber of Congress from Maine, with whom I served, with about twenty others who have charge of insane hospitals in different parts of the U. S. attended. Mr. Bates informed me that he was himself at the head of such an institution, and that a convention of those who also had charge of such institutions in different parts of the U. S. was now assembled in Washington to consult together on the subject of their respective charges.

WEDNESDAY, *13th May, 1846.*— A very large number of visitors called on me this morning, consisting of Senators, Representatives, citizens, & strangers. All took a deep interest and many were excited at the declaration of war which passed Congress on yesterday, and now only awaited my approval to become a law. All approved the acts. Many members of Congress especially from the Western States desired that volunteers under the law should be accepted from their respective States.

About 1 O'Clock P. M. a committee of Congress waited on me and presented the act[1] declaring War against Mexico for my approval. I read it in their presence & approved and signed it.

Gen'l Scott, commander in chief of the U. S. Army, called in company with the Secretary of War. I had requested the Secretary to invite Gen'l Scott to call. I held a conference with them in relation to the execution of [the] act declaring War against Mexico. Gen'l Scott presented a project of the number and distribution among the States of the

[1] *U. S. Stat. at Large,* IX, 9.

number of troops required. It was incomplete and after giving him my views [I] requested him to make a more formal report to me during the day. I tendered to Gen'l Scott the command of the army to be raised. He accepted and retired. Though I did not consider him in all respects suited to such an important command, yet being commander in chief of the army, his position entitled him to it if he desired it.

Most of the Cabinet were in attendance, though no cabinet meeting had been called. A Proclamation [1] announcing the existence of the War was prepared and signed by me. This was done in pursuance of the precedent of Mr. Madison in 1812.

I appointed a special meeting of the Cabinet at 7½ O'Clock P. M. All the members attended except the Secretary of War. He was detained at his office issuing a requisition on the Gov. of Missouri for a thousand Mounted Volunteers, and issuing orders to Col. Kearney to proceed with his dragoons to protect a caravan of traders who, it was understood, had recently left Missouri for Santa Fé. Col. Howard of Texas was despatched with these orders, and to proceed without delay to overtake the traders to Santa Fé and notify them of the existence of War.

Mr. Buchanan read the draft of a despatch which he had prepared to our Ministers at London, Paris, & other Foreign Courts, announcing the declaration of War against Mexico, with a statement of the causes and objects of the War, with a view that they should communicate its substance to the respective

[1] *U. S. Stat. at Large,* IX, 999. Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents,* IV, 470.

Governments to which they are accredited. Among other things Mr. Buchanan had stated that our object was not to dismember Mexico or to make conquests, and that the Del Norte was the boundary to which we claimed; or rather that in going to war we did not do so with a view to acquire either California or New Mexico or any other portion of the Mexican territory. I told Mr. Buchanan that I thought such a declaration to Foreign Governments unnecessary and improper; that the causes of the war as set forth in my message to Congress and the accompanying documents were altogether satisfactory. I told him that though we had not gone to war for conquest, yet it was clear that in making peace we would if practicable obtain California and such other portion of the Mexican territory as would be sufficient to indemnify our claimants on Mexico, and to defray the expenses of the war which that power by her long continued wrongs and injuries had forced us to wage. I told him it was well known that the Mexican Government had no other means of indemnifying us. Mr. Buchanan said if when Mr. McLane announced to Lord Aberdeen the existence of the War with Mexico the latter should demand of Mr. McLane to know if we intended to acquire California or any other part of the Mexican territory and no satisfactory answer was given, he thought it almost certain that both England and France would join with Mexico in the war against us. I told him that the war with Mexico was an affair with which neither England, France, or any other power had any concern; that such an inquiry would be insulting to our Government, and if

made I would not answer it, even if the consequence should be a war with all of them. I told him I would not tie up my hands or make any pledge to any Foreign power as to the terms on which I would ultimately make peace with Mexico. I told him no Foreign [power] had any right to demand any such assurance, and that I would make none such let the consequences be what they might. Then, said Mr. Buchanan, you will have war with England as well as Mexico, and probably with France also, for neither of these powers will ever stand bye and [see] California annexed to the U. S. I told him that before I would make the pledge which he proposed, I would meet the war which either England or France or all the Powers of Christendom might wage, and that I would stand and fight until the last man among us fell in the conflict. I told him that neither as a citizen nor as President would I permit or tolerate any intermeddling of any European Power on this Continent. Mr. Buchanan said if my views were carried out, we would not settle the Oregon question & we would have war with England. I told him there was no connection between the Oregon & Mexican question[s], and that sooner than give the pledge he proposed that we would not if we could fairly and honourably acquire California or any other part of the Mexican Territory which we desired, I would let the war which he apprehended with England come & would take the whole responsibility. The Secretary of the Treasury engaged warmly & even in an excited manner against the proposition of Mr. Buchanan in his draft of his de-

spatch. The Secretary of the Navy, the Atto. Gen'l, & the P. M. Gen'l in succession expressed similar opinions. Mr. Buchanan stood alone in the Cabinet, but was very earnest in expressing his views and enforcing them. Towards the close of the discussion, which lasted for more than two hours, I stepped to my table and wrote a paragraph to be substituted for all that part of Mr. B's proposed despatch which spoke of dismembering Mexico, of acquiring California, or of the Del Norte as the ultimate boundary beyond which we would not claim or desire to go. I strongly expressed to Mr. Buchanan that these paragraphs in his despatch must be struck out. Mr. Buchanan made no reply, but before he left took up his own draft and the paragraph which I had written and took them away with [him]. I was much astonished at the views expressed by Mr. Buchanan on the subject. The discussion to-night was one of the most earnest & interesting which has ever occurred in my Cabinet.

The Cabinet adjourned about 11 O'Clock P. M. and I retired to rest much exhausted after a day of incessant application, anxiety, and labour.

THURSDAY, *14th May, 1846.*— Many members of Congress and others called this morning. Great anxiety prevailed to know the number of volunteers I would call to the Mexican frontier, and the States from which they would be taken. All I could say was that probably about 20,000 would be called out, and that they would be taken from the Western and Southwestern States which were nearest the scene of

action, but that I had not yet distributed the proportions among these states.

Mr. Buchanan sent over for my approval a revised copy of his despatch [1] to our Ministers abroad, which had been so fully discussed in Cabinet last night. He had struck out of it the parts I had directed to be struck out & had substituted the paragraph I had written (see Diary of yesterday).

I was exceedingly engaged; members of the Cabinet and members of Congress were calling at short intervals during the whole day. The exciting topic was the War with Mexico, and the raising of troops to prosecute the war.

At 8 O'Clock P. M. the Secretary of War and Gen'l Scott of the U. S. Army called.

I had a long conference with them concerning the plan of conducting the war with Mexico. I gave it as my opinion that the first movement should be to march a competent force into the Northern Provinces and seize and hold them until peace was made. In this they concurred. The whole field of operations was examined with all the information before us, but it would be tedious to detail all the views and the reasons for them which were expressed.

It was agreed to call out immediately for service 20,000 volunteers, and we proceeded to apportion this force among the States of Texas, Arkansas, Illinois, Missouri, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, & Georgia. After very full examination of the subject the Secretary of War & Gen'l Scott retired between 11 & 12 O'Clock P. M.

[1] Moore, *Buchanan,* VI, 484.

Gen'l Scott did not impress me favourably as a military man. He has had experience in his profession, but I thought was rather scientific and visionary in his views. I did not think that so many as 20,000 volunteers besides the regular army was necessary, but I did not express this opinion, not being willing to take the responsibility of any failure of the campaign by refusing to grant to Gen'l Scott all he asked.

FRIDAY, *15th May, 1846.*— Saw a large number of persons this morning, members of Congress and others. I was this morning to tell members of Congress how many volunteers were called out, & the number from each State upon which a requisition was made.

After 12 O'Clock had repeated interviews with different members of the Cabinet who called, and especially with the Secretaries of War, Navy, & State.

Mr. Holmes of S. C., Chairman of the committee of Naval affairs of the Ho. Repts., called about 2 O'Clock to hold a conversation with me about the measures connected with the Navy to be brought forward by his committee. He told me they had determined to Report a Bill authorizing 13 War Steamers to be built. He expressed a desire on the part of the Committee to harmonize with the views of the administration. He mentioned a Report made to them or to the Ho. Repts. by the Secretary of the Navy, proposing certain reforms in the Navy in which he did not concur, and said he had written to the Secretary of the Navy on yesterday on the subject but had received no answer. He expressed the

opinion that since the declaration of War against Mexico, the State of the country was very different from what it was at the time the Secretary had made his Report. I was not enabled to give him any definite information in regard to the Secretary's views since the declaration of the War against Mexico, but told him I would immediately send for the Secretary of the Navy & consult him on the subject. Mr. Holmes retired & I sent for the Secretary of the Navy and informed him of Mr. Holmes' conversation. He said he had received no letter from him & that he would without delay address him a note to that effect. I note Mr. Holmes' call, because he had heretofore given indications of no kind feelings towards the administration, and his call upon me therefore was unexpected.

Colonel R. M. Johnson of Kentucky and [I] had a friendly conversation of an hour. He approves the whole course of my administration, and expressed himself warmly to that effect. He told me there [were] some of Mr. Calhoun's friends who had come to him & condemned my course on the Mexican question, and had attributed to me [as] the motive in bringing on the war with Mexico the desire to run a second time for the Presidency. Col. J. said he repelled the imputation as unworthy of them and vindicated my course on the Mexican question, & had told them plainly that he would prefer me to any man spoken of for the Presidency, and if I withheld my assent to be a candidate the people had a right to elect me whether I agreed to it or not. I told [him] I was no candidate for a second term and

would not be; and repeated to him my fixed & unalterable resolution on this subject, from the day I wrote my letter of acceptance of the Baltimore nomination. I told him I had not changed the resolution expressed in that letter and should not do so.

This was one of the evenings for receiving company in the parlour. It was raining and not more than 40 or 50 persons attended.

SATURDAY, *16th May, 1846.*— At 5 O'Clock this morning my brother-in-law, James Walker, and my sister, his wife, who had been inmates of my house for near a month past, left for their residence in Tennessee. They took with them their daughter Sarah who has spent the last six months in my family.

The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present. The P. M. Gen'l being much engaged in the business of his office remained but a short time. The chief subject considered was the Mexican War. A "confidential Circular"[1] to all our consuls abroad stating the causes of the War with Mexico and the views of the Government, which had been printed, was presented by the Secretary of State, and met the approbation of the Cabinet. I had before approved it.

The plan of the campaign against Mexico was considered & particularly against the Northern Provinces. I presented my views to the Cabinet and they were approved. My plan was to march an army of 2000 men on Santa Fé & near 4000 men on Chihua-

[1] Moore, *Buchanan,* VI, 485.

hua and at once conquer the Northern Provinces, leaving Gen'l Scott to occupy the country on the lower Del Norte and in the interior. After the Cabinet adjourned I sent for Col. Benton and submitted the plan to him and he approved it.

During the sitting of the Cabinet I submitted to them the distribution among the States of the 50,000 volunteers authorized to be raised. A portion of this force was assigned to each State and territory in the Union, so as to make each feel an interest in the war. The 20,000 to be called into service immediately were to be taken from the Western and South Western States, and the remaining 30,000 to be organized in the other States and territories and held in readiness subject to the call of the Government. I had constant calls during the latter part of the day by many members of Congress on the subject of the War & the organization of the volunteer force. After night fifteen or twenty members of Congress, chiefly from the Western States called. The Vice President & the Speaker of the Ho. Repts. also called. All desired to see me on the subject of the Mexican War. The law [1] passed Congress to-day to raise a Regiment of riflemen to guard our emigrants to Oregon, in pursuance of the recommendation in my annual message. The officers to command this Regiment are of course to be appointed soon. Most of the members who called recommended persons to fill these offices. Near 12 O'Clock P. M. I retired much fatigued & exhausted.

[1] Approved May 19, 1846. *U. S. Stat. at Large,* IX, 13.

SUNDAY, *17th May, 1846.*— Attended the first Presbyterian Church to-day in company with Mrs. Polk and my niece, Miss Rucker.

MONDAY, *18th May, 1846.*— An unusually large number of visitors called to-day. A great number of strangers are in the City to attend the fair to be held by the manufacturers on the 20th Instant. Many others have doubtless been drawn to the City by the recent declaration of War against Mexico; some of them to tender the services of themselves & others as volunteers, and a very large number to seek appointments in the Regiment of mounted rifle-men, which passed Congress two or three days ago. From these combined causes I saw a larger number of persons in my office to-day than have called on me in my office on any one day since I have been President. At 12 O'Clock I usually close my office, but when that hour arrived to-day so many persons were in desiring to see me that though my porter closed the door below stairs & prevented other from entering my time was occupied in conversation until near my dinner hour.

In the course of the day Robert H. Morris, Post Master at New York, called. Mr. Morris had been nominated and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate been appointed Post Master of New York some weeks ago. The Post Master Gen'l reported to me some days ago that Mr. Morris had been required to give bond as all other Post Masters were required to do, and had failed to do so. The Post Master Gen'l informed me that he had written

& caused to be written to Mr. Morris several letters required [ing] the bond to be forwarded, and that he had answered evasively, and insisted that his compensation to pay his clerks & other expenses of his office must be increased before he would give bond. I directed the Post Master Gen'l to write to him without delay and inform him that if he did not execute & forward his bond immediately I would remove him & appoint another Post Master. Upon receiving that letter Mr. Morris had come to Washington & called to see me on the subject. I repeated to him what I had authorized the P. M. Gen'l to write to him. I told him it was my duty to see that the laws were faithfully executed; that bonds were required of all Post Masters, and that unless he gave his bond forthwith I would remove him. He spoke of the inadequacy of his compensation. I told him he received all that the law allowed, and that if his compensation was inadequate he must appeal to Congress to increase it. I told him it was useless to talk further on the subject, that he had to give the bonds forthwith or be dismissed. He then begged me to allow him to return to N. York when he would execute the bond on to-morrow & have it here on thursday next. I told him he could have the time he requested, but if the bond was not here at that time I would certainly remove him. Mr. Morris is a leading democrat, but in the discharge of my official duties I can & will know no man or his politics, but require all public officers to conform to the law.

After night a crowd of members of Congress attend[ed] at my office. They wished to converse

about the Mexican war, and to solicit appointments for their friends in the Regiment of mounted riflemen recently authorized by Congress to be raised. I retired at a late hour after one of the most harassing and fatiguing day's labour I have ever performed in my life.

TUESDAY, *19th May, 1846.*— This was the regular day of the meeting of the Cabinet. The members were irregular in the hour of meeting. The Secretary of War was attending the Military Committee of the Senate, consulting with them in relation to further legislation with a view to the more vigorous prosecution of the Mexican war, & did not come in until near two hours after the usual time of meeting. The Post Master Gen'l & Secretary of State [came], but said if there was nothing of importance to be brought before the Cabinet they were much engaged in their respective Departments & would retire. They did so, the Secretary of State returning in about an hour. No subject was brought up for consideration & decision. I had however a long and full conversation with the Secretaries of War and of the Navy in relation to the prosecution of the war with Mexico, and urged upon both the necessity of giving their personal attention to all matters, even of detail, and not confiding in their subordinates to act without their supervision. I required of them, too, to keep me constantly advised of every important step that was taken. I urged the most energetic and prompt action. I told them that I had understood that Gen'l Scott had given out that he would not

probably go to the seat of War on the Del Norte to take command until about the 1st of September. I remarked to the Secretary of War that any such delay was not to be permitted, & that Gen'l Scott must proceed very soon to his post, or that I would supersede him in the command. The Secretary of War informed me that Gen'l Scott was embarrassing him by his schemes, that he was constantly talking and not acting. I told the Secretary to take the matter into his own hands; to issue his orders and cause them to be obeyed.

Mr. Buchanan called whilst some of the members of the Cabinet were still in my office and introduced Bishop Hughes[1] of the Catholic church in New York. I requested Bishop Hughes to call with Mr. Buchanan at 7 P. M. Bishop Hughes had come to Washington upon an invitation given by Mr. Buchanan upon consultation with me some days ago. Our object was to procure his aid in disabusing the minds of the Catholic Priests & people of Mexico in regard to what they most erroneously supposed to be the hostile designs of the Government and people of the U. S. upon the religion and church property of Mexico.

Bishop Hughes called with Mr. Buchanan at 7 O'Clock. Mr. B. having already conversed with him on the subject, retired, and I held a conversation

[1] John Hughes, Catholic Bishop of New York 1840–1850, Archbishop 1850–1864. At the request of President Lincoln and Secretary Seward he visited Europe in 1861 in behalf of the Northern cause.

of an hour with him. I fully explained to him the object[ions] which we would probably have to encounter from the prejudices of the Catholic Priests in Mexico, and the false impressions they had of the hostile designs of this country on their religion; that the false idea had been industrious[ly] circulated by interested partizans in Mexico that our object was to overthrow their religion & rob their churches, and that if they believed this they would make a desperate resistance to our army in the present war. Bishop Hughes fully agreed with me in the opinion I expressed that it was important to remove such impressions. I said to him that the great object of my desiring to have this interview with him, was to ask whether some of the Priests of the U. S. who spoke the Spanish language could be induced to accompany our army as chaplains and others to visit Mexico in advance of the army, for the purpose of giving assurance to the Catholic clergy in Mexico that under our constitution their religion and church property would be secure, and that so far from being violated, both would be protected by our army, and in this way avoid their active hostility in the pending war. Bishop Hughes at once said he thought such a visit to Mexico and having a few catholic priests with the army would have a good effect, & expressed his entire willingness to cooperate with our Government in giving such aid as was in his power. He said he knew personally the Arch-bishop of Mexico, & expressed his willingness to visit Mexico himself if the Government desired it. I found Bishop

Hughes a highly intelligent and agreeable man, and my interview with him was of the most satisfactory character.

This being reception evening it was announced to me that company was assembling in the parlour below. Bishop Hughes accompanied me to the parlour. The company soon became so numerous that the Circular parlour in which they were received became so crowded that one of the adjoining parlours was thrown open & lighted up. Both were soon crowded. The City is unusually crowded with strangers many of whom were present.

I was surprised to see Senator Wescott of Florida present in the drawing room this evening. Mr. Buchanan, it is true, had informed me that Mr. Wescott desired to see me on public business, and asked if I would see him. I told him certainly I would see any member of Congress or citizen on public business; but I had not expected to see him in the drawing room. Mr. Wescott has acted in most improper manner towards me, as is stated in the previous part of this diary, and I had not seen him for several months. He came up and spoke to me in the crowd, and I treated him as the President should treat any citizen in his own mansion.

WEDNESDAY, *20th May, 1846.*— Saw company as usual to-day. A very large number of persons attended. The press for offices in the new Regiment of mounted riflemen is very great, and this brought upon me a great number of applicants and their

friends. Others called to tender themselves & organized companies as Volunteers for the Mexican war.

Col. Benton called with the Catholic Bishop of Missouri. I had before held a conversation with Col. B. and he had concurred with me in the importance of having with our army in Mexico a few Catholic Priests, who would be able to allay the fears of the Mexican Catholics in regard to their religion and church property. I had a short interview with Col. B. and the Bishop. Col. B. said they had just seen the Secretary of War, and that a number of Priests would be designated by the Bishop to accompany the army. If the Catholic Priests in Mexico can be satisfied that their churches and religion would be secure the conquest of the Northern Provinces of Mexico will be easy and the probability is that the war would be of short duration; but if a contrary opinion prevails the resistance to our forces will be desperate. The interview with Bishop Hughes on yesterday and this interview with the Bishop of Missouri to-day was for the purpose of having their aid in conveying true information in relation to the free toleration of all sects of religion under our constitution to the Mexican Priesthood & people, & giving them assurance that our invasion of Mexico was not for the purpose of interfering in any way with their religion.

I had a busy day. At 6 O'Clock the Marine Band performed in the grounds South of the President's House. A very large number of persons attended.

THURSDAY, *21st May, 1846.*— A very large crowd of Strangers called on me to-day. The pressure for appointments in the new Regiment of Riflemen is beyond anything of the kind which I have witnessed since I have been President. There are many hundred applicants, and but 3 Field officers, 10 Captains, 11 First Lieutenants, and 10 Second Lieutenants to be appointed. Upwards of 100 officers of the army have applied for promotion. Except in the case of Capt. Frémont,[1] I have upon full consideration determined to select the officers from civil life, for the reason that if any of the officers of the present army are promoted, it will produce heartburning with all other officers of the same grade who have performed equal service and have equal merit with themselves. Capt. Frémont's is an excepted case. He has made several explorations to Oregon and California, and his Reports show that he is an officer of high merit and peculiarly fitted for this Regiment, which is intended to guard and protect our emigrants to Oregon. Moreover it is peculiarly a Western Regiment, and I will give a larger proportion of officers to that portion of the Union than to any other. Besides the reason assigned for not selecting the officers from the army, it is generally expected that they should be selected from citizens.

The Secretary of War called at my office at 12 O'Clock by previous appointment to confer about the officers to be appointed for the new Rifle Regiment,

[1] John C. Frémont, famous for his explorations, nominee of the Republican party for the Presidency in 1856.

and spent about 2 hours in examining their papers and recommendations. The Secretary of the Treasury & the Atto. Gen'l were present during the most of the time. We agreed that a portion of the officers should be Whigs. As I had determined to appoint Persifor F. Smith [1] (Democrat) Colonel, and Capt. Frémont (politics unknown) Lieut. Col. we determined to select a Whig for Major. I directed my Private Secretary to call on Senators Crittenden, Ky., Reverdy Johnson, Md., and Archer, Va., to present to me a suitable person of the Whig party for Major.

Mr. F. W. Risque of Lynchburg, Va., with whom I had no acquaintance, called to-day and sought an interview with me. His object was to procure the restoration of his brother-in-law, Captain Hutter, late of the army, who had been dismissed during Mr. Tyler's administration. I glanced casually at portions of the papers in the case, but had not time to read them. Mr. Risque made a statement of the case, and according to his account of it it was a hard one. He stated that he had some time ago called on Senator Archer of Va. to aid him in the case. He said that Mr. Archer had at first declined, but upon his urgent request had finally agreed to do so. He said Mr. Archer had held some correspondence with Gen'l Scott on the subject, and he handed me a letter from Gen'l Scott to Mr. Archer on the subject dated 6th Feb'y, 1846, which was highly unjust and

[1] Perfisor Frazer Smith, 1798–1858; promoted to rank of Major General in 1848 and given command of the Departments of Texas and California.

disrespectful to the administration and especially to the President. Gen'l Scott was opposed to Capt. Hutter's reinstatement in the army, and the letter was shown to me to prevent Gen'l Scott's official influence from operating to the prejudice of Capt. Hutter. Gen'l Scott in that letter spoke of the new Regiment about to be raised, and said it was intended to make offices for Western Democrats, or rather, as he expressed it, to give them pay, and said he would never dishonour himself by recommending anyone to this administration for office. This is the substance of the reasons he assigned in that letter for not recommending Capt. Hutter for reinstatement in the army, or for an appointment in the new Regiment. The letter was of a partisan character; wholly unbecoming the commander-in-chief of the army, and highly exceptionable in its tenor and language towards the President.[1] It proved to me that Gen'l Scott was not only hostile, but recklessly vindictive in his feelings towards my administration. Whilst I was examining the papers in Capt. Hutter's case the Secretary of War came in on official business, and Mr. Risque, to whom I had returned Gen'l Scott's letter,

[1] The obnoxious portion of the letter was as follows: "With the officering of a new corps I am sure I should not be allowed the least possible agency except in favour of a democrat, and the proposed Riflemen are intended by western men to give Commissions or rather pay to western democrats. Not an eastern man, not a graduate of the Military Academy and certainly not a whig would obtain a place under such proscriptive circumstances or prospects. You may be certain I shall not dishonor myself by recommending any individual whatever, and so I have already replied to hundreds of applicants, most of them democrats."

handed it to the Secretary, who read it. Mr. Risque said the letter was not marked private & he felt himself at liberty to use it. After Mr. Risque left, taking the letter with him, the Secretary of War and myself conversed about the very offensive and highly exceptionable character of the letter. After seeing this letter I can have no confidence in Gen'l Scott's disposition to carry out the views of the administration as commander-in-chief of the army on the Del Norte, and yet unless Congress shall authorize the appointment of additional general officers I may be compelled to continue to entrust the command to him. If I shall be compelled to do so, it will be with the full conviction of his hostility to my administration, and that he will reluctantly do anything to carry out my plans and views in the campaign.

After night the Secretary of War sent to me a letter of this date addressed to himself by Gen'l Scott in relation to the Mexican campaign, of an exceptionable character, and going conclusively to prove his bad feelings and hostility to the administration. I will request the Secretary of War to preserve this letter. Taken in connection with the letter shown to me by Mr. Risque to-day, I am satisfied that the administration will not be safe in intrusting the command of the army in the Mexican war to Gen'l Scott. His bitter hostility towards the administration is such that I could not trust him and will not do so if Congress will pass the Bill now before them, authorizing the appointment of additional Maj'r Generals of the Army. Gen'l Scott's partisan feel-

ings must not interfere with the public service if another suitable commanding officer can be had.

I was waited on to-day by Mr. Mayor Seaton [1] & two gentlemen from a distance (manufacturers I presume) whose names I do not remember and invited to attend the fair [2] now holding in this City at such time as might suit my convenience.

FRIDAY, *22nd May, 1846.*— A very large crowd attended to-day. The number of strangers in the City is very large, and many of both sexes called to pay their respects this morning. I continued to be pressed to-day for offices in the new Rifle Regiment. I sent my Private Secretary to the Capitol to ascertain from Messrs. Crittenden, Johnson, & Archer if they had selected a Whig gentleman for the command of Maj'r in that Regiment. I requested him also to procure the names of three or four Whigs for Lieutenancies.

The Secretary of War called and informed [me] that Mr. Senator Archer had been at his office this morning, and had entered into a conversation with him concerning Gen'l Scott & a difference which he had heard existed between the Secretary & Gen'l Scott. The Secretary told me that he informed him that he knew of no such difference, but informed [him] of the strange conduct of Gen'l Scott, and

[1] William W. Seaton, 1785–1866, member of the firm of Gales and Seaton, editors of the *National Intelligencer,* the Whig organ at Washington.

[2] The National Manufacturers Fair, held at Washington, May 21–June 3, 1846.

among other things of the exceptionable letter which had been shown to him by Mr. Risque on yesterday, addressed by Gen'l Scott to him, Mr. Archer, on the 6th of February, as noted in yesterday's diary. Mr. Archer expressed surprise that that letter was out of his possession, and said it had gone out of his hands by mistake or accident. The Secretary informed me that he told Mr. Archer that the person who had shown it to him on yesterday was a stranger to him and he did not remember his name, but that he referred Mr. Archer to Judge Mason who had seen the letter, & he understood it had been shown to several persons in the City. The Secretary said he informed Mr. Archer that I had seen the letter. While the Secretary was giving me an account of this conversation with Mr. Archer, Judge Mason called & informed me that Mr. Archer had just left his office, where he had called to learn about the letter of Gen'l Scott to himself, which had been mentioned to him by the Secretary of War to-day. Judge Mason said he told him that he had read it, and that Mr. Risque was the person in whose possession it was. Mr. Archer left his office in pursuit of Mr. Risque, resolved to recover the possession of the letter at any hazard. The Secretary of War and myself both expressed a desire to procure a copy of the letter, but after some conversation we came to the conclusion that as the letter might be regarded by Mr. Archer as a private letter, although not so marked, it would not be proper to apply to Mr. Risque for a copy.

I learned yesterday and to-day that Gen'l Scott,

Gen'l Wool, & Adjutant Gen'l Jones were using their influence with members of Congress to prevent the passage of the Bill now before the Senate authorizing the appointment of two additional Major Gen'ls & four Brigadier Generals. Such conduct is highly censurable. These officers are all whigs & violent partisans, and not having the success of my administration at heart seem disposed to throw every obstacle in the way of my prosecuting the Mexican War successfully. An end must be speedily put to this state of things.

This was reception evening. Many hundred persons attended. They were chiefly strangers who had been attracted to Washington by the Manufacturer's fair, and the excitement produced in the public mind by the War with Mexico. Many patriotic persons are at present in the City seeking commands in the army, and tendering their services to the Government as volunteers in the army.

SATURDAY, *23rd May, 1846.*—This was Cabinet day and I devoted myself to the business which had accumulated on my table until 11 O'Clock when the Cabinet met; all the members present. Mr. Buchanan read a despatch from Mr. McLane, received this morning, of the 3rd Inst., the purport of which was that no proposition would be made by the British Government with a view to the settlement of the Oregon question until the action of the Senate on the question of Notice was known. Mr. McLane repeated the opinion before expressed by him that the delay of the Senate to act on the question of notice

had operated most unfortunately in England. Mr. King, our Minister at Paris, in a private letter from him which Mr. Buchanan read, expressed the strong opinion that the delay of the Senate to give the notice had operated most prejudicially to the U. S. throughout Europe, and expressed his deep regret at the delay. Mr. King expressed the desire in his private letter to Mr. Buchanan (& requested him to communicate it to me) to be recalled in September next.

Mr. Buchanan read the draft of a message to the Senate which he had prepared in relation to our Treaty of indemnity with Peru, the exchange of ratifications of which had not taken place within the time limited by the Treaty.

I read to the Cabinet a letter [1] addressed by Gen'l Winfield Scott to the Secretary of War dated 21st Instant, which had been communicated to me by the Secretary on the day it bears date. (See this diary of the 21st & 22nd Instant.) This letter of Gen'l Scott is foolish, & vindictive toward the administration. Without the slightest reason for it Gen'l Scott makes base and false insinuations in reference to the administration, as connected with the command of the army on the Mexican frontier, which I had on the commencement of hostilities requested him to assume. He uses language not only exceptionable but unbecoming an officer. After making false insinuations against the administration, he concludes by using the following language, *viz.:* "My explicit meaning is, that I do not desire to place myself in the most perilous of all positions, a fire upon my

[1] *Niles Register, LXX,* 231.

rear from Washington and the fire in front from the Mexicans." I repeat this insinuation is wholly false, and proves, as I think, two things; 1st, that Gen'l Scott seeks a pretext to avoid going to the Del Norte to take command of our army, and 2nd, that his partisan feelings are such that he is unfit to be intrusted with the command. The only reason assigned for making such an insinuation is that in an interview with the Secretary of War a few days ago he had expressed the opinion which he repeats in this letter, that operations on the Del Norte under the late act of Congress authorizing a call for volunteers could not commence before the 1st of September, to which the Secretary had informed him that I wished prompt action, and that the delay proposed was unnecessary. This is what Gen'l Scott calls "a fire upon my rear from Washington." The facts are that war has been declared against Mexico, twenty thousand volunteers have been called out to take the field as soon as possible, I had designated Gen'l Scott solely because he was commander-in-chief of the Army, to take the command; I desired a prompt and energetic movement; whereas Gen'l Scott was in favour of remaining in Washington and not assuming the command before the 1st of September. This as far as I know is the sole cause of his extraordinary & vindictive letter. I submitted to the Cabinet the impropriety, with this letter before us, of continuing him [in] the command. The subject was discussed, the Secretary of the Treasury expressing a decided opinion that he ought not to be intrusted with the command. I expressed the opinion that the

administration could not have any confidence in him & that I could not feel safe if he took the command of the army, & said that if I could find any other officer who was qualified, my opinion was that Gen'l Scott should be superseded & such officer assigned to the command. While the subject was under discussion, a committee of manufacturers accompanied by Mr. Seaton, Mayor of Washington, called to accompany me to the Manufacturers fair now holding in this City. The Cabinet suspended the consideration of the subject and adjourned. I visited the fair accompanied by the Mayor & committee & the ladies of my family. There were a great variety of manufactured articles collected in a very large temporary building erected for the occasion by the manufacturers. I was informed that the building alone cost over $6000, and that as soon as the fair was over would be taken down. The specimens of manufacture exhibited are highly creditable to the genius and skill of our countrymen. All must desire that the manufacturing interests should prosper, but none ought to desire that to enable them to do so heavy burthens should be imposed by the Government on other branches of industry. The manufacturers have spent many thousands of dollars in getting up this fair, with a view no doubt to operate upon members of Congress to prevent a reduction of the present rates of duty imposed by the oppressive protective tariff act of 1842. To effect this, lower prices was [were] affixed to & labelled on the specimens exhibited than they are sold for in the market. This I know was the case in reference to some of the

articles. The object of this is no doubt to impress the public with the belief that [in] the absurd doctrine that "high duties make low goods." The wealth exhibited at this fair & the expense attending it prove, I think, that the large capitalists owning the manufacturies should rely upon their own resources not upon the bounty of the Government, (and especially when that bounty cannot be afforded them but at the expense of other interests) for their support. With revenue instead of protective duties, they have the advantage over all other interests, and with this they should be satisfied.

The Southern mail of this evening brought intelligence of two decided victories [1] obtained by Gen'l Taylor's army over the Mexicans on the Del Norte. No official account of these battles was received.

My office was crowded during the evening and until a late hour to-night by members of Congress and others, who called to learn the news from the army on the Del Norte & to converse on the subject. Among them was Senator Wescott of Florida. He had treated me badly, as is set forth in a previous part of this diary, and I had not seen him since the rejection of Mr. Woodward as Judge of the Supreme Court of the U. S. about four months ago, except on the last reception evening (22nd Instant) I observed him in the parlour and spoke to him in a formal manner. This evening he made known his business. It was in reference to the defenseless condition of the State of Florida. He wished volun-

[1] The victories of Palo Alto and Reseca de la Palma, May 8 and 9, 1846.

teers called out to take the place of the regular troops who had been ordered from the forts in that State to the seat of War on the Del Norte. I treated him courteously in my own office, as I do all persons who call, & told him I would consider his request.

SUNDAY, *24th May, 1846.*— Attended the first Presbyterian church to-day in company with Mrs. Polk and her niece, Miss Rucker. As we were going out of the door to attend church we were accosted by a young man, much emaciated and very feeble, who said his name was Bledsoe, & that he was the same person who had been a law student with James H. Thomas, Esq. (my law partner) of Columbia, Tennessee, in 1844. I remembered that there was such a person in our law office at that time, but he was so changed in his appearance I did not recognize him. He said he had been advised to go to sea for the benefit of his health, that he had done so, and during his absence had been three months in the hospital at Gibraltar, that he had made his way thus far back towards his home in Mississippi, and that he had no money to pay his way at a tavern. His appearance and his story excited my sympathy. I handed him $5.00 and directed the steward to give him refreshments & then conduct him to a Hotel & see that he had comfortable quarters. I told him I would give him further assistance on to-morrow.

MONDAY, *25th May, 1846.*— Saw many persons this morning, male & female, who called to pay

their respects. Many called seeking office, and as it was expected that I would very soon nominate the officers of the Regiment of Mounted rifle-men recently authorized to be raised by Congress, numerous applications were made this morning. I answered all the applicants that I had made out the list of these appointments and would send them to the Senate to-day. I did so at 12 O'Clock.

The Secretary of War, who had shown me the draft of his answer to Gen'l Scott's extraordinary letter of the 21st Instant, called a few minutes after 12 O'Clock, and it was carefully examined and revised. It had previously undergone the revision of the Atto. General. Deeming it to [be] a matter of sufficient importance, I called a special meeting of the Cabinet at 2 O'Clock P. M. to-day, to consider of the answer to Gen'l Scott's letter. The Cabinet convened at that hour. Mr. Buchanan suggested & prepared a modification of one of the paragraphs, which was approved, and as thus modified the letter of the Secretary of War was approved unanimously by the Cabinet. I directed the Secretary of War to have it copied and delivered to Gen'l Scott to-day. The conclusion of the letter was to excuse Gen'l Scott from the command of the army against Mexico, and to order him to remain in the discharge of his duties at Washington.

My Private Secretary handed to me on his return from the Capitol to-day copies of a letter from Hon. Wm. S. Archer, Senator from Va., of the 7th [6th] of Feb'y last to Mr. Risque of Lynchburg, Va., enclosing the very exceptionable letter of Gen'l

Scott to Mr. Archer in relation to Capt. Hutter's restoration to the army referred to in this Diary of the 22nd Instant. The Copy of Mr. Archer's letter to Mr. Risque and the copy of the letter of Gen'l Scott to Mr. Archer were furnished to my Private Secretary by the Hon. Mr. Relfe [1] of Missouri, to whom they had been furnished by Mr. Risque. They are under cover of an envelope with Mr. Relfe's frank, which I will preserve, as they may be useful hereafter, as showing Gen'l Scott's vindictive and hostile feelings towards the administration.

Official despatches from Gen'l Taylor were received this evening, confirming the previous intelligence of the success of the American Arms in two engagements with the Mexican forces on the Del Norte on the 8th & 9th days of May, 1846.

About 7 O'Clock the Secretary of War informed me that he had caused his answer to Gen'l Scott's letter of the 21st Instant, as it had been agreed on in cabinet to-day to be copied & delivered to Gen'l Scott at about 5½ O'Clock this afternoon. The Secretary produced a second letter from Gen'l Scott of this date, which he said was delivered to him after the Cabinet adjourned to-day, and before his answer to Gen'l Scott's first letter had been copied and delivered to him. He said he perceived nothing in this second letter to make it necessary to change the answer as it had been prepared to the first letter. He read the second letter, which was not so violent in its terms or so offensive as the first,

[1] James H. Relfe, Representative from Missouri 1843–1847.

but there was nothing in it to change my approval of the answer which had been prepared to the first letter.

The Secretary of the Senate called near dark with a Resolution of the Senate rejecting the nomination of Henry Horn as collector of the Port of Phila. Senator Houston called after night, from whom I learned that all the Whig Senators in a body had voted against Mr. Horn's confirmation, and that Senators Calhoun, Cameron, and Wescott had voted with them. I learned also that six or eight democratic Senators were absent, some of them attending the funeral of Senator Speight's son who died in this City on yesterday. In the absence of his father and other Democratic Senators, Mr. Cameron had moved to take up the nomination & in a thin Senate had rejected him. Mr. Cameron has acted very badly in this matter. He had given me reason to believe that he would withdraw his opposition to him. I now learn that he had continued his efforts to have him rejected in a thin Senate. There never was a better officer than Mr. Horn; there was no objection to his private character, for that was irreproachable. His rejection was produced by a small faction of professed democrats united to the whole Whig party. Cameron of Penn. was elected by the Whigs to the Senate, is a managing, tricky man in whom no reliance is to be placed. He professes to be a Democrat, but he has his own personal and sinister purposes to effect, & I consider him little better than a Whig. Wescott, though elected as a Democrat, I consider a Whig. Of Mr. Calhoun I

forbear to express an opinion, further than to say that his ambition is destroying him. On one thing I am resolved, and that is that those in & out of Congress who have caused the rejection of Mr. Horn shall not have the man they desire appointed to fill the vacancy they have thus made. I will make my own selection, and unless my mind changes I will nominate Col. James Page, former P. M. at Phila.

I had an interview to-night with Mr. Amos Kendall and Gov. Yell of Arkansas on the subject of organizing a military expedition to California. They were both in favour of it.

Judge Shields, commissioner of the General Land Office, called between 9 & 10 O'Clock. He had this evening addressed me a note informing me that he was about to leave Washington for the West. He had some days ago proposed to go West, to organize and aid in bringing [out] the volunteers who had been called for for the Mexican War, but I had not assented to it, but discouraged [it]. Gen'l Cass and some of the Western members had made the same suggestion to me & I had discouraged [it]. I told Judge Shields that there was no propriety in his leaving his office, and that he could be of no possible use to the Government in bringing out or organizing the volunteers. I told him plainly that I thought all public officers in Washington ought to remain at their posts & do their duty, especially during the Session of Congress. I told him that I hoped my friends in Congress and elsewhere would suffer me to conduct the War with Mexico as I thought proper, and not plan the campaign for me

& without consulting me. I told him if he had private business in Illinois he could be absent from his office for a short time, but that there was no sort of necessity to employ him to go out upon any agency connected with the public business, & I repeated to him with emphasis that my opinion was that he ought to remain at Washington in the discharge of his duty as commissioner of the General Land office.

TUESDAY, *26th May, 1846.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present. The Secretary of War produced a letter from Gen'l Scott in reply to the Secretary's letter to him on yesterday. In his letter Gen'l Scott disavows that he meant to impute to the President the unworthy motives mentioned in his letter of the 21 Instant, but says he referred to the Secretary of War & members of Congress who were raising a clamour and creating a prejudice against him. There is nothing in his answer which changes my determination to order Gen'l Scott to remain at Washington instead of taking command of the army on the Del Norte. Gen'l S's last letter is in a subdued tone and even passes a high compliment on me. He now sees his error no doubt, but it is too late to recal[l] what has been done. The Secretary of War read the rough draft of the answer which he had prepared to Gen'l Scott's last letter. I sent a message to the Senate to-day nominating Gen'l Z. Taylor of the army a Maj'r-Gen'l By brevet, for his gallant vic-

tories obtained over the Mexican forces on the Del Norte on the 8th & 9th days of this month.

The plan of military operations against Mexico was the subject of a long conversation in Cabinet. I proposed that an expedition be immediately fitted out against Upper California, & after full consideration it was unanimously agreed that it should be done, if it was ascertained that there was time for two or three mounted regiments to be assembled and marched from Independence in Mo. to the Sacramento before the setting in of winter.

It was agreed that Brigadier Gen'l Wool should be forthwith ordered to proceed west & assist in organizing the Volunteers & march with them to the Del Norte, where he would assume his command as a Brigadier General of the U. S. army.

Mr. Charles J. Ingersoll of Penn. called about 2½ O'Clock & informed me that 10 of the Democratic members of the Pennsylvania Delegation in Congress had held a caucus at the Capitol this morning & gone into a balloting for a Collector of Phil'a in place of Mr. Horn, who was rejected on yesterday by the Senate. He stated that on the first ballot they had scattered, and some of those voted for were utterly and wholly unfit; that finally a majority had voted for a man named Elred, a person of whom I had never heard before. I promptly told Mr. Ingersoll that I had made up my mind as to the person whom I would nominate, and that he might so inform his delegation. He said he was glad of it. His name, he said, was [signed] to the nomination

[of] Mr. Elred by the Delegation, but it was only because a majority in caucus had preferred him. He said he himself preferred Richard Rush, but that I was right in making my own selection. I told him that I knew Mr. Horn was a good collector, that I could sleep sound on my pillow & know that the public money was safe in his hands; and that now no man who had any agency in causing his rejection should profit by it, by having any man whom they recommended appointed in his place.

Senator Bright of Indiana expressed his great regret to me that he was absent from the Senate when Mr. Horn was rejected, and expressed great anxiety that the vote should be reconsidered. I learned, too, to-day that 7 Democratic Senators had been absent when the vote was taken. Mr. Senator Speight was attending the interment of his son, who died on sunday last. Mr. Cameron, taking advantage of this thin state of the Senate, called up the nomination. The Senate was appealed to to adjourn but refused, the vote was taken, and Mr. Horn was rejected. This was reception evening, the crowd was so great, of ladies & gentlemen, that two parlours and the East Room had to be thrown open to accomodate them.

WEDNESDAY, *27th May, 1846.*— A great crowd of persons, male & female, called to-day. A greater number of persons (strangers) are said to be in Washington than have been at any one time for many years, unless at the Inauguration of a President. Among others Ex President Tyler called. I

spent 20 minutes in agreeable conversation with him. He informed me that he had come to Washington in obedience to a summon[s] of a committee of Congress. I told [him] that I had heard of the summons and deeply regretted the proceeding, and wholly condemned it. I had before understood that one of the committees of the Ho. Repts. appointed to investigate the quarrel between Mr. Ch. J. Ingersoll and Mr. Daniel Webster concerning the secret service fund expended during Mr. Tyler's administration, had issued such a summons. This information was given to me by the Hon. Mr. Dobbin [1] of the Ho. Repts. from N. C., & I had expressed to him in strong terms my disapproval of the proceedings. I thought it unnecessary, and subjecting Mr. Tyler to unjust annoyance. I invited Mr. Tyler to dine with me on saturday next.

Among other visitors who called to-day was Gov. Branch [2] of N. C.

In the course of the day Mr. Buchanan called with a despatch from the Brittish Minister on the subject of a return of discriminating duties levied by the Brittish Government on American rough rice, in pursuance of an arrangement previously entered into between the Secretary of State and the Brittish Minister. He suggested that I should send a message to Congress communicating this despatch, to which I assented.

[1] James Cochrane Dobbin, 1814–1857, Representative from North Carolina 1845–1847, Secretary of the Navy 1853–1857.

[2] John Branch, 1782–1863, Governor of North Carolina 1817, Secretary of the Navy 1829–1831.

Mr. Buchanan mentioned that he had received a confidential letter from Mr. McLane, expressing great dissatisfaction with Mr. Melville,[1] his Secretary of Legation, and expressing the hope that he would not be left in charge of the legation on his return, but that his successor would be appointed and sent out before he left. This hope, Mr. B. said, Mr. McLane expressed for the sake of the honour as well as the interest of the country. I then entered into conversation with Mr. Buchanan as to the proper person to succeed Mr. McLane. I named several persons, with none of whom was I entirely satisfied. Mr. Buchanan said that he would communicate a fact to me confidentially, and that was that about two months ago Mr. Robert J. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, had intimated to him a desire to be appointed to the Mission to England on Mr. McLane's return, but expressed a desire to remain in the Treasury [Department] until the tariff bill was disposed [of]. I replied that if Mr. Walker desired it, I would be disposed to gratify him, if I could find a suitable Secretary of the Treasury.

Mr. James Thompson, Mr. Ritter, and two other members of the Pennsylvania Delegation in the Ho. Repts. called to-day & presented me a paper (the same of which Mr. Ingersoll had informed me on yesterday) recommending a Mr. Elred for Collector of Phil'a in place of Henry Horn, rejected by the Senate. I told them that I regretted that they had not consulted me on the subject before they held

[1] Gansevoort Melville.

their caucus, and that if they had done so I should promptly have told them, as I then did, that my mind was made up as to Mr. Horn's successor. I told them that Mr. Horn was an honest man and a good officer and one against whom there could have been no good objection, and that I deeply regretted the rejection of so good an officer and so good a man. I told them that he had been rejected by the United Whig party on party grounds alone, aided by the votes of three professed Democrats. I did not tell them, but the fact is so, that the three Democrats are Mr. Calhoun, Mr. Wescott, & Mr. Cameron, the two latter of whom are no further democrats than it is their interest to be so. I told them further that the Collector at Phila. handled millions of Public money and was a very responsible officer, that I wished to have no defalcations in my administration, & that I, being responsible for the appointment, would make my own selection of a man whom I knew & in whom I had confidence. I told them also that no man or his friends who had any agency in Mr. Horn's rejection, should ever profit by it, by having any man whom they preferred appointed to the vacancy which they had created. They avowed that they had no agency of this kind. I told them I supposed they had not, but that the man they had nominated in their caucus was wholly unknown to me or to the country, and that I would make my own selection. I saw Senator Hannegan, who was absent when Mr. Horn was rejected, who told me he would vote for him if renominated. Mr. Senator Lewis had told me the same thing on yes-

terday. Mr. Senator Sturgeon, for whom I had sent, called to-night and expressed the confident belief that with a full Senate Mr. Horn could yet be confirmed, and expressed a strong desire that I would re-nominate him.

I learned, too, that Senator Johnson of Md. (Whig) who had voted against Mr. Horn, had on yesterday moved to reconsider the vote by which he was rejected, but as the notification of his rejection had been sent to me he had withdrawn the motion on objection being made that it was out of order. Upon this information I am strongly inclined to re-nominate Mr. Horn, but will not decide until I see some other of the Senators who were absent when he was rejected.

THURSDAY, *28th May, 1846.*— A great crowd of persons, male and female, called this morning. Among others Hon. Franklin H. Elmore[1] of Charleston, S. C., called. I invited him to dine with me on Saturday next. I sent for Senator Lewis & Senator Colquitt this morning. Mr. Lewis told me that Senator Atchison, who was absent when Mr. Horn was rejected as collector of Phila., would vote for him if nominated. Mr. Colquitt [said] he had been absent attending the interment of Senator Speight's deceased son when the vote was taken on Mr. Horn's case, and that he would vote for him if he was renominated.

Had a conference with the Secretary of War &

[1] Franklin Harper Elmore, 1799–1850, chosen in 1850 to fill the Senatorial vacancy caused by the death of Calhoun.

Gen'l Wool to-day. Had a similar conference with them on yesterday. Gen'l W. was ordered to proceed to the West and see that the volunteers were speedily raised and marched to the Rio Grande with the least possible delay. General Wool's particular service in the Mexican war has not yet been determined upon, *viz.*, whether he is to proceed to the lower Rio Grande or go in a separate command to the Upper Provinces. This is to be decided hereafter & his orders are to follow him.

Senator Cameron called this evening [?] and requested me not to renominate Mr. Henry Horn as Collector of Philadelphia. I told him that since Mr. Horn had been rejected by a thin Senate, I had seen several Senators who had been absent who were anxious for his appointment, and who had requested me to renominate him. I told him that several Senators had expressed to me the opinion that in a full Senate he would be confirmed. I told Mr. Cameron that Mr. Horn was an honest man, that the whole commercial interest[s] of Phila. were satisfied with him as collector; that there could be no better officer, and that if I came to the conclusion it was proper to renominate him I should certainly do so. Mr. Cameron still insisted that I should not do so, and said if I would nominate him for any other office than for collector, he would vote for him. To this I replied that if he would vote for him for any other office, it was conclusive evidence that there was no public ground upon which as a Senator he had voted against him, and proved that he ought not to have been rejected. I told Mr. Cameron that

himself & two other Senators elected as Democrats (Wescott & Calhoun) but neither of whom had by their course given any evidence of their Democracy lately, had left the balance of the Democratic party, joined the United Whig party, and taking advantage of a thin Senate when six or eight Democratic Senators were absent had voted against Mr. Horn and rejected him. He said he was a Democrat & a supporter of my administration. I replied that this vote did not look much like it. Mr. C. left me apparently dissatisfied with the result of his interview.

I had several consultations to-day with the Secretary of War & some members of Congress at different periods of the day, concerning the manner of conducting the war with Mexico and especially about the propriety of set[ting] on foot an expedition to California.

FRIDAY, *29th May, 1846.*— Had a large number of visitors, male and female, to-day. The crowd of strangers in Washington for the ten or fifteen days has been unusually great, and while my office is open every day my whole time is taken up in receiving them. At 12 O'Clock I closed my doors. I devoted the day until evening in disposing of the business on my table. I had several interviews with the Secretary of War in the course of the day, concerning various points connected with the prosecution of the Mexican War. The more I reflected on the subject the more important I thought it to despatch an expedition to California. The only doubt in my mind was whether there was time before the

setting in of winter to collect a force on the Western frontier of Missouri in time to reach the Sacramento River in California. It was concluded to postpone the decision of the question until the meeting of the Cabinet on to-morrow.

This was reception evening and several hundred persons, ladies & gentlemen, attended. The three smaller parlours were filled, and many were in the outer hall. The East room was not opened to-night.

James H. Thomas, Esqr., my law partner in Tennessee, called this evening, having left his home ten days ago. I was gratified to learn from him that my aged mother was in excellent health when he left home.

I renominated Henry Horn to the Senate to-day as Collector of Philadelphia.

SATURDAY, *30th May, 1846.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present except the Attorney General, who was detained at his House by indisposition.

I read to the Cabinet a Private letter from Mr. McLane dated London, May 8th, 1846, received this morning by the Steamer Great Brittain, which arrived at New York on yesterday.

A plan of the campaign against Mexico and the manner of prosecuting the War was fully considered. I brought distinctly to the consideration of the Cabinet the question of ordering an expedition of mounted men to California. I stated that if the war should be protracted for any considerable time, it would in my judgment be very important that the U.

S. should hold military possession of California at the time peace was made, and I declared my purpose to be to acquire for the U. S. California, New Mexico, and perhaps some others of the Northern Provinces of Mexico whenever a peace was made. In Mr. Slidell's Secret instructions last autumn these objects were included. Now that we were at War the prospect of acquiring them was much better, and to secure that object military possession should with as little delay as possible be taken of all these Provinces. In these views the Cabinet concurred. The only doubt which remained was, whether the season was not too far advanced to enable an expedition of mounted men from Missouri to pass the mountains & reach California before the setting in of winter. In winter all whom I had consulted agreed that it was impracticable to make the expedition. Col. Benton had given me his opinion that if the expedition could leave Independence in Mo. there would be time. Col. Benton had brought me Fremont's map and Book and given me much detailed information of the route and of the difficulties attending it, but advised the expedition this season provided it could move from Independence by the 1st of August. Col. B. had written me a note with the outline of the plan of the expedition, which I read to the Cabinet. I finally submitted a distinct proposition to the Cabinet. Col. Kearney[1] of the U. S. army was as I learned an experienced officer, and had been with a part of his Regiment to the South Pass of the Rocky

[1] Stephen W. Kearny, promoted to rank of Brigadier General, June, 1846; died October 31, 1848.

mountain, and made an extensive tour in that region last year. Immediately after the act declaring war against Mexico was passed (May 13th, 1846) orders had been given to Col. Kearney with his Regiment to move to Santa Fe to protect our traders. A requisition had at the same time been made on the Governor of Missouri for 1000 mounted Volunteers to go under Col. Kearney's command on the same service. These troops or a portion of them could be put en route for California three weeks earlier than any new force, which could be now ordered out. The proposition which I submitted was, that Col. Kearney should be ordered as soon as he took Santa Fe, if he thought it safe to do so & practicable for him to reach California before winter, to leave Santa Fe in charge of his Lieut. Col. with a sufficient force to hold it, and proceed towards California with the balance of his command including a portion of the 1000 mounted men who had been ordered out. I proposed further that another 1000 mounted men should be immediately ordered out from Mo. to proceed to Bent's [1] Fort or Santa Fe, and a portion of them to follow Col. Kearney towards California or not, as Col. K. might leave orders behind him, leaving a large discretion to Col. K. whether he should undertake the California expedition this season or not, but expressing to him the strong wish of the Government that he should do so, if he thought it practicable. The Cabinet assented to this proposition. The Cabinet adjourned after a very full discussion of the sub-

[1] Bent's Fort was located at the junction of the Arkansas River and the Sante Fe trail, some distance to the northeast of Sante Fe.

ject, with the understanding that the Secretary of War would see me again before the orders were issued. After the Cabinet adjourned I sent for Col. Benton, and saw him with the Secretary of War. He approved the general outline of the campaign. He suggested that Gen'l Price [1] of the Ho. Repts. of Mo. should command the 1000 mounted men now to be called out from Missouri. The Secretary of War promised to see Gen'l Price and come with him to see me before he issued the orders.

I had a dinner company to-day, consisting of Ex President Tyler, Gov. Branch of N. C. (now of Florida) his daughter and two Granddaughters, Mr. Slidell, late minister to Mexico, & his wife, Senator Yulee of Florida & his wife, Hon. Franklin H. Elmore of Charleston, S. C., James H. Thomas, Esqr., of Tennessee, Mrs. Mason (wife of the Atto. Gen'l — Mr. Mason was detained by sickness) and Thos. Ritchie, Esqr., Editor of the *Union.*

After dinner I found several members of Congress in my office waiting to see me, who detained me until a late hour. I retired exceedingly fatigued having spent a week of great labour & anxiety in the discharge of my responsible duties.

SUNDAY, *31st May, 1846.*— Before Church hour this morning the Secretary of War called with Gen'l

[1] Sterling Price; he resigned his seat in the House to take command of the Missouri mounted regiment, and was made Brigadier General for distinguished service in the war. Governor of Missouri 1853–1857, and prominent Confederate leader in the Civil War.

Price of Mo. to consult me further concerning the 1000 mounted men to be called out from Mo. and about the expedition to California.

Attended the dedication of a new Presbyterian church near the Patent office to-day, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Tuston. Mrs. Polk, her niece, Miss Rucker, and my nephew, Marshall T. Polk, accompanied me. The sermon (an excellent one) was delivered by the Rev. Mr. Balch of Va., who is the brother of the Hon. Alfred Balch of Nashville, Tennessee.

The Hon. Franklin H. Elmore of Charleston S. C. (who dined with me on yesterday) called about 9 O'Clock to-night & held a long and confidential conversation with me about public affairs, but especially about the tariff and Mr. Calhoun's position in reference to the administration. Mr. Elmore is my personal and political friend & I conversed freely with him. I told him that I anxiously desired that the doctrines of my annual message in relation to the tariff and other subjects should be carried out by Congress, and that I would exert all my influence with Congress to have it done. I told him I had no unkind feelings towards Mr. Calhoun, and should be gratified if he should think proper to support my administration. Mr. Elmore was anxious that he should do so. I told him that I had done nothing to prevent it; that Mr. Calhoun had differed with me on the Oregon and Mexican questions and upon some of my nominations, which I regretted, but that there was no reason why he should not support my administration if he was disposed to do so. I stated, too,

that the natural position of the South was to support my administration upon the tariff, the Constitutional Treasury, & other measures, because my doctrines were those which they had heretofore maintained. To this Mr. Elmore agreed. The conversation was a long and a very friendly one, running into many details in relation to the policy of my administration, and the course of Mr. Calhoun towards it. I finally told Mr. Elmore that I saw no good reason why Mr. Calhoun should oppose me. Mr. Elmore said that he found Mr. Calhoun more irritable than he had ever known him, that he had conversed with him since he came to Washington, and would see him again, expressing the hope that he might give to my administration that support which Mr. Elmore thought it should receive from all Southern men.

MONDAY, *1st June, 1846.*— The crowd of visitors to-day was not so great as it had been for many days past, still a large number of persons called. At 12 O'Clock I closed my doors, and until my dinner hour at 4 O'Clock P. M. devoted myself unceasingly to the business which had accumulated on my table, which was interrupted by short visits from the Secretaries of State, War, Treasury, and the Navy on official business. I spent more time with the Secretary of War in reference to the Mexican War and especially the contemplated expedition to California than with either of the other Secretaries.

Being much wearied by my long confinement for many months, I took a ride on horseback with my Private Secretary in the evening. We visited Judge

Mason, the Atto. Gen'l, and found him confined to his bed and quite ill.

TUESDAY, *2nd June, 1846.*— The Cabinet met today; all the members present except the Atto. Gen'l, [who] was detained at his residence by severe indisposition.

The manner of conducting the war with Mexico was the chief topic considered. The expedition against California was definitively settled, the Cabinet being unanimous in favour of such an expedition. In pursuance of a conference on the subject between the Secretary of War and myself on yesterday, the Secretary read the rough draft of an order to Col. Kearney of the U. S. army, who was designated to command the expedition. Upon several points the order was modified upon my suggestion. It was in substance that as soon as Col. Kearney took possession of Santa Fe, he was to leave a sufficient force to hold it, and proceed without delay with the balance of his command & the mounted men ordered out from Missouri some three weeks ago towards California, if in his judgment he could reach California before the winter set in. 1000 additional mounted volunteers were ordered out from Missouri to proceed to Santa Fe, or follow Col. Kearney to California as he might order. For further particulars see the order of the Secretary of War of this date. I submitted to the Cabinet that a large number of cannon, small arms, munitions of war, and provisions should be immediately sent from New York to the Pacific for the use of our army. This was unanimously approved by

the Cabinet. It was agreed that Col. Kearney should be authorized to take into service any emigrants (American citizens) whom he might find in California or who may go out with these munitions of War and Military stores. Col. Kearney was also authorized to receive into service as volunteers a few hundred of the Mormons who are now on their way to California, with a view to conciliate them, attach them to our country, & prevent them from taking part against us. Many other matters of detail connected with the expedition were considered. The Cabinet adjourned at about 1½ O'Clock P. M.

This was reception evening. A large number of visitors, ladies & gentlemen, attended. As the manufacturers fair will close to-day, it is probable that the unusual number of strangers (chiefly manufacturers and their employees) who have attended it will be diminished, and the City cease to be crowded with strangers as it has been for the last three weeks.

WEDNESDAY, *3rd June, 1846.*— Had a very busy morning until 12 O'Clock; had many visitors and a large proportion of them seeking office. Closed my doors as usual at 12 O'Clock. A despatch from our Minister (Mr. McLane) at London, dated 18th of May, 1846, was received this morning. It communicated the substance of the proposition which he had learned from Lord Aberdeen would be made by the Brittish Government through their minister at Washington for the settlement of the Oregon question. If Mr. McLane is right in the character of the proposition which will be made, it is certain that I can-

not accept it, and it is a matter of doubt in my mind whether it [will] be such as I ought to submit to the Senate for their previous advice before acting upon it. If I reject it absolutely and make no other proposition the probable result will be war. If I submit it to the Senate and they should advise its acceptance I should be bound by their advice & yet I should do so reluctantly. I had a conference on the subject [with Mr. Buchanan]. He was not prepared without further reflection, as he said, to give his advice on the subject. After Mr. Buchanan left, the Secretary of War called on business connected with the Mexican war, which being transacted I informed him of Mr. McLane's despatch. The Secretary of the Navy afterwards called and read it. I will probably call a Cabinet meeting on the subject to-morrow.

Held a conversation with Mr. Amos Kendall & Mr. J. C. Little of Petersborough, N. H. (a mormon) to-day. They desired to see me in relation to a large body of Mormon emigrants who are now on their way from Na[u]voo & other parts of the U. S. to California, and to learn the policy of the Government towards them. I told Mr. Little that by our constitution the mormons would be treated as all other American citizens were, without regard to the sect to which they belonged or the religious creed which they professed, and that I had no prejudices towards them which could induce a different course of treatment. Mr. Little said that they were Americans in all their feelings, & friends of the U. S. I told Mr. Little that we were at War with Mexico,

and asked him if 500 or more of the mormons now on their way to California would be willing on their arrival in that country to volunteer and enter the U. S. army in that war, under the command of a U. S. Officer. He said he had no doubt they would willingly do so. He said if the U. S. would receive them into the service he would immediately proceed and overtake the emigrants now on the way and make the arrangement with them to do so. I told him I would see him on to-morrow on the subject. I did not deem it prudent to tell him of the projected expedition into California under the command of Col. Kearney, who has instructions to make such an expedition this season if practicable. The mormons, if taken into the service, will constitute not more than ¼ of Col. Kearney's command, and the main object of taking them into service would be to conciliate them, and prevent them from assuming a hostile attitude towards the U. S. after their arrival in California. It was with the view to prevent this singular sect from becoming hostile to the U. S. that I held the conference with Mr. Little, and with the same view I am to see him again to-morrow.

The Marine band played on the President's grounds this evening. A large number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, were present.

THURSDAY, *4th June, 1846.*— Had the usual round of company to visit me to-day. The throng of office seekers continues with little if any abatement. I seriously regret that I possess any patronage. It[s] dispensation interferes very much with the proper

discharge of my more important public duties. When there are no vacancies it is exceedingly distressing to be compelled to hear an office [seeker] for an hour tell his story and set forth his merits and claims. It is a great and useless consumption of my time, and yet I do not see how I am to avoid it without being rude or insulting, which it is not in my nature to be.

I called a special meeting of the Cabinet at 2 O'Clock P. M. to-day to consider of the English proposition on the Oregon question, the substance of which as it will probably be made by Mr. Pakenham was communicated in the despatch of Mr. McLane of the 18th ultimo. That proposition will probably be a line of partition of the Oregon territory by the line of 49° from the Rocky mountains to the Straits of Fuca and thence through the Straits to the sea, leaving the Straits in their whole extent around Vancouver's Island an open Sea to both nations; a fee-simple title to Brittish subjects for the farms and lands they occupy between the Columbia River and 49°, and the free navigation of the Columbia, not to Brittish subjects generally but to the Hudson's Bay company only. I asked the advice of the Cabinet, if such a proposition was made by Mr. Pakenham what I should do. Mr. Buchanan said he did not feel prepared without further reflection to commit himself, but was inclined to the opinion that I should submit it to the Senate for their previous advice accompanied by a message reiterating my opinions expressed in my annual message of the 2nd of December last. He said if the right of free navigation of the Columbia, which was the objectionable feature

of the proposition to his mind, was confined to the duration of the present charter of the Hudson's Bay company which would expire in 1859, he should be clear it should be submitted to the Senate for their previous advice. Mr. Bancroft thought such a modification in regard to the navigation of the River should be made, but was clear that the proposition as it was with a recommendation of such a modification should be submitted to the Senate before I acted on it. Mr. B. gave his views at some length in favour of this course. Mr. Marcy concurred in substance in opinion with Mr. Bancroft. Mr. Johnson inclined to favour the same view. Mr. Walker, Sec. of Treasury, and Mr. Mason, the Atto. Gen'l, were not present, both being detained at home by indisposition. No decision was made, and I expressed no opinion, desiring to hear the opinions of the Cabinet before I did so. I requested Mr. Buchanan to take Mr. McLane's despatch to Mr. Walker at his house & confer with him on the subject, and he agreed to do so. The subject was postponed, & the Cabinet after considering various matters connected with the Mexican war adjourned.

About 6 O'Clock P. M. I rode on horseback with my Private Secretary to the residence of Judge Mason, Atto. Gen'l, and found him still confined to his bed by indisposition. I stated to Judge Mason what the Brittish proposition would probably be, as communicated by Mr. McLane, & asked his opinion of it. Judge Mason advised that it should be submitted to the Senate for their previous advice, accompanied

with a well-considered message. I did not tell Judge Mason my own opinion.

FRIDAY, *5th June, 1846.*— My time was occupied until 12 O'Clock to-day in receiving company as usual, some on business, some seeking office, and others on visits of ceremony. I had a special interview with Mr. Amos Kendall and Mr. Little of N. H. (a mormon) by previous appointment at their request (see this diary of the 3rd Instant). I told them that I had consulted the Secretary of War, and that the conclusion to which we had come was that the battalion of Mormons of which mention was made on the 3rd Instant, could not be received into the service of the U. S. until they reached California, but that on their arrival there (if the war with Mexico still continued) they would to the number of 500 be mustered into the service of the U. S. as volunteers for 12 months, placing themselves under the command of a U. S. officer who would be there ready to receive them. Mr. Little desired to follow the emigrating party now on their way to California, and on overtaking them to have 500 of their number mustered into the service of the U. S. so that their pay might commence from that time. This proposition I declined. After Mr. Little retired I explained to Mr. Kendall what I did not think it safe to communicate to Mr. Little, *viz.*, that Col. Kearney was ordered to proceed from Santa Fe with a part of his Regiment of dragoons and the mounted volunteers called out from Mo., and it was hoped would

reach California this season, but this was not certain; that when Col. K. reached the country he was authorized to receive 500 of the mormons into the service so as to conciliate them and prevent their becoming the enemies of the U. S., but if the mormons reached the country I did not desire to have them the only U. S. forces in the country. I told Mr. Kendall that the citizens now settled in California at Sutter's settlement and elsewhere had learned that a large body of mormons were emigrating to that country and were alarmed at it, and that this alarm would be increased if the first organized troops of the U. S. that entered the country were mormons. To avoid this and at the same time to conciliate the mormons, Col. K. [was authorized] to receive mormons into the service after he reached the country not to exceed in number one fourth of his whole force. Mr. Kendall assented to the wisdom of concealing these views from Mr. Little.

I Had a consultation with the Secretary of War about the Mexican war, and requested him to take the most prompt & vigorous steps to check the march of militia forces to the Rio Grande who have been called out by Gen'l Gaines without authority and without consulting the Government. Gen'l Gaines has greatly embarrassed the Government by his unauthorized orders[1] calling forth large bodies of militia and volunteers, and the danger is that a very large body of 3 & 6 months men may be assembled

[1] Edmund Pendleton Gaines, 1777–1849; he served in the War of 1812 and under Jackson in the Creek Indian war. For the orders see *S. Doc.* 402, 29 Cong. 1 Sess.

on the Rio Grande for which there is no use, and who will consume Gen'l Taylor's provisions and otherwise greatly embarrass him. To prevent Gen'l G. from producing further embarrassment by his unauthorized orders he has been ordered to Washington.

I learned from my private Secretary, who returned from the Senate about 5 O'Clock P. M., that that body had passed a Resolution [1] calling for the correspondence between Gen'l Gaines & the Secretary of War, and the conduct of the former in calling out troops without authority. I learned from him also that a Resolution passed the Senate calling for the correspondence between Gen'l Scott & the Secretary of War in relation to the command of the army on the Rio Grande.

SATURDAY, *6th June, 1846.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day, all the members present except Mr. Mason, who is still confined at his house by severe indisposition.

Mr. Buchanan submitted a proposition from the Brittish Government for the settlement of the Oregon question, which he said had just been delivered to him by Mr. Pakenham. The proposition which was in the form of a convention was read, and also a protocol of the conference which had taken place at the delivery of the proposition. The proposal [2] is substantially that the Oregon territory shall be

[1] *S. Journal,* 29 Cong. 1 Sess. 328.

[2] For the convention and protocol see *Globe,* 29 Cong. 1 Sess. *App.* 1168–1178.

divided between the parties by the 49° parallel of latitude from the Rocky mountains to the Straits of Fuca, thence through the main channel of said straits to the Sea, the country south of this line to belong to the U. S. and that North of it to Great Brittain. The proposition also contained two reservations, *viz.,* 1st, that the Hudson's Bay company and all Brittish subjects in the actual occupancy of their farms & lands used for other purposes shall be secured in their titles to the same, south of 49°, but to be subject to the jurisdiction and sovereignty of the U. S.; and secondly, that the navigation of the Columbia River shall be free, not to Brittish subjects generally but to the Hudson's Bay company and to Brittish subjects trading with that company. As the Hudson's Bay company will under its present charter cease to exist in the year 1859, a question arose whether if the charter of the company should be extended for an additional term of time this reservation as to the right to navigate the Columbia would extend beyond the life of the present company under the existing charter. Mr. Walker and Mr. Marcy expressed the opinion that the right reserved would be limited to the existence of the company under the existing charter. Mr. Buchanan expressed a different opinion, and a discussion of some length on this point arose between Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Walker. I inclined to the opinion that Mr. Walker was right on the point, but was not clear on the subject and so expressed myself.

I asked the advice of the cabinet as to what action I should take on the proposition now submitted, *viz.,*

whether the proposition should be rejected, or whether I should submit it to the Senate for their previous advice. Mr. Walker, Mr. Marcy, Mr. Bancroft, and Mr. Johnson advised that it should be submitted to the Senate for their previous advice. Mr. Buchanan held back his opinion and was the last to express himself and not then until I asked his opinion. He said it would depend upon the character of the message whether he would advise its submission to the Senate or not. He said the 54° 40′ men were the true friends of the administration and he wished no backing out on the subject. I felt excited at the remark but suppressed my feelings and was perfectly calm. Mr. Walker made an animated remark in reply, and I interposed and gave the conversation a different direction, for I desired no excitement or division in the Cabinet. All agreed that if the proposition was rejected without submitting it to the Senate that in the present position of the question I could offer no modification of it, or other proposition, and that if it was rejected and no other proposition made, war was almost inevitable. I then remarked to Mr. Buchanan that the substance of my message would be, if I submitted the proposition to the Senate, a reiteration of my opinions as expressed in my annual message of the 2d of December last, but in view of the action of my predecessors and of the debates and proceedings of Congress at its present Session, I submitted it to the Senate for their previous advice, accompanied with a distinct statement that if the Senate advised its acceptance with or without modifications I should conform to their ad-

vice; but if they declined to express an opinion, or by the constitutional majority to give their advice, I should reject the proposition. Mr. Buchanan then said that with such a message as that he would advise its submission to the Senate. I then asked Mr. Buchanan to prepare such a message. He declined to do so, but said if I would prepare a draft of one he would examine it, and make such suggestions as might seem to him to be proper. I told him I would do so. The Cabinet adjourned, after having considered several questions in relation to the war with Mexico. Mr. Marcy remained after the other members had retired, on business connected with the military operations. He remarked to me that Mr. Buchanan's course was a very queer one, for that he had been for a long time the most strenuous advocate of settling the question on the basis of the 49° of North Latitude, and had often said in & out of the Cabinet that he would be willing to take the whole responsibility of settling the question on the basis of 49°. This I remembered distinctly, and it was not until within a short time since that he gave indications of a change of position. The first indication I had of it was a remark which fell from him incidentally when speaking of the subject, to the purport that Gen'l Cass had made character by his course in the Senate on the subject. Gen'l C. was a 54° 40′ man. In the course of the discussion in the Cabinet to-day, I have omitted to state one fact, *viz.*, after Mr. Buchanan had stated his views & said it would depend on the character of the message whether he would advise the submission of the proposition to the Sen-

ate, Mr. Walker said in an emphatic tone that he was in favour of submitting it to the Senate, but that he would be opposed to it unless it was understood that every member of the Cabinet would support the measure, but that if any member of the Cabinet should exert an influence in his intercourse with Senators to prevent his [their] acceptance of the proposition with or without modification, he would be opposed to submitting it to the Senate. I interposed promptly and said of course if it was submitted to the Senate every member of the Cabinet would support the views presented in the message; and before the message was sent in, I remarked, there must be unanimity in the Cabinet in regard to it.

SUNDAY, *7th June, 1846.*— The great pressure of public duties relating to the prosecution of the war with Mexico, the preparation of a message [1] in relation to Gen'ls Gaines & Scott, and a message on the Oregon question with a view to submit the proposition for a settlement of that question made on yesterday by the Brittish Minister, compelled me most reluctantly to remain at home and decline accompanying Mrs. Polk to church. The Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy who were necessarily engaged in the discharge of their respective duties called several times in the course of the day to consult me. At one time they were present together. One of them, Mr. Marcy I think, remarked that Mr. Buchanan's course in the Cabinet meeting of yesterday on the Oregon question, was very strange. A

[1] Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents,* IV, 448.

conversation followed in which they both remarked that during the whole of last year, and up to within a short time past, he had been the most strenuous advocate of settling the question by making a Treaty on the basis of 49°, and had several times said he was willing to take the whole responsibility of settling it on that basis. They remembered, too, that in the early part of our discussions in Cabinet on the subject, he had repeatedly said when advocating a settlement at 49°, that he believed he stood alone on that subject in the Cabinet. I remembered all they said. My impression is that Mr. Buchanan intends now to shun all responsibility for the submission of the British proposition to the Senate, but still he may wish it to be done without his agency, so that if the 54° 40′ men shall complain, he may be able to say that my message submitting it did not receive his sanction. I shall be disappointed if any message which can be drawn will receive his assent. He will choose to dissent and if it is condemned he will escape all responsibility. In his despatches to Mr. McLane I have more than once, & in the presence of the Cabinet, caused paragraphs to be struck out yielding as I thought too much to Great Brittain, and now it is most strange that he should take suddenly, and without the assignment of any reason, the opposite extreme, and talk as he did on yesterday of "backing out from 54° 40′." His course is one which I cannot approve. Mr. Marcy and Mr. Bancroft both condemned it in decided terms.

After night Mr. Dallas, Vice Pres't U. S., called, & I informed him confidentially of the proposition

which had been made for the settlement of the Oregon question by the Brittish Minister. He approved of my purpose to submit it to the Senate for their previous advice before I acted on it.

MONDAY, *8th June, 1846.*— I directed my porter this morning to inform all persons who called that I was engaged and could see no company. I desired to devote the day to the preparation of my message to the Senate submitting the proposition of the Brittish Government for the adjustment of the Oregon question which had been made on the 6th Instant, and been considered on that day in Cabinet. I desired also to give attention to measures proper to be adopted for the vigorous prosecution of the war with Mexico. To enable me to attend to these important duties I directed my porter to bring me no names or cards, but to admit any of the Cabinet or public officers on business. Notwithstanding this positive order I was greatly annoyed every twenty or ten minutes by the calls of public officers or by the delivery of letters by my messenger. Among other annoyances my messenger reported to me that Mr. Charles J. Ingersoll had called, and on receiving information that my orders were that I would see no one, and receive the card of no one, the messenger informed me that Mr. Ingersoll said that I had sent for him & had important business with him. I told the messenger to tell him that I had not sent for him & had no business with him and that I was so much engaged that I had closed my doors to-day, but as his name had been brought to me I told my messenger to tell

him that if he had important business with me I could not refuse to see him. He came in & had no business but to talk to me about the propriety of recalling Mr. Wise [1] as Minister to Brazil. Engaged as I was, with my mind absorbed in much more important matters, I was very impatient, and he might as well have talked to me of " the man in the moon." I notice this instance as I might many others of useless consumption of my time. I told Mr. Ingersoll that I had considered [it], and I suppose I manifested, what I felt, some impatience, and Mr. I. after boring me for a time about what I had no time to consider, left. In the course of the morning I saw the Secretaries of State, Treasury, War, and Navy at different times on business. Mr. Buchanan called early in the day (before 12 O'Clock) and I told him that I had closed my doors to-day, but had been notwithstanding greatly interrupted & annoyed. I told him I was engaged in preparing my message to the Senate on the Oregon question, and again asked him, as I had done in the Cabinet meeting on saturday, to aid me in preparing it. He again declined, and said he wished to have no agency in its preparation. He said that the remark of the Secretary of the Treasury in Cabinet on saturday, that he would oppose the submission of the Brittish proposition to the Senate for their advice if any member of the Cabinet was to exert his influence with senators to prevent a settlement of the question [was meant to apply to him]. I told Mr. Buchanan that I remembered the remark

[1] Henry A. Wise of Virginia, 1806–1876, appointed minister to Brazil in 1843.

but that I had not understood it to apply to him particularly. He said it did apply to him, and was so intended, because he was at the time engaged in the discussion with Mr. Walker. Mr. Buchanan declined to aid me in preparing the message when requested a second time to do so, and I was confirmed in the impression which I had on saturday that he intended to avoid all responsibility. Mr. Buchanan left, and about 1 O'Clock returned bringing with him several of his despatches to Mr. McLane and Mr. McLane's despatches to him, and expressed doubts whether any of them should be sent to the Senate with my message. I could not help coming to the conclusion that his reason for not being willing to send them to the Senate was that they, especially his own despatches, expressed different opinions in favour of the settlement of the Oregon question on the basis of 49°, different from the position which he now wished to occupy in favour of the extreme right up to 54° 40′. After he had done reading them, not deeming it very important whether they were sent to the Senate or not, I told him I left it to him to select what portions of the correspondence, if any, should be sent to the Senate. He then said; Well! when you have done your message I will then prepare such an one as I think ought to be sent in. I felt excited at this remark, as he had on saturday and on this morning refused to aid me in preparing my message, and I said to him, for what purpose will you prepare a message? You have twice refused, though it is a subject relating to your Department, to give me any aid in preparing my message; do you wish,

after I have done, to draw up a paper of your own in order to make an issue with me? He became excited and said that remark st[r]uck him to the heart, and asked me if I thought him capable of doing such a thing? I replied, you have twice refused to give me any aid in preparing my message though requested to do so, and notwithstanding you see that I am overwhelmed with other important public duties and have been subject to constant interruptions, and now you say that after I have done you will prepare a message such as you think ought to be sent in; and I asked him for what purpose will you do this, and he replied to submit it to you. I said, you have not before said that this was your purpose; to which he replied that it was to [be] implied that such was his purpose. I then told him that I thought I had cause to complain that he had not aided me when requested, but that if I had misunderstood him, I retracted the remark. The conversation became a very painful and unpleasant one, but led to mutual explanations that seemed to be satisfactory. I told him I had never had any unkind feelings towards him personally or politically. He expressed his friendship for me and for Mrs. Polk. After a most unpleasant interview he retired.

My Private Secretary is confined to his room by indisposition to-day, and Hampton C. Williams, a clerk in the War Department, attended in his office and officiated in his place. Mr. Trist, the Chief Clerk in the State Department, took a message to the Senate in answer to a call which that body had made in relation to Gen'l Gaines and Gen'l Scott.

TUESDAY, *9th June, 1846.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day, all the members present except the Attorney General, who is still confined to his house by indisposition. I read my message to the Senate submitting for their advice the Brittish proposition for the adjustment of the Oregon question. All the Cabinet present except Mr. Buchanan approved it. It was a message of some length and I will preserve the manuscript for future reference. Mr. Buchanan objected to some portions of it. A discussion ensued between him and other members of the Cabinet. I remained silent. Mr. Bancroft reminded Mr. Buchanan of a remark which he had made in the Cabinet some months ago, that the title of the U. S. North of 49° was a shackling one. Mr. Buchanan said that remark related to Fraser's River, and that the Brittish Government had never placed their claim to that River on the proper ground. Mr. Bancroft reminded him of several of his own despatches to Mr. McLane strongly in favour of a settlement of the question on the basis of 49° and hinted intelligibly enough at his recent strange and unaccountable change of position. Several suggestions in way of objection to parts of my message were made by Mr. Buchanan. I at length spoke and said I would yield anything but principle for the sake of harmony and union in the Cabinet on this important subject. Mr. Buchanan then said if I would give him my draft of the message he would go into another room and draw up such a draft as he would approve. I told him to do so, and he took my draft and retired. He was gone more than an hour and re-

turned with his draft and read it. I saw at once it would not do, but said nothing. The other members of the Cabinet each in turn expressed objections to it. I at length proposed, in order to obtain union of opinion, to strike out a large part of my draft, leaving only that portion which proposed to submit the Brittish proposition to the Senate for their advice, the reasons which induced me to ask that advice, reiterating the opinions expressed in my annual message and declaring that I would be governed in my action by the advice which the Senate might give. Mr. Buchanan and all the other members of the Cabinet agreed to this, and after a session of more than five hours the message in this form was agreed to & the Cabinet adjourned. In the course of the evening I sent for Senators Cass, Allen, & Turney and communicated to each the character of the Brittish proposition which had been made and of the confidential message asking the advice of the Senate, which I proposed to send in on to-morrow.

This was reception evening and about 100 persons, ladies and gentlemen, called. Mr. Senator Haywood remained after the company dispersed, when I informed him as I had done Messrs. Cass, Allen, and Turney, of the message which I would send in on to-morrow. Mr. Allen thought I ought to reject the Brittish proposition and not consult the Senate. The other three Senators thought I ought to consult the Senate. Gen'l Cass thought I was bound to do so, though he would be compelled to vote against advising me to accept the Brittish proposition. He said however that if it was accepted by the Senate he

would never be heard to utter a word afterwards on the subject.

WEDNESDAY, *10th June, 1846.*— Received visitors this morning until 11½ O'Clock. Had the usual round of company, some to pay their respects & others seeking office.

I sent for Senators Benton and Dickinson this morning, and informed them of the message I intended to send to the Senate to-day, asking the advice of that body in relation to the Brittish proposal for the adjustment of the Oregon question. Senators Houston, Bagby, and Niles called and I gave them the same information. About 2 O'Clock P. M. Mr. Trist, ch. Clk. in the State Department, took the message [1] to the Senate, my Private Secretary being still confined to his room by indisposition.

About 2½ O'Clock I sent for Mr. Buchanan, who had on the day previous informed me of the death of Judge Randall, District Judge of the U. S. for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. I informed him that it was necessary to make the appointment of a Judge speedily, and that I desired to consult him in regard to the person to be appointed. He mentioned no person whom he desired to have appointed. I then told him my mind was made up to appoint John K. Kane of Phila. unless he had insuperable objections to him. He said he had no such objections, that Mr. Kane would not be his choice, but that he would make a respectable judge and that he would not object to him. I then told him I would nominate him

[1] Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents,* IV, 449.

on to-morrow. He said that Mr. Kane was now Atto. Gen'l of Pennsylvania, a very important office in that State, which would be vacated by his appointment to the Federal Bench. He said he would write to Gov. Shunk to-day, and urge him to appoint Mr. John M. Read, who had been a leading friend of Mr. Muhlenberg, who was the opponent of Gov. Shunk for Governor, and said Mr. Read's appointment would harmonize and reunite the party in the State. He suggested to me that I should write on the subject either to Gov. Shunk or Hon. Jesse Miller, his Secretary of State.

I had fully considered the relations (in some respects unpleasant) which had for several months existed between Mr. Buchanan and myself, relations which had been produced as I believed mainly by Mr. B.'s sensitiveness about my appointments to office & I had made up my mind to gratify his wish to be himself appointed a Judge of the Supreme Court of the U. S. in place of Judge Baldwin dec'd. Mr. Buchanan's desire to go on the Supreme bench may be found recorded in this diary a short time before the meeting of Congress, and again immediately after Mr. Woodward's rejection by the Senate. Having previously made up my mind on the subject, I told Mr. Buchanan that as the Oregon question would probably soon be settled, that if he still desired it I would, as soon as that question was disposed of, appoint him to the Supreme Court. The offer seemed to be unexpected to him, but it was evident he was much gratified. This led to a long

explanation of a pleasant character of the relations which had existed between us for some months past. He finally said that he had long desired to go on the Bench of the Supreme Court, but he had for some time past given it up altogether, and that he would desire a little time to consider it, though it was evident to me that he was delighted with the offer and intended to accept it. He was in an unusually pleasant humour and said he had thought of the mission to England or of returning to the Senate of the U. S., and remarked that Mr. Cameron had repeatedly told him that he would resign at any time to give place to him, if he desired it. He added that he thought he could be of more service to my administration in the Senate than in his present position. After a long conversation he retired, manifestly changed in his feelings and in a very pleasant humour.

There was music on the President's grounds this evening, and many hundreds of persons attended.

THURSDAY, *11th June, 1846.*— Saw company as usual until 12 O'Clock to-day. Among others Senators Cass and Dickinson of N. York, both of whom were in favour of 54° 40′ on the Oregon question, and expressed to me in the strongest terms their satisfaction at my message to the Senate on yesterday, submitting the Brittish proposal for an adjustment of the question. They said they would vote against advising its acceptance, but that after all that had occur[r]ed on the question they did not see how I as President of the U. S. could have done otherwise

than I had done, and that they approved my submission of the subject to the Senate. I expressed my satisfaction at hearing these sentiments.

I occupied the balance of the day in disposing of the business on my table, and in the course of the day had official interviews with the Secretaries of War, Treasury, and State. Mr. Buchanan appeared to be in a fine humour.

FRIDAY, *12th June, 1846.*— Saw company as usual to-day, until 12 O'Clock, when I closed my doors. Among others the Hon. Mr. Brinkerhoff,[1] a Representative in Congress from Ohio, called. He asked a private interview of a few minutes which I gave him. He requested me to appoint him a Paymaster in the army, three additional Paymasters having been authorized by a bill which has passed Congress, but which has not yet been presented to me for my approval and signature. He said he wished me to give him a frank answer. I told him that the fact that he was a member of Congress would be an objection to his appointment. I told him that the Constitution rendered members of Congress ineligible to any civil office which was created during the term for which he was elected, and the principle would to some extent apply to an office of this description, which was not strictly a military office. I told him that Gen'l Jackson had been much censured for appointing members of Congress to office, and that I had during the present Session refused to

[1] Jacob Brinkerhoff, Representative from Ohio 1843–1847, noted as the reputed author of the Wilmot Proviso.

appoint either of two members of Congress to the District Judgeship in Va. which had become vacant, and that I had refused also to appoint a member of Congress to be Col. of the Mounted Rifle Regiment, which had been authorized by an act of Congress during the present Session. I told him I had refused to appoint other members of Congress to other offices. I observed to him that Cabinet officers, Ministers abroad, or Judges of the Supreme Court, and perhaps a few others of high grade would constitute an exception to the general rule. There might be cases in which other officers might be selected from Congress, but I think they are rare.

The Secretary of State and Secretary of War each called on business to-day. About 6 O'Clock P. M. the Secretary of the Senate called and delivered to me a Resolution of the Senate, passed as stated on its face with the concurrence of two thirds of the Senators present, advising me "to accept the proposal of the Brittish Government," accompanying my message to the Senate of the 10th Instant, "for the settlement of the Oregon question." About 7 O'Clock P. M. the Secretary of the Senate sent to me a copy of the Executive Journal of this day, from which it appears that the vote on the Resolution advising acceptance of the Brittish proposition stood ayes 38, noes 12.

This was reception evening and about 100 persons, ladies and gentlemen, called.

SATURDAY, *13th June, 1846.*— Saw Mr. Buchanan early this morning, and communicated to

him the Proceedings and resolution of the Senate, advising by a vote of ayes 38 to noes 12 the acceptance of the Brittish proposition for the settlement of the Oregon question, which was communicated to the Senate by my message of the 10th Instant. It was agreed that he should see Mr. Pakenham this morning and agree upon a time when the Treaty in pursuance of the advice of the Senate should be signed.

The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day, all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury and the Atto. Gen'l, both of whom were detained at their homes by indisposition. The Secretary of the Treasury wrote me a note, that if it was important he would endeavour to attend. It being a thin Cabinet no important business was transacted. I conferred with the Secretary of War in relation to many matters of detail in relation to the prosecution of the War with Mexico. The Cabinet adjourned about 1 O'Clock P. M.

Mr. Henry Horn called to-day. He had come to Washington in consequence of a letter addressed to him at my instance two days ago by the Secretary of the Treasury. This letter was written at the suggestion of Mr. Buchanan, who represented that Senator Cameron, who had made opposition to Mr. Horn's confirmation as collector of Phila., was disposed to cease that opposition, and Mr. Buchanan thought that if Mr. Cameron & Mr. Horn could hold a conversation together the whole matter could be accommodated. Mr. Horn said he had no objection to converse with Mr. Cameron but that he could make no explanations which were unbecoming an in-

dependent or honorable man. Mr. Buchanan called in shortly afterwards, and I told him Mr. Horn was here as he had suggested two days ago. Mr. B. said he would return to his office, and send for Cameron. In the course of an hour Mr. Buchanan informed me that he had seen Cameron who said he would be glad to see Mr. Horn at Gadsby's Hotel [1] at 2 O'Clock P. M. About 1½ O'Clock P. M. Mr. Horn called again, and I informed him what Mr. Buchanan had said. Mr. Horn acted with great propriety and delicacy. He said he should not have thought of coming to Washington, lest it might be supposed that he had come to Washington to electioneer with Senators to secure his confirmation. He said he came on the receipt of Mr. Walker's letter requesting it, and that as he now learned from Mr. Buchanan through me that Mr. Cameron would be pleased to see him, he would call on him at Gadsby's at the hour indicated. He said he would hold a frank conversation with Mr. Cameron, but not capitulate or compromise his independence or his honour for his office. I told him that that was precisely the manner in which I expected he would act. I told him that Mr. Cameron had through Mr. Buchanan, as above stated, made the advance & indicated a willingness to hold a free conversation with him & that I thought he ought to call and hold such a conversation. He said he would do so and left, as I understood him, with that intention.

Col. Joel L. Jones of Somerville, Tennessee (who is my personal and political friend) & his wife, Mrs.

[1] Better known by its later name of Coleman's Hotel.

Stanton (the wife of Hon. Mr. Stanton, a Representative in Congress from Tennessee) and the P. M. Gen'l took a family dinner with me to-day.

SUNDAY, *14th June, 1846.*— Attended the first Presbyterian Church to-day, in company with Mrs. Polk, her niece, Miss Rucker, and Mrs. J. Knox Walker.

MONDAY, *15th June, 1846.*— Saw the usual round of company this morning. I had to-day a company of visitors who exhibited a striking contrast with each other. Some were gentlemen introduced by Senators and Representatives, who called to pay their respects; others were importunate seekers after office; and others again begging money. I was exceedingly disgusted with the two latter classes, and was glad when 12 O'Clock came, that being the hour of closing my office.

Among other visitors who called to-day, very unexpectedly to me, was J. Geo. Harris of Tennessee, whose nomination as a purser in the Navy is now pending before the Senate.

At 1½ P. M. to-day I received by the Telegraph a message from Coleman & Stetson dated "Astor House, N. Y., June 15th, 1846," (this day) as follows, *viz.,* "General Armstrong, special messenger from the Minister of England, directs us to inform you that he has just arrived by the Great Western, bearer of despatches."

About 3½ P. M. to-day the Secretary of State and the Brittish Minister concluded & signed a con-

vention for the settlement of the Oregon question, being the same submitted by the latter on the 6th Instant, by me submitted to the Senate for their advice on the 10th, and by that body advised on the 12th Instant. Mr. Buchanan brought the convention to me, and my Private Secretary started with it, accompanied with a message from me, to the Senate, but before he reached the Capitol the Senate had adjourned for the day.

About 11 O'Clock this morning Senators Cass and Dickinson called, and informed me that in consequence of the action of the Senate on the Oregon question Senator Allen had resolved to resign his place as chairman of the committee of Foreign affairs of the Senate. I expressed my hope that he would not do so. Gen'l Cass told me that he stood second on the committee of Foreign affairs, and that Mr. Allen had advised him to resign also. Both Mr. Dickinson and myself expressed the opinion that he ought not to do so. About 3 O'Clock Gen'l Cass called again and informed me that after he left me this morning, a consultation was held between Mr. Allen, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Atherton,[1] and himself, all democratic members of the committee of Foreign affairs of the Senate, in which Mr. Allen insisted that they should resign with him, and that they had all declined to do so. Upon the meeting of the Senate (Gen'l Cass informed me) Mr. Allen made a

[1] Charles Gordon Atherton, Senator from New Hampshire 1843–1849, and 1852–1853. Author of the famous "gag resolutions" of 1838 against the reception of anti-slavery petitions in the House.

speech and resigned.[1] Gen'l Cass informed me that he had made a speech declining to resign, but requesting that he might not be made chairman of the committee in Mr. Allen's place. He read to me the substance of what he had said.

Col. Benton called at 8 O'Clock P. M. and introduced to me Col. McGaffin of Chihu[a]hua in Mexico, an intelligent merchant & trader in that country. Col. McGaffin was, as he said, a native of Kentucky, but has resided in Mexico for the last twenty years. I had a conversation of an hour with him, in the presence of Col. Benton, and derived from him much valuable information in relation to the Northern Provinces of Mexico, the character of the country, and the means of conducting a campaign in them. I requested Col. McGaffin to call on me at 12 O'Clock on wednesday next & he promised to do so.

TUESDAY, *16th June, 1846.*— This was the regular day of meeting of the Cabinet. Before the hour of meeting of the Cabinet, several persons gained admittance to my office, upon the representation to my messenger that they had important business. Though much engaged in preparing a message to the Senate in answer to a call made by that body in relation to the measures proper to be adopted for the purpose of raising additional means for the prosecution of the war with Mexico I consented to see them, and was much annoyed to find that their important business with me consisted in importunate applica-

[1] *Globe,* 29 Cong. 1 Sess. 972.

tions for office. I was enabled, however, before the meeting of the Cabinet to finish my message to the Senate. I sent it to the Senate. I sent also a message laying before the Senate the convention with Great Brittain concerning the Oregon territory, which was concluded and signed on yesterday, in conformity of [with] the advice of the Senate, in their Resolution of the 12th Instant.

There was a full meeting of the Cabinet to-day, all the members being present. I brought up for consideration the propriety of sending a Regiment of Volunteers from New York by sea to California to join Col. Kearney's command, which had been ordered to proceed from Missouri overland to California. All the members of the Cabinet expressed opinions favourable to such a movement. No definitive decision was made, but it was concluded that I should address a letter to Capt. John A. Thomas of New York, late of the U. S. army, who it was understood was raising a Regiment of Volunteers, and request him to come to Washington, that I might confer with him and ascertain whether, if such an expedition was ordered, he would tender his Regiment for that service. I wrote the letter to Capt. Thomas before the Cabinet dispersed. Various other matters connected with the war with Mexico were considered.

Mr. Healey, the artist, requested the cabinet & myself to go into the parlour and suffer him to take a degguerryotype likeness of the whole of us in a groupe. We gratified him. We found Mrs. Madison in the parlour with the ladies. Three attempts

were made to take the likeness of myself, the Cabinet, & the ladies in a group, all of which failed.

Gen'l Robert Armstrong, U. S. Consul at Liverpool, & his brother, Maj'r William Armstrong, took a family dinner with me to-day.

This being one of our reception evenings a fashionable assembly of ladies and gentlemen to the number of more than 100 persons called.

I learn that the Senate made several unsuccessful ballots to-day, to elect a Chairman of the Committee of Foreign affairs of the Senate in place of Mr. Allen who resigned on yesterday. An Election was defeated by Mr. Allen and his friends, who refused, as I learn, to vote for Mr. Sevier, who had been selected as the Democratic Candidate, but scattered their votes, and some of them voted for Mr. Archer, the Whig candidate. I learned also from Mr. Colquitt, a Senator, that in Executive Session, when my message transmitting the convention concerning Oregon was taken up, that Mr. Hannegan had made a violent speech, and that several of the North Western Senators were excited & in a bad temper.

WEDNESDAY, *17th June, 1846.*— Saw company until 12 O'Clock to-day. Quite a large number of persons called.

Shortly after 12 O'Clock Col. McGaffin of Chihu[a]hua in Mexico, who was introduced to me on monday last by Col. Benton, called according to appointment. The Secretary of War was present. We held a long conversation with Col. McGaffin, in relation to the projected campaign into Mexico.

He is a very intelligent man, and gave us much valuable information. He tendered his services to the Government of the U. S. in any way in which he could be useful. He said he was an American citizen, never having thrown off his allegiance to the U. S. It was concluded that he could be useful in furnishing supplies for the army, and conciliating the people of the Northern Provinces of Mexico to the U. S., and with that view he was informed that the Secretary of War would on to-morrow give him letters to Col. Kearney who was in command of the expedition to Santa Fe, and also to the officer who might be in command of an expedition to Chihu[a]hua, requesting them to avail themselves of his services.

Senator Breese of Illinois called this morning. He was at the drawing room last evening & I had requested him to call this morning. I had a full conversation with him upon the Oregon question and my course in relation to it. I referred him to the fact that in my message to the Senate of the 10th Instant I had reiterated the opinions which I had expressed in my annual message of the 2nd of December last. I told him that I had at the commencement of the present Session of Congress conferred freely with Mr. Allen, the chairman of the Committee of Foreign affairs of the Senate, on the subject. I told him that my opinion on the abstract question of title remained unchanged as I had expressed it in my annual message, but that for the reasons stated in that message I had in July last (reluctantly to be sure) offered the 49° as a line of

boundary, and that upon the appearance of my message the whole country had approved what I had done; I told him that in my interview with Mr. Allen at the commencement of the Session, and several times since, I had repeatedly told him that I would make no further proposition, but that if the Brittish Government (as I anticipated they might) should return to me my offer of 49° or what was equivalent to it with slight modifications, I should feel inclined to submit such proposition to the Senate for their previous advice, and that Mr. Allen had fully concurred in these views & had advised me to take this course. I told him that after the debates and proceedings which had taken place in Congress at the present session, and especially in the Senate, I had felt it to be my duty to do so. I told him that when the recent Brittish proposition was made, I had made up my mind that it was my duty to submit it to the Senate for their previous advice before I acted upon it. I told him that I had on the 9th Instant (being the day before I submitted it to the Senate) sent for Mr. Allen and informed him of what had occurred and what I deemed it my duty to do. Mr. Breese said he approved my course, but added that some of the 54° 40′ men felt wounded that Mr. Haywood should have my confidence and have moved the Resolution in Executive Session advising me to accept the Brittish proposal. I told him that Mr. Haywood had acted voluntarily, and without my request or advice in that matter. I told him that I had no more knowledge that Mr. Haywood would make such motion than the man in Africa, & that

the fact that he had done so should give no cause of offence with me with any of my friends. I told him that on the same evening (the 9th Instant) on which I had consulted with Mr. Allen, I had consulted also with Gen'l Cass and Mr. Turney, and informed them of what I intended to do, and that they both approved of what I intended to do; that Mr. Haywood had not been sent for by me, but that being my evening for receiving company, Mr. Haywood with more than 100 others had called; that Mr. Haywood remained until the company retired, and I had informed him of the Brittish proposition and that I intended on the next day to send a message to the Senate asking their previous advice on the subject, but that I had not expressed to him or to any other Senator any wish or opinion as to the course which the Senate should take on the subject, and repeated to him that I was wholly ignorant of Mr. Haywood's intention to move such a resolution and did not know that he had done so until I saw the resolution in the Executive Journal of the Senate which had been furnished to me by the Secretary of the Senate on the evening of the 12th Instant, the day on which he had moved it. Mr. Breese expressed himself entirely satisfied.

The Marine band played on the President's grounds this evening, and several hundred persons attended. Among them were Mr. & Mrs. Samuel D. Ingham of Pennsylvania, whom I had not seen since Mr. Ingham retired from Gen'l Jackson's Cabinet. Mr. I. and myself were at all times personal friends & our meeting was a very pleasant one.

At 8½ O'Clock this evening the Hon. Mr. Douglass of the Ho. Repts. from Illinois called and I had a long conversation with him on the Oregon question. I explained to him my course & stated to him that I stood upon the same ground I had taken in my annual Message, and that in my action on the subject I had been entirely consistent. Mr. D. stated his dissatisfaction at a land officer whom I had appointed at Springfield in Illinois. I told him that I had continued the old officer who had been strongly recommended by Senator Breese, the Governor of Illinois, & many citizens of that State, as a good officer & a sound Democrat. He complained also that I had appointed a Whig in Illinois a 2nd Lieutenant in the Rifle Regiment lately raised. I told him that we were at war with a Foreign country and that I thought it improper to make politics a test in appointments in the army, and that I had resolved therefore to appoint some Whigs to office in the army. I told him that all the political friends with whom I had conversed had agreed with me in this, but when I came to make the selections none of my friends in Congress wished any Whig appointed from his State, but all said they were willing that I might select Whigs from any other State than their own. I think Mr. Douglass became ashamed of his objection. In the beginning of the conversation his tone was a dissatisfied one, but before he left he seemed to be satisfied, and said on leaving, "Well, let all these small matters rest forever," and expressed himself resolved to go on in the support of my ad-

ministration. I told him that he could, if he would, lead the Democratic party in the House.

THURSDAY, *18th June, 1846.*— Saw a large number of Visitors this morning. Closed my doors at 12 O'Clock. The Secretary of State, of War, and the Atto. Gen'l called, with whom I transacted public business. I was subjected to other interruptions by persons calling on special business who sent in their names, & I felt bound to receive them, so that I did not commence disposing of the business on my table until 3 O'Clock P. M. About 5 O'Clock P. M. Mr. Dickins (the Secretary of the Senate) called and delivered to me the convention between the U. S. and G. B. in relation to the Oregon Territory, accompanied with a Resolution of the Senate ratifying the same. Mr. Dickins informed me that the convention had been ratified by a vote of ayes 41, noes 14, every Senator voting except Mr. Jarnegan of Tennessee. The Secretary of the Senate informed me that Mr. Jarnagan was present in the Senate to-day, but had probably stepped out of the Senate chamber to avoid voting.

The company of musicians called Harmonians, having requested to perform in the Presidential Mansion, attended this evening and sang to a few persons not exceeding 20 or 30 in number.

FRIDAY, *19th June, 1846.*— Saw company to-day until 12 O'Clock, and after that hour was busily engaged until my dinner hour (4 O'Clock P. M.) in

disposing of the business on my table, and in consultation with the Secretary of War, in arranging and organizing the volunteers called out to prosecute the war against Mexico, into Brigades and Divisions. About 11½ O'Clock A. M. Gen'l Edmund P. Gaines attended by his aide-de-camp, Lieut. Calhoun, called in full uniform. He called he said to Report himself in obedience to orders to repair to Washington. He said he received the order at New Orleans on the 10th and left on the 11th Instant. He remained a few minutes engaged in general conversation and retired.

This being reception evening, near 100 persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

SATURDAY, *20th June, 1846.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present. The Secretary of War brought the case of Gen'l Edmund P. Gaines of the U. S. army before the Cabinet. Gen'l Gaines had been ordered from New Orleans to Washington in consequence of his violation of orders, and the assumption and exercise of authority not conferred upon him of calling out Militia & Volunteers into the service of the U. S., designating the officers, and of mustering them into the service of the U. S. The Secretary of War made a statement of the case, when the Cabinet were unanimous (Mr. Buchanan first expressing his opinion) that a Court of Enquiry should be ordered, who should hear his defence & report the facts of the case. I directed the Secretary of War to order a Court of Enquiry accordingly.

I sent for Col. Benton and had an interview with him after the Cabinet adjourned. I consulted Col. Benton as to the expediency of sending a Regiment of Volunteers from New York by sea to California. He advised it, if they would go as emigrants and agree to be discharged in California at the end of their service. I pointed out to Col. Benton the embarrassment and difficulty of executing the act approved [on the] 18th Inst. providing for calling forth the militia General officers of the States to command the Volunteers who had been called into the service of the U. States. He saw the difficulty and he saw that the law could not be executed. It was agreed that the Secretary of War should address a letter [to Congress] stating the difficulties of executing the law. Col. B. said [if] he would do so Congress would run a Supplemental Bill through on Monday next conferring the power on the President to appoint these officers. I sent for the Secretary of War (after Col. B. left), who agreed in opinion with him, and said he would write the letter suggested.

Senator McDuffie, who was lately elected Chairman of the Committee of Foreign affairs of the Senate in place of Mr. Allen resigned, called about 10 O'Clock this morning and held a conversation of an hour with me in relation to our Foreign affairs.

SUNDAY, *21st June, 1846.*— Attended the first Presbyterian Church to-day in company with Mrs. Polk and her niece, Miss Rucker.

MONDAY, *22nd June, 1846.*— Saw company as usual until 12 O'Clock to-day. After that hour I had a very busy day, being several times interrupted by the calls of members of Congress. I was chiefly engaged in considering the matter of executing the act of the 18th Instant making further provision for the prosecution of the war against Mexico. After a further consultation on the subject with the Secretary of War and with several members of Congress, the embarrassments and difficulties which I pointed out to Col. Benton on Saturday last were not removed (see this diary of Saturday, 20th Instant). I urged upon several members the indispensible necessity of passing without delay a supplemental bill. They all agreed to do so, but it could not be done to-day, because according to usage neither House could do any business to-day, because of the announcement of the death of the Hon. Mr. Herrick, one of the Representatives from the State of New York, but would adjourn for the day; nor could they do so on to-morrow because on that day the funeral ceremonies would be attended to, and the body would be interred.

The two Senators and several of the Representatives from the State of Illinois called to-day and presented their joint recommendation in writing in favour of persons to fill the staff offices of the Illinois Volunteers who have been called into the public service in the war against Mexico. They also recommended Senator Semple (who is a Brigadier General of militia in Illinois) to command the Brigade called out from that State. They also recommended Hon. Mr. Douglass of Illinois to be

Brigade Major, an appointment which by the act I am not authorized to make. I urged upon them the necessity of amending the law, with little effect. The truth is, that Mr. Semple and several other members of Congress who are militia officers in their respective States desire to get commands for themselves, and therefore oppose any amendment of the act of June 18th, 1846,[1] which requires me to select the Brigadier & Major Generals from the officers now in command of the militia in the States. The passion for office among members of Congress is very great, if not absolutely disreputable, and greatly embarrasses the operations of the Government. They create offices by their own votes and then seek to fill them themselves. I shall refuse to appoint them, though it be at the almost certain hazard of incurring their displeasure. I shall do so because their appointment would be most corrupting in its tendency. I am aware that by refusing their applications I may reduce my administration to a minority in both Houses of Congress, but if such be the result I shall have the high satisfaction of having discharged my duty in resisting the selfishness of members of Congress, who are willing to abandon their duty to their constituents and provide places for themselves. I will not countenance such selfishness, but will do my duty, and rely on the country for an honest support of my administration.

TUESDAY, *23rd June, 1846.*— This was the regular day of meeting of the Cabinet. All the members

[1] *U. S. Stat. at Large,* IX, 17.

attended. Before entering on regular business I repaired with the Cabinet, except the Atto. Gen'l who was too unwell to go, to the Capitol to attend the funeral of the Hon. Mr. Herrick, late a Representative from the State of New York. I returned from the Funeral services about 2 O'Clock P. M. The Cabinet did not again assemble, although I saw and transacted business with several members of it. At my request The Secretary of War brought Gen'l Gibson,[1] the Commissary General of subsistence, to my office, and I had a full interview with him in relation to the prosecution of the Mexican war so far as depended on his bureau. I told him that I wished no wasteful expenditure of public money, but that I desired to have full and ample provision made for the army on the Rio Grande and now assembling there. I told him to spare no necessary expense to effect this, and that if it was not done I would hold him responsible for the failure.

I saw Mr. Douglass of the Ho. Repts. from Illinois to-day, and in a long and friendly conversation advised him to abandon his application for a place in the army & remain in his seat in Congress. I expressed to him my objections to appoint members of Congress to office, and especially to offices created by laws passed by their votes. Mr. Douglass is a sensible man, and he received what I said to him well. In the after part of the day he addressed me a letter withdrawing [the application] which was

[1] George Gibson, 1783–1861. Commissary General 1818, given rank of Major General in 1848 for meritorious service in the Mexican War.

made in his behalf by the Illinois delegation on yesterday.

This was reception evening and near 100 persons, gentlemen and ladies, called.

WEDNESDAY, *24th June, 1846.*— Had a very laborious day; saw company until 12 o'clock. After that hour I prepared a message nominating to the Senate about sixty staff officers of the army of the Rank of Major and Captain, in pursuance of the act of the 18th Instant. I withheld the nomination of one Major General and two Brigadier Generals, authorized by the act of 18th of June, 1846, in the expectation that Congress would to-day or to-morrow pass a supplemental act. I sent several other executive messages to the Senate.

The Secretary of War at my request called with Gen'l Jesup, the Quarter Master General, and I held a conversation with him, in substance the same as that held with Gen'l Gibson on yesterday (see this diary of yesterday). I directed him to make ample provision for the troops called out to prosecute the war against Mexico, so far as related to the Quarter Master's Department, & I told him I should hold him responsible for any failure in this respect. I directed him to provide as well for the irregular forces called out by the unauthorized act of Gen'l Gaines as for the forces ordered out by the Government.

The Secretary of the Senate delivered to me this afternoon a Resolution of the Senate rejecting the nomination of Henry Horn as Collector of Phila.

Mr. Horn had been rejected on the 25th ultimo, and was renominated to the Senate for the reasons stated in this diary, to which I refer.[1] When I renominated him I had positive assurances from several Senators that in a full Senate he would have been confirmed. Mr. Semple (Senator from Illinois) who voted for him on the first nomination, voted against him on the last, for no reason known to me unless it be that he is an applicant to me for a Brigadier-General's command of Volunteers, which I have declined to confer upon him. The selfishness of some members of Congress who make their public duties bend to their personal interests, proves at least that they are no better or purer than the mass of other men. Senator Atchison of Missouri, who was absent from the Senate on the first nomination, voted against Mr. Horn on the second nomination, although Senator Lewis had informed me that Senator Atchison had authorized him to assure me that if Mr. Horn was renominated he would renominate [vote for] him. Upon this assurance from Mr. Atchison as well as similar assurances from other Senators who were absent I had renominated Mr. Horn. The other Senators who professed to belong to the Democratic party, but who really act with the Whig party, who voted against Mr. Horn are Mr. Cameron, Mr. Wescott, and Mr. Calhoun. Mr. Hannegan, who had informed [me] he would vote for Mr. Horn if I would renominate him, was absent and did not vote. Messrs. Hannegan, Semple, and Atchison have lashed themselves into a passion

[1] See Diary entries for May 26–28, 1846.

because twothirds of the Senate advised the acceptance of the Brittish proposition for the adjustment of the Oregon question, and subsequently voted for the ratification, and have since that time voted and acted with the Whig party. They voted first for Mr. Archer (Whig) and then for Mr. Webster (Whig) for chairman of the committee of Foreign affairs, and refused through many ballotings to vote for Senator Sevier, who was the Democratic candidate, & ultimately defeated his election. They now vote against my nominations, as I suppose out of spite. The sooner such party men go into the ranks of the Whig party the better. They oppose, too, and embarrass the military Bills for the prosecution of the war against Mexico. They profess to be in a great rage (there is certainly no reason in their course) at the settlement of the Oregon question, and yet they can find no just cause of complaint against me, because my message transmitting the proposal to the Senate, as they know, repeated the doctrines and positions of my annual message of the 2nd December last, which they had over and over again approved. Their course is that of spoiled children. I have treated them with great civility and have yielded to their wishes about appointments in their respective States until they seem to have come to the conclusion that I must administer the Government precisely as they may direct. In this they will find themselves mistaken.

The Marine band played on the President's grounds this evening. Several hundred persons were present.

THURSDAY, *25th June, 1846.*— Saw company until 12 O'Clock to-day. I nominated Col. James Page of Phila. to the Senate to-day, as collector of Phila., in place of Henry Horn who was rejected by the Senate on yesterday. I sent a message by Mr. Cave Johnson, P. M. Gen'l (who called early this morning) to Mr. Buchanan that I intended to nominate Col. Page. Mr. Buchanan called about 11½ O'Clock, and I repeated to him personally that such was my intention. He said he would not have anything to say in the matter, but remarked that Col. Page was more bitterly opposed to him than any man in Pennsylvania except Henry Simpson. He said further that he thought I ought to consult the Pennsylvania delegation in Congress in reference to the appointment. I replied that this was a peculiar case, and that my consideration and independence as President of the U. S. required that I should show to Mr. Cameron and others who had made a factious opposition, not only to Mr. Horn, but to Mr. Woodward as Judge of the Supreme Court, that by their rejection neither they nor their friends should be profited by it. I told him that I was resolved that no man who had taken an active part in procuring Mr. Horn's rejection in order to make a vacancy to be filled by some favourite should ever be profited by it. I told him that he knew that I had set aside Col. Page for the Phila. P. office & had appointed Dr. Leghman,[1] with a view if possible to preserve harmony in the party in Penn., when in truth Mr.

[1] George F. Lehman, nominated Postmaster at Philadelphia December 29, 1845.

Page was more strongly recommended than any other person for the place. I told him, too, that Col. Page was qualified, was a man of high character and substance, and that I knew the public money would be safe in his hands. I told him I had seen Senator Sturgeon this morning, who thought Col. Page was the best appointment I could make. I told him also that Hon. Mr. Foster of the House of Repts. had remarked to me in conversation this morning, that either Col. Page, Mr. Rush, Mr. McCully, or Mr. Welsh would be satisfactory appointments. Mr. B. expressed his surprise that Mr. Foster had expressed such an opinion of Col. Page. The Secretary of the Treasury came in while I was in conversation with Mr. B., and I told him I was about to nominate Col. Page as Collector of Phila., to which he replied that he would make a good officer. Mr. B. remarked that he would prefer Mr. Rush to Col. Page. I told him my mind was made up to nominate Col. Page & I did so. The truth is, that it is a contest between different political cliques in Penn. to get possession of the patronage of the Phila. Custom House. It was with this view that Mr. Horn was rejected, and I am resolved not to lend myself to it. Mr. Buchanan did not become excited, but his great weakness, in this case as in many others which have occur[r]ed, consists in his exceeding sensitiveness about appointments, and especially in Pennsylvania. He retired and in a short time afterwards addressed me a note accompanied with a package of papers recommending Thomas McCully for Collector of Phila. Before I received it, my Private

Secretary had gone to the Senate with Col. Page's nomination.

I spent the balance of the day laboriously in disposing of the business on my table.

J. Geo. Harris and James H. Thomas of Tennessee took a family dinner with me to-day.

FRIDAY, *26th June, 1846.*— Saw company as usual until 12 O'Clock to-day. After that hour I was occupied through the day in disposing of the business on my table. Several of the Heads of Departments called during the day on business. Several members of Congress called also, whom I saw, though it was against my rule to do so after 12 O'Clock.

This was reception evening. The Circular parlour was crowded with ladies and gentlemen.

SATURDAY, *27th June, 1846.*— The Cabinet held a regular meeting to-day; all the members present. Several subjects were considered & disposed of, but none of them of great importance. The Cabinet adjourned about 1½ O'Clock P. M. and I devoted the balance of the day to the business on my table.

During my evening's walk I met Senator Breese and Mr. McClernand[1] of the Ho. Repts from Illinois, who informed me that Senator Semple of Illinois, who had been recommended by the Illinois delegation in Congress for the command of a Brigade of Volunteers, not wishing to embarrass me and

[1] John A. McClernand, 1812–1900, Representative from Illinois 1843–1851, and 1859–1861; Federal officer in Civil War.

having understood that I desired to avoid the appointment of members of Congress, had authorized them to withdraw his application.

After night Senator Colquitt called, and after conversing with me on several public subjects, informed me that General Haralson of the Ho. Repts. from Georgia, who had been an applicant for the command of a Brigade or Division of Volunteers, would not take exception to my course if he was not appointed, provided I established a general rule against the appointment of any member of Congress. I told Mr. Colquitt that as a general rule I thought it improper to appoint members of Congress to offices, & especially to such offices as had been created by laws passed by their votes. I told him I would not like to restrict myself by any positive general rule, for it was possible that a case might occur in which it would not be improper to appoint a member of Congress to a military office. I told him that I had several applications from members of Congress for offices both military and civil, and that I was disinclined to appoint them. He approved of my course. As a general [rule] I think members of Congress should not be appointed to office by the Executive. The exceptions to this rule may be, Cabinet officers, Foreign Ministers of the higher grade, Judges of the Supreme Court, and in time of war perhaps the higher military officers. But even in these cases it is desirable to avoid appointing members of Congress, if men equally qualified and with sufficient character before the country can be procured.

SUNDAY, *28th June, 1846.*— Attended the first Presbyterian church to-day in company with Mrs. Polk, her niece, Miss Rucker, and my nephew, Marshall T. Polk.

Mr. Cave Johnson, the P. M. Gen'l, called this morning and handed me a note from Mr. Buchanan, Secy. of State, to the effect that after much hesitation he had made up his mind to accept the appointment of Judge of the Supreme Court of the U. S. which I had some days ago informed him he could have if he still desired it. He stated in his note that he had come to this conclusion reluctantly, and intimated that he would be still willing to remain in my cabinet if he thought his retirement from it would injure my administration. Mr. Johnson expressed the opinion that I ought to retain him in my Cabinet, and that Mr. B. would leave it to me whether he would take the Judgeship or remain in the Cabinet. I told Mr. Johnson I would see Mr. Buchanan and hold a conversation with him on the subject.

MONDAY, *29th June, 1846.*— Had an unusually large crowd of visitors this morning. It was known that I would probably nominate to-day, the Brigadier and Maj'r Generals to command the volunteer force called into the service in the war against Mexico. These appointments excited much interest and I was called on by members of the Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee delegations in Congress in relation to these appointments. I had less difficulty in reconciling them to the appointments which I

proposed to make than I anticipated. The greatest difficulty was with the Illinois Delegation. About 1½ O'Clock P. M. my Private Secretary went to the Senate with a message nominating two Brigadier Generals of the Regular Army, *viz.,* Col. Kearney and Col. Twiggs, both of the line of the army, and one Major General and six Brigadier Generals to command the Volunteers. Gen'l Haralson of the Ho. Repts. from Georgia called before I sent in my message nominating the Generals and withdrew his application, saying that he knew I was embarrassed by the applications of members of Congress. He went [on] to remark that he thought himself that it was best not to appoint members of Congress, but he hoped that I would make an exception in the case of Gov. Yell of Arkansas, who had left Washington for Arkansas to join the Volunteers before the late acts of Congress creating the Brigadier and Maj'r Generals was [were] passed, that he did not of course vote for these laws, and that it was now understood that he was in the ranks as a private soldier. He expressed a strong desire that I would appoint Gov. Yell Brigadier Gen'l of the Arkansas Brigade. I told Gen'l H. I thought his course honourable to himself and magnanimous.

Members of Congress continued to call during the whole day about the military officers of various grades to be appointed. It was one of the severest day's labour I have had since I have been President.

At 5½ O'Clock I received a letter from Senator Semple of Ill. Saying that he had authorized his friends to withdraw his application for Brigadier

General. It was not written in good temper, and was not delivered to me for 3½ hours after I had sent to the Senate a nomination for a Brigadier General to command the Illinois Volunteers. Senator Semple probably knew of the nomination before his letter was written. His letter was brought to me from the Post office by my messenger with my mail.

I learned this morning that Mr. Tibbatts, a member of the Ho. Repts. from Kentucky, made a violent attack upon me in a speech [1] in the House today, in reference to the Oregon question. The tariff Bill was the subject before the House. The reason of Mr. Tibbatts's hostility I think I understand. He made application to me some weeks ago to be appointed a Col. of the Rifle Regiment authorized by Congress at the present session and I did not appoint him. This is probably the cause of his grief, and has no doubt led to the attack which I understand he made upon me to-day. I am satisfied I acted properly, and if I incur the hostility or opposition of members of Congress because I do not appoint them to office, I am content to incur it. None but small men would act upon such selfish principles. All I desire is that the public shall understand the true cause of their hostility and their opposition.

I received a letter from the Hon. Governor Kemble [2] to-day informing me that he had understood

[1] Printed in *Globe,* 29 Cong. 1 Sess. *App.* 1018, but incorrectly stated to have been delivered July 1. Tibbatts had spoken in defence of Polk and of the war on May 12 and May 19, 1846, *ibid,* 908.

[2] Probably Gouveneur Kemble, Representative from New York

that the Navy Department was about to remove Mr. Craven, the Naval Store-Keeper at New York, and to appoint a Mr. Pentz [1] in his place. Mr. Kemble expressed the opinion that this change would be almost universally disapproved by my friends, and urged strong objections against it. I sent for Mr. Bancroft, and showed him Mr. Kemble's letter. I expressed in strong terms my objections to the proposed change, and he concluded to suspend it for the present. He had previously ordered it to take place on the 1st of July. I think Mr. Bancroft has made a mistake in this matter. He acted undoubtedly from good motives, but he has been deceived.

TUESDAY, *30th June, 1846.*— This was the Regular day of meeting of the Cabinet. All the members attended except the attorney General, who, it was understood, was detained in consequence of indisposition. The Mexican war became the subject of discussion in the Cabinet. It was brought up by a question propounded by the Secretary of the Navy in regard to the policy of our blockading squadron seizing and holding Tampico. A discussion arose between Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Walker in regard to the objects of the War against Mexico, in the course of which Mr. Buchanan expressed himself in favour of acquiring the Rio Grande as our Western boundary as high up as the Passo in about latitude 32° of North Latitude & thence West to the Pacific.

1837–1841, a prominent member of the group to which Peter Brevoort, J. K. Paulding, and Washington Irving belonged.

[1] Adam P. Pentz of New York.

He expressed himself as being opposed to acquiring any territory by Treaty with Mexico South of 32° of North Latitude. He spoke of the unwillingness of the North to acquire so large a Country that would probably become a slave-holding country if attached to the U. S. Mr. Walker warmly resisted Mr. B.'s views, and insisted that we should if practicable acquire by Treaty, all the country North of a line drawn from the mouth of the Rio Grande in Latitude about 26° West to the Pacific. Mr. Buchanan said it was necessary to know what the objects of the war were, that it might be conducted accordingly; that if it was the object of the President to acquire all the country North of 26°, the line indicated by Mr. Walker, including all of the Department of Tamaulapas, it should be known, and added that if we attempted to acquire all this territory the opinion of the world would be against [us], and especially as it would become a slave-holding country, whereas while it was in possession of Mexico slavery did not exist in it. Mr. Walker remarked that he would be willing to fight the whole world sooner than suffer other Powers to interfere in the matter. I remained silent until the discussion had proceeded to a considerable length, when I spoke, and said in substance that the causes and objects of the war were as I supposed well understood, and that when we came to make peace the terms of the peace would be a subject for consideration. As to the boundary which we should establish by a Treaty of Peace, I remarked that I preferred the 26° to any boundary North of it, but that if it was found that that boundary could

not be obtained I was willing to take 32°, but that in any event we must obtain Upper California and New Mexico in any Treaty of Peace we would make. The other members of the Cabinet expressed no opinions, not being called upon to do so. The discussion between Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Walker was an animated one.

Other matters connected with the Mexican War, as well as other public matters of no general importance were considered, and the Cabinet adjourned.

Mr. [My] Private Secretary returned from the Capitol about 3 O'Clock P. M. and informed me that Mr. Brinkerhoff, a member of the Ho. Repts. from Ohio, had to-day made a speech [1] on the tariff Bill now pending before the House, and had taken occasion to make a violent attack on me, in which he complained that the State of Ohio had not received her share of offices. The selfishness, and I might add the corruption of a few members of Congress, if disclosed, would be incredible to the public. The real cause of Mr. Brinkerhoff's attack consists in the fact that he made application to me a few days ago to appoint him a Paymaster in the army under a law passed at the present Session of Congress, creating three additional Paymasters, and for which Mr. Brinkerhoff had voted, and I had refused to do so (see this diary of the 12th Instant). On yesterday Mr. Tibbatts of Ky., who had applied to me to appoint him Colonel of the mounted Rifle Regiment and been refused, attacked me. To-day Mr. Brinkerhoff, who had applied to be a Paymaster in the

[1] *Globe,* 29 Cong. 1 Sess. *App.* 784.

army and been refused, attacked me. Both these gentlemen were elected as Democrats, but their conduct shows that they think more of their own personal interests than they do of principle. Both of them I understand intend to vote against the modification of the tariff. This intention they never announced until they were disappointed in obtaining offices for themselves. Such conduct ought to be exposed to their constituents and the public. If my measures are to fail because I will not appoint selfish members of Congress to office, the true reasons for their course should be known to the public.

After the Cabinet adjourned Mr. Bancroft & Mr. Marcy remained at my request, and the proposed removal of Mr. Craven, Naval store-keeper at New York, and the appointment of Mr. Pentz in his place, was considered. Mr. Marcy spoke modestly, but distinctly intimated his opinion in opposition to the change. I repeated to Mr. Bancroft the opinions I had expressed to him on yesterday, but said to him that he could do as he pleased, stating to him at the same time that I thought it would be attended with the worst of consequences.

This was the regular reception evening; but in consequence of an unusual[ly] heavy fall of rain about night, no company called. Senator Houston and Mr. Martin of Tenn. were with me during the fall of the rain.

END OF VOL. I.