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THE DIARY OF JAMES K. POLK

DURING HIS PRESIDENCY, 1845 TO 1849

NOW FIRST PRINTED FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT
IN THE COLLECTIONS OF
THE CHICAGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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IN FOUR VOLUMES

VOL. III.

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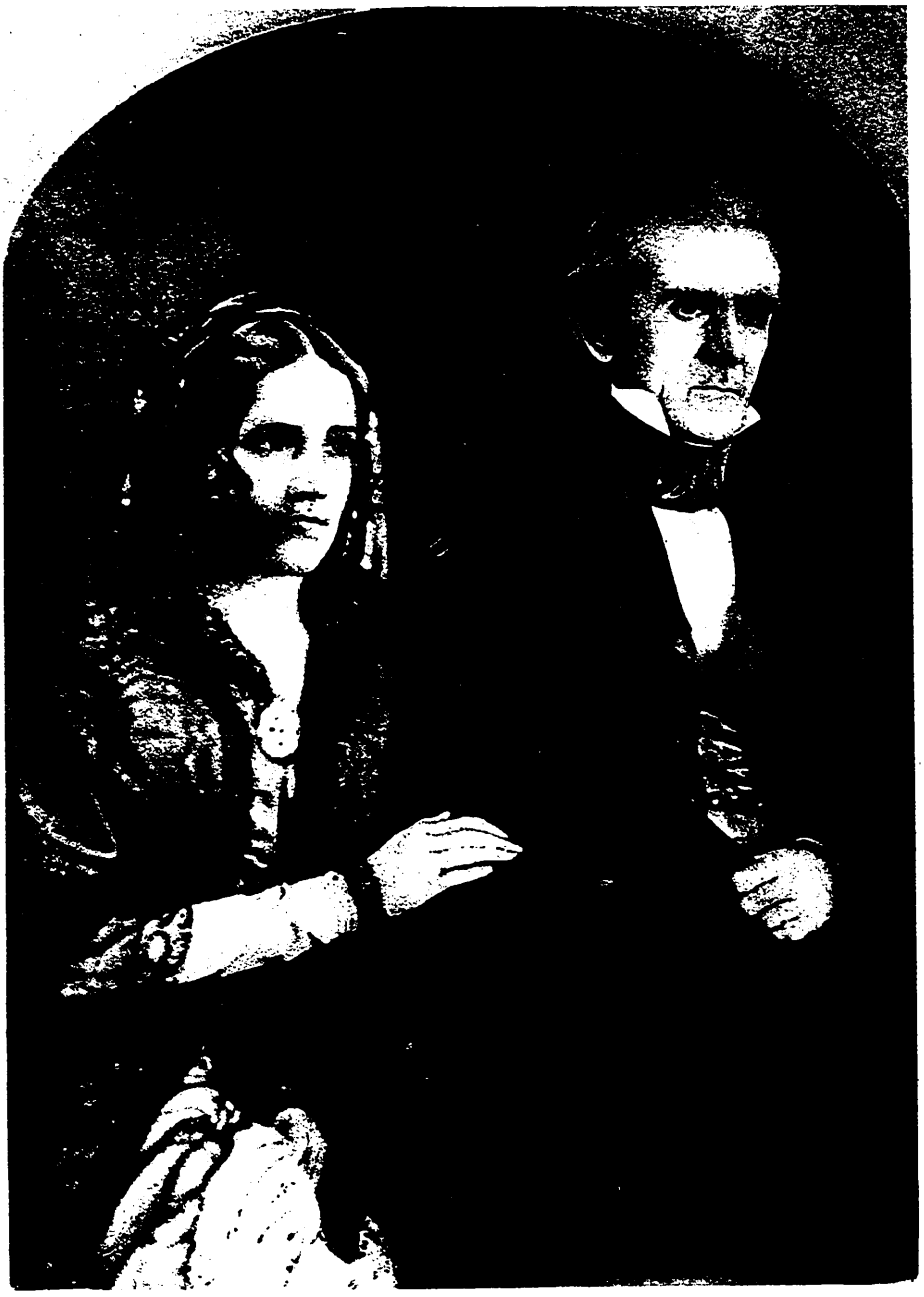


A. C. McCLURG & CO.
CHICAGO
1910

THE DIARY OF JAMES K. POLK

1845—1849

VOL. III.



THE PRESIDENT AND MRS. POLK

From the original daguerreotype made in Washington in 1847 or 1848, being one of the early portraits made by this process. Owned by Mrs. Sarah Polk Fall, of Nashville, Tenn.

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Entered at Stationers' Hall, London, England

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THE DIARY OF JAMES K. POLK

1845—1849

DIARY OF
JAMES K. POLK

III

SATURDAY, *1st May, 1847.*— This was the regular day of the meeting of the Cabinet. The attorney General is absent from the City on a visit to his family in Maine. The Secretary of State & the Secretary of the Treasury sent me messages that they were prevented from attending in consequence of indisposition. The other members of the Cabinet attended at the usual hour. The Vice President of the U. States (Mr. Dallas) called about 11 O'Clock A. M. This being the day appointed for laying the corner stone of the building for the Smithsonian Institution, no business was transacted in the Cabinet. About 12 O'Clock a large procession, consisting of the military, Masons, the order of Odd Fellows, and citizens appeared before my door. Accompanied by the members of my Cabinet who were present, I took the place which had been assigned me in the procession, and moved with it to the site of the building of the Smithsonian Institution on the public mall, south of Pennsylvania Avenue. The Vice President, The Secretary of War, & my Private Secretary took seats in my carriage. Delegations of the Masonic lodges

of Pennsylvania & Maryland were present, as also a large number of the Masonic fraternity & the Odd Fellows of the District of Columbia. The occasion on the ground opened and closed with prayer. The ceremonies of laying the corner-stone of the building were performed chiefly by B. B. French, Esq'r, Grand Master of the Mason fraternity of the D. C. The Vice President, after this ceremony was over, delivered an address to the multitude assembled on the occasion. A large crowd of ladies & gentlemen were present. About 2½ O'Clock P. M. the ceremonies were concluded & I returned to the Presidential Mansion. The Vice President took a Family dinner with me to-day.

About 5 O'Clock P. M. the Masonic fraternity from Philadelphia, headed by Col. James Page, their Grand Master, called to pay their respects. There were between 20 & 30 of them. I received them in the Circular parlour. After spending half an hour in pleasant conversation with me they retired.

I received to-day a short letter from Charles J. Ingersoll of Phila. in answer to mine of the 28th ult. (See letter Book.) In his letter Mr. Ingersoll denies that he sought the French mission from me. In this he states what he knows to be untrue. I affirm that he did solicit the mission in private interviews with me, and that he was importunate on the subject. He sought it also through Vice President Dallas. There was no witness present & Mr. I. has now the baseness to deny it. It is also false, as stated by him, that I got him to give up the Russian Mission & suggested the French mission in its stead.

SUNDAY, *2nd May, 1847.*— I was indisposed this morning from the effects of cold, and much fatigued by the labours of the past week, and remained quietly at home. It was, moreover, a damp uncomfortable day and unusually chilly for this season. Mrs. Polk & her niece, Miss Rucker, attended church. The quiet rest of the sabbath day is always desirable to me, but has seldom been more acceptable than on this day. When Mrs. Polk returned from church she complained of being very cold, and it was manifest she had a chill. In a short time afterwards [a] re-action took place and she had a fever. She had slight symptoms of a chill on friday last, which had not attracted much attention as she had casually mentioned it, but had not complained of much indisposition in consequence of it.

MONDAY, *3rd May, 1847.*— I entered my office this morning somewhat indisposed, and entered upon the laborious duties of another week. Before noting any of the events of this day, I deem it proper to place more distinctly upon this record than I have heretofore done the conduct & course of Charles J. Ingersoll of Phila., in reference to his application to me to be appointed Minister to France. This becomes necessary in consequence of his extraordinary letter to me of the 25th of March last, and his reply to mine of the 28th ultimo (see my file of letters and my letter Book). I do this also because I am now satisfied that any confidence I have heretofore placed in Mr. Ingersoll was undeserved, and because others who may come after me may have occasion to refer

to the facts, as they are known to me to exist. Early after my election as President, Mr. Ingersoll's desire to go abroad in the character of Envoy to some one of the Principal courts of Europe was made known to me. Indeed before I left Tennessee I received a letter from him from which his wishes in this respect might have been inferred. During the first Session of Congress under my administration his wishes were made known to me by Mr. Dallas and others. He professed great friendship for my administration and often visited me. In the early part of that Session (I cannot call to mind the precise date) I cannot be mistaken in the fact that he made known to me his wishes in a personal conversation. He desired the French mission. Mr. King was then the U. S. Envoy at Paris, though it was said he intended shortly to return. I gave Mr. Ingersoll no encouragement to hope for that mission. He continued his visits to me at short intervals, & professed great zeal in the support of my administration. Finally, the Russian Mission being vacant by the recall of Mr. Todd, I concluded to let him have it, and informed him that I would nominate him to the Senate near the close of that Session of the Senate. He repeated his preference for the French mission, but I told him distinctly that I could not give it to him. Subsequently he joined me in one of my evening walks (see this diary of July 9th, 1846) and personally again importuned me for the French mission. That upon these as well as other occasions, which I did not deem it necessary to note in this diary not dreaming that it would ever be of any im-

portance, he solicited the French mission is most certain. After I had promised him the Russian mission, he had his quarrel with Mr. Webster, upon which it is unnecessary that I should remark, further than to say that he got the worse of that affair. On the 3rd of August, 1846, Mr. Ingersoll called (see this diary of that day) to know when I would nominate him to the Senate for the Russian mission, & I informed him that I proposed to do so on the friday or saturday following, and mentioned to him the danger of his rejection by the Senate. On saturday morning, the 8th of August, 1846, Mr. Ingersoll called and requested me *not to nominate him to the Senate as Minister to Russia.* In my diary of that day I had no time to state his reasons for that request (see Diary of that day). These reasons I distinctly remember. They were the belief on his part that if nominated he would be rejected by the Senate. In this I fully concurred with him. I founded my belief on information received from members of the Cabinet, and from conversations which I had held a day or two previously with Senator Cameron & Senator Benton, with both of whom, as they informed me, Mr. Ingersoll had conversed & had requested them to ascertain whether, if nominated, he would be rejected. I became satisfied from the conversation I had with these Senators that he would be rejected. Their information as communicated to me I gave to Mr. Ingersoll. He was himself satisfied that if nominated he would be rejected, and for this reason he requested that his name should not be sent to the Senate. Believing him, at that time, to

be an honourable man, I felt a sympathy for him, and when he rose to leave my office, I remarked to him that I appreciated his situation, and said to him that it might yet be in my power during my administration to gratify his wishes to go abroad. From this general remark (for I know of nothing else) he must have assumed that I had promised to give him the French Mission. Congress at that Session adjourned on the 10th day of August, 1846. On the 19th of August following, I left Washington on a short excursion to Old Point Comfort. In my absence a letter was addressed to me by Mr. Ingersoll, which he subsequently requested should be returned to him through Mr. Buchanan, and which was returned to him, but which I now regret I did not retain (see letter Book containing my note to Mr. Buchanan of October 23rd, 1846). The substance of this letter was to know whether I intended to appoint him Minister to France. This fact he wished to ascertain before the 27th of August, the day on which he stated the delegates of his Congressional District were to assemble to nominate a candidate for Congress. He wished the information because, if it was my intention to send him to France, he would not be a candidate before the convention for the nomination. He took offense that I did not answer this letter, and through Mr. Buchanan requested leave to withdraw it. I accordingly enclosed it to Mr. Buchanan in my note of the 23rd of October. I now from subsequent developments see that it was important that I should have retained that letter, for if I had it it would have contra-

dicted a palpable untruth which Mr. Ingersoll in his recent correspondence with me unblushingly affirms, *viz.*, that he had never personally solicited the French mission from me. I heard nothing more on the subject from Mr. Ingersoll until after the next Session of Congress convened. He then repeated his visits to me, & professed great zeal in supporting my administration, and expressed himself in the most obsequious manner as being desirous to be personally useful to me in Congress. On the 23d of December, 1846 (see this Diary of that day) Mr. Ingersoll most importunately and indelicately again introduced the subject of the French mission & personally solicited it from me. His conduct on the occasion was so indelicate & annoying to me that I made a note of it in this Diary at the time. I gave him no encouragement, for the truth is I had not then made up my mind to appoint him. His visits continued to be frequent, and upon another occasion (after night) he again introduced the subject, and being annoyed at it I promptly replied to him that I preferred not to converse with him on the subject, & remarked that I did not know what I could do on the subject, but would determine before the end of the session.

A few days before the close of the Session I made up my mind to nominate Mr. Ingersoll to the Senate as minister to France, and thus gratify his most ardent wishes as repeatedly expressed to me. I sent for him & informed him that I had made up my mind to do so. He expressed his deep gratitude to me for it. I conversed with him on the subject of

Mr. Webster's probable opposition to him, & the danger of his rejection. He expressed apprehensions of opposition from Mr. Webster, but still thought he could be confirmed by a majority of the Senate. I sent in his nomination to the Senate, and on the last night of the Session and within its last hour he was rejected. I then nominated Mr. Richard Rush for the mission & he was confirmed. Mr. Ingersoll called at my office on the 4th of March (the day after the adjournment of Congress) and I expressed to him my regret at his rejection, and he gave no intimation of any dissatisfaction with me, for he had no cause to do so: (see also this diary of the 3rd of March, 1847). Mr. Richard Rush called to see me a few days after the adjournment of Congress, to pay his respects to me & thanked me for his appointment as Minister to France, which had been unexpected to him. He expressed his regret at Mr. Ingersoll's rejection; and informed me that Mr. Ingersoll immediately after the adjournment of Congress, had actually prepared a challenge to Mr. Webster to fight a duel, charging as he did his rejection by the Senate to Mr. Webster. Mr. Rush informed me that he had advised him strongly against it & had induced him to abandon it. Up to this time, & until I received Mr. Ingersoll's most wanton & extraordinary letter of the 25th of March, I had no conception that he was dissatisfied with me. On the 7th of April, 1847, and after I had received that letter, but before I had answered it, Mr. Ingersoll to my great surprise called at my office. For my interview with him see this diary of that day.

To Mr. Ingersoll's letter of the 30th of April in answer to mine of the 28th April I shall make no reply. In his letter of the 25th of March he states several palpable untruths, among which is his denial that he had solicited the French mission from me, and his statement that I had denounced the Senate as a faction. After all that has transpired I am compelled to regard him as a base & unprincipled man.

The Attorney Gen'l, Mr. Clifford, called this morning, having returned from his visit to his residence in Maine, as he informed me, on yesterday. I transacted official business with the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Navy to-day. I opened my doors for the reception of company at 1 o'clock P. M. to-day. A number of persons called, generally seeking office. I was so much indisposed to-day that I disposed of but little of the business on my table.

TUESDAY, *4th May, 1847.*— I rose this morning as usual about 6 O'Clock, and while I was shaving in my chamber (for I am my own barbour) Mrs. Polk, who had not arisen, asked me if it was a cool morning and complained of being very cold. I answered her that I thought it was more chilly than usual. I soon discovered that she had a chill, and threw more covering on the bed. Her chill continued for more than three hours. I have never seen her suffer or complain more than she did for several hours after the chill subsided and her fever rose. My family physician (Dr. Miller) I learned was absent from the City, and I sent for Dr. Hall, who

is one of the most eminent physicians of the City. He prescribed for her. She spent a restless & uncomfortable afternoon & night though her medicine had its desired effect.

The Cabinet met at the usual hour, all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury, who was detained by indisposition. I have observed that he has been sinking for several weeks past under the immense labours of his Department. He has not been able to speak above a whisper for the last month, and there is danger that he may lose his voice entirely, and that his general health may be destroyed and his life endangered, if he continues to apply himself as he has heretofore done to the very laborious duties of his office.

The Secretary of War presented and read in Cabinet the official despatches [1] from Col. Donophan of the Missouri Volunteers, giving an account of the battles he and his brave forces had fought at the Passo & at Sacramento, in which, in the latter especially, he had obtained decisive victories over vastly superior forces of the enemy. The battle of Sacramento I consider to be one of the most decisive and brilliant achievements of the War. The despatches of Gen'l Kearney and Commodore Stockton giving an account of events which had occurred in California were considered. The despatches of Commodore Stockton had been brought to the Navy Department by Lieut. Gray of the Navy some days ago, and those of Gen'l Kearney to the War Department by Lieut. (now Major) Emery, a day or two

[1] *S. Ex. Doc.* 1, 30 Cong. 1 Sess. 497–502.

ago. It appears that an unfortunate collision had occurred between Com. Stockton and Gen'l Kearney. Upon a full examination of the whole of the correspondence of both, I was fully satisfied that Gen'l Kearney was right, and that Com. Stockton's course was wrong. Indeed both he and Lie[u]t. Col. Fremont, in refusing to recognize the authority of Gen'l Kearney, acted insubordinately and in a manner that is censurable. A reference to the official Documents will show this. I expressed a decided opinion on the subject to the Cabinet. All the Cabinet agreed that Gen'l Kearney [Commodore Stockton] & Lie[u]t. Col. Fremont had been in the wrong, but all agreed as I did that they were both gallant & meritorious officers, and all regretted the occurrence. None of the Cabinet censured Gen'l Kearney. The two former have subjected themselves to arrest & trial by a Court Martial, but as all collision has probably been since that time avoided, I am disposed not to pursue so rigorous a course. The Secretary of War thought in answering Gen'l Kearney's despatches he ought to express the approbation of the Government of his course. The Secretary of the Navy thought this inadvisable, because this would be to pass a censure on Com. Stockton; and he desired that no opinion should be expressed and that the matter should be passed over as lightly as possible. Such seemed to be the inclination of the Cabinet, and was my own, as far as it could be done with propriety. The subject was postponed for further consideration.

Some other matters relating to our Foreign affairs

were presented by Mr. Buchanan & considered. The Cabinet retired about 3 O'Clock.

This being reception evening I met the company who called in the parlour. An unusual number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, attended. Mrs. Polk was unable to be present.

WEDNESDAY, *5th May, 1847*.— This morning Mr. McCulloch, the 1st Comptroller of the Treasury, called to see me in relation to the critical state of health of Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury. He informed me that he had been present in Baltimore a few days ago when Mr. Walker had consulted Dr. Butler, an eminent physician of that City, and that he had learned from Dr. Butler that unless Mr. Walker abstained from the labours of his office & took some recreation, at the same time submitting to medical treatment, he considered his case not only a critical one, but that his life was in danger. I concur in this opinion and said to Mr. Walker some weeks ago that he ought to leave his office & take an excursion into the country. He is now, I learn, confined to his house. I have serious apprehensions that his health has given way, and that he may be unwilling [unable] to perform the duties of his office. This I should deeply regret for he is a very able & indefatigable man.

Mr. Richard Rush, who is in Washington preparatory to his departure as minister to France, called today. I communicated to him the extraordinary course of Mr. Charles J. Ingersoll in reference to the French mission. I read to him Mr. Ingersoll's

letter to me of the 25th of March last, & my answer of the 28th of April (see this diary of the 3rd Instant). Mr. Rush expressed his strong disapprobation of Mr. Ingersoll's course and was much astonished at it. Indeed he expressed the opinion that he must have been partially deranged to have written such a letter as he had addressed to me.

Mrs. Polk was much better to-day. She was visited by Dr. Hall and was still under treatment according to his prescription. I transacted official business with the Secretaries of War & the Navy to-day. I attended also to some of the business on my table.

I opened my office at 1 O'Clock P. M. to-day. A number of persons called and among others Mr. Jones (Gen'l Benton's son-in-law) who informed me that it was rumoured in the New Orleans papers, that the Post Master of that City was to be removed, and that he was to be appointed. He said he did not ask for the removal of the P. M. at New Orleans, but if he was to be removed the place would be agreeable to him. I promptly replied that there was no foundation for the rumour & that I had no intention to remove the P. M. at New Orleans, that he was a faithful officer and I knew of no reason to disturb him in his office. He then repeated the request which he had previously made to me, to be appointed Chargé d' affaires abroad, and wished to know if I could give him any encouragement. I told him, as I had previously done, that I could not. I note the case of Mr. Jones particularly among the numerous office-seekers who annoy me daily, because

I predict that he will violently oppose my administration because of his disappointment. Some weeks ago Gen'l Benton applied to me in person for the appointment of Chargé for Mr. Jones, then just married to his daughter. I gave him no encouragement, and I predict that he too will be excited at my refusal. Indeed almost the whole of my embarrassment in administering the Government grows out [of] the public patronage, which it is my duty to dispense.

THURSDAY, *6th May, 1847*.— I transacted business with several of the public officers to-day. Among others the Secretary of War called on business. He read to me a draft of a letter which he had prepared to Gen'l Taylor in reference to his future operations in the enemy's country. I suggested some alterations, one of which was that Gen'l Taylor, being second in command in the field, should be subject to the orders and directions of Gen'l Scott, who is first in command. It is true the respective columns of these generals are operating several hundred miles apart, but still it would produce infinite confusion if both were not under the orders of the Gen'l in chief in the field. The Secretary of War then suggested that if any accident should happen to Gen'l Scott in conducting the operations of the main army from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico, that Gen'l Taylor should be directed to take command of it in his place. The reason assigned for this was that it might not be advisable to place so large a body of troops under the orders of Maj'r

General Patterson, who was second in command in Gen'l Scott's column. To this I objected, and told the Secretary that I had quite as much confidence in Maj'r Gen'l Patterson with the aid of Gen'ls Twiggs, Worth, Pillow, Quitman, & Shields as I had in Gen'l Taylor & indeed much more. Gen'l Taylor is a good fighter, but I do not consider him a great General. I feel perfectly safe with the commanders who are with Gen'l Scott, if any accident should happen to him, and prefer that Gen'l Taylor should remain on his present line of operations. Mrs. Polk had another violent chill this morning & was quite sick all day to-day.

FRIDAY, *7th May, 1847.*— I saw the Secretary of the Navy and the attorney General on business this morning. After the business was transacted I remarked to them that, having a trust fund for a small amount in my hands, I had early in March authorized Mr. Wm. W. Corcoran, of the firm of Corcoran & Riggs, brokers in this City, to purchase for me from the holders the amt. of $3,000 in U. S. Stock; and that on the next day they transferred to me on the Books of the Treasury stock for this amt. and the certificates of stock were sent to me accordingly], and that I paid them a premium of one percent or $3,030, for the same. I stated to them that the stocks stood in my individual name & not as Trustee, though it was intended as an investment for my ward, Marshall T. Polk, & for the heirs and devisees of my brother, Samuel W. Polk deceased, for whose estate I am Executor. I remarked to

them that though I did not doubt my legal right to make such an investment in my individual name, that yet, in view of my official position, I had come to the conclusion to relinquish it to Mr. Corcoran & Riggs by re-transferring the Stock to them. The Attorney Gen'l said he had been investigating the question whether the clerks & other officers of the Treasury Department had the legal right to make such investments, and that in this way his attention had been called to the subject. He expressed a clear opinion that there was no legal impediment or restriction which would prevent the President from making such an investment if he chose to do so. Judge Mason was of the same opinion; but both concurred with me in thinking that it might be as well for me to dispose of it, & thus prevent illiberal political opponents from attempting, as they possibly might [seek] to do, to make political capital out of the fact that the President of the U. S. had become the owner of public stocks. I then [sent] for Mr. Corcoran, and in the presence of Judge Mason stated to him the reasons why I desired him to take back the $3,000 of stock which he had sold to me in March. He said he would do so if I desired it. He said I had paid him a premium of one per cent., and that the stock now commanded a premium of between four & five per-cent. I told him that I wished to make no speculation or profit by the transaction and that I would not accept the increased premium or any interest which had accrued on the stock during the time I had held it; that all I wanted was simply

to rescind the contract by retransferring the stock back to him, and to receive the precise sum which I had paid him for it. He said very well, but added that he would make a donation of the increased premium & the interest to the Orphan Asylum of Washington. I told him he could, of course, do with it what he pleased. At my table I addressed a note to Mr. Corcoran, to the effect of the foregoing statement (see my letter Book). I then transferred to Corcoran & Riggs the certificates of Stock, which transfer was witnessed by Mr. Gillet, the Register of the Treasury, in the presence of Judge Mason. After this transaction was over, and about 1 O'Clock, I opened my doors for the reception of Visitors. Several persons called, and while they were in my office I received a Telegraphic despatch from Fredericksburg, Va., in advance of the Southern mail, announcing a victory achieved by our army in Mexico under the immediate command of Maj'r Gen'l Scott. The battle was fought at the mountain pass called Cerro Gordo, between Vera Cruz & Jalappa, on the 17th & 18th of April, and resulted in the triumph of our arms and the total route [rout] of the enemy. I communicated to the persons who were present the information which I had received. The Southern mail in the evening confirmed the news, but brought no despatches from the army.

This was reception evening. A number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called. Mrs. Polk was still quite indisposed & did not receive the company. I was in the parlour.

SATURDAY, *8th May, 1847.*— The Cabinet met at the usual hour to-day, all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury, who is, I understood, quite unwell, having almost entirely lost his voice. Mr. Buchanan complained of being indisposed and remained but a short time. Several matters, principally of details connected with the public business, were considered and disposed of. The Cabinet adjourned about 2 O'Clock P. M. I requested Judge Mason to walk with me to the House of Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, as I was becoming concerned for the state of his health from what I learned of his condition. We walked to Mr. Walker's house. I found him in appearance enjoying usual health except that his throat was bandaged and he had almost entirely lost his voice. He conversed with me by writing on a slate. In a very low & indistinct whisper he attempted to converse with me, but was compelled to give it up. I told him that he required rest & recreation, & advised him to leave his office & travel for a few weeks, saying to him that his Department could be conducted in his absence by Mr. Young, his chief clerk. He replied in writing on his slate, that he thought he would do so. My opinion is that he will live but a short time, unless he relaxes his labours in his office.

On our return Judge Mason & myself called at the office of Gov. Marcy, the Secretary of War.

This evening had been designated by the citizens of Washington for the illumination of the City, in honour of the triumph of our arms by land and sea

in the pending war with Mexico. I learned that some of the officers of some of the public Departments were preparing to illuminate. Some of these buildings, and especially those of the War, Navy, and State Departments, are not fireproof, are very combustible, & contain the most valuable public records of the Government. I thought there was danger from fire to have them illuminated, and after consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury, when I visited him, and afterwards with the Secretaries of War & the Navy, who concurred with me that it might be unsafe, I gave directions that none of the public offices should be illuminated. I illuminated the Presidential Mansion, & each of the Heads of Departments illuminated their respective residences. Many houses in the City were also illuminated. Official despatches giving an account of the battle of Cerro Gordo were received from Gen'l Scott to-night. Mrs. Polk fortunately missed her chill this morning & was better to-day.

SUNDAY, *9th May, 1847.*— Mrs. Polk has been closely confined to her chamber for several days past but [by] a violent attack of intermittent fever. She is much better to-day. I attended the first Presbyterian church to-day and was accompanied by my niece, Miss Rucker.

MONDAY, *10th May, 1847.*— I sent for the Secretary of War this morning & conferred with him in relation to the military operations in Mex-

ico. He retired, and returned about 1 O'Clock and read to me a despatch which he had prepared to Gen'l Kearney, commanding in California. I sent also for the Adjutant General of the army and gave him an order correcting a mistake or omission he had made in organizing the 10 regiments, authorized to be raised by the act of the last Session [of] Congress, into Brigades & Divisions. He returned to his office & prepared a despatch to Gen'l Scott, and returned & read it to me. I expressed my opinion also that Gen'l Scott's column of the invading army should be re-inforced as speedily as possible by sending to him the new recruits & volunteers as fast as they were ready to move. This seemed to me to be proper if not indispensible, for the reason that Scott's is the advancing column, with an enemy in front, & Taylor's is to be, for a time at least, stationary. Both the Secretary of War & the Adjutant Gen'l, to whom I made the suggestion, concurred with me in this opinion. They are to look into the subject and see me in a day or two. I saw the Secretary of the Navy & the Atto. Gen'l on business to-day. At 1½ O'Clock I opened my office. A number of persons called, chiefly office seekers.

Senator Yulee called to see me to-day. He read to me a part of a letter from the Hon. Charles A. Wickliffe of Kentucky, suggesting that possibly he might be a candidate for Congress from his District. Mr. Yulee, I thought, seemed to be desirous to ascertain whether it would be agreeable to me to see Mr. Wickliffe in the next Congress. I told him it would be so.

TUESDAY, *11th May, 1847.*— The Cabinet met at the usual hour to-day, all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury, who is still confined to his house by indisposition. Some matters of minor interest, introduced by members of the Cabinet, were the subject of conversation, when I brought to the notice of the Cabinet, and particularly of the Secretary of War, the importance of re-inforcing the column of the army under the immediate command of Gen'l Scott, now on the march from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico. I had brought the same matter to the notice of the Secretary of War some days ago; and also to the adj't Gen'l of the army, and on the 8th Instant handed to the latter a written memorandum, the object of which was to ascertain from the records of the War Department the precise amount of force in Gen'l Scott's column, and also in Gen'l Taylor's column. As Gen'l Scott's is the advancing column & must be constantly diminished as it advances into the enemy's country from causalties and in order to keep his rear open, and as Gen'l Taylor in one of his late despatches gives it as his opinion that he cannot advance with his column beyond his present position without at least 2,000 veteran troops of the regular [army], which amt. of force cannot be spared to him by Gen'l Scott, I informed the Cabinet that I was of opinion that all our available force should be ordered without delay to join Gen'l Scott's column, leaving with Gen'l Taylor all his present force, and such additions as would [render] his present position secure. The Cabinet concurred with me in these views. I requested the

Secretary of War to call on to-morrow, and bring the Adj't Gen'l with him, who could give in detail the actual position of each detachment of our forces now in the field, as well [as] of those which have been recently called out & are expected shortly to be en route for the Seat of War. I impressed upon the Secretary of War the importance of immediate action on the subject. Mr. Moses Y. Beech, Editor of the N. York *Sun,* called and had a long conversation with me on Mexican affairs. He had recently returned from the City of Mexico, where he had gone several months ago in the character of a secret agent from the State Department. He gave me valuable information.

This was reception evening. But a few persons called. I met them in the parlour. Mrs. Polk was too feeble from her late indisposition to be present.

WEDNESDAY, *12th May, 1847.*— I was in my office at the usual hour this morning. Several persons called on special business, or such persons as I could not well refuse to see before 1 O'Clock, which is the hour at which I usually open my office for the reception of visitors. Between the hours of 12 and 1 O'Clock the Secretary of War & the adj't Gen'l of the army called in pursuance of a previous appointment. The adj't Gen'l reported the forces and their distribution now in the field in Mexico, and also those which are either en route to the seat of War, or are expected shortly to be so. This I had required with a view to ascertain whether Gen'l Scott's column, now advancing on the City of Mex-

ico, could be re-inforced without too much weakening Gen'l Taylor's column. (See this Diary of yesterday and the day before.) Some additional forces were ordered to Vera Cruz to join Gen'l Scott's column. A Detachment of Marines which can be spared from the Navy, as I am informed by the Secretary of the Navy, I will also order to join the land forces at Vera Cruz. I held a conference also with the Secretary of War & the adj't Gen'l in relation to retaining in service the Staff-officers of the Volunteers now in service, in proportion to the number of Volunteers called out to serve during the war. They were both disinclined to retain them. I thought the act of June 18th, 1846, under which they were appointed, was clear on the subject, and expressed my opinion that they should be retained. The Secretary of War did not doubt that I had the power to retain [them] and thought it was a question of expediency simply. I disposed of much of the business on my table to-day. The office-seekers were no doubt disappointed for I did not open my doors to give them audience to-day.

THURSDAY, *13th May, 1847.*— The Secretary of the Navy called early to-day, and introduced some Naval officers to me. He also brought with him Gen'l Henderson[1] of the Marine Corps. Gen'l Henderson stated that 6 companies of marines could be spared from the navy for the land service. I gave a written order to the Secretary of the Navy to trans-

[1] Archibald Henderson, Brevet Brigadier General 1837, died 1859.

fer them to the land forces under the immediate command of Gen'l Scott. I requested Gen'l Henderson to execute the order without delay, as I deemed it important that Gen'l Scott's column should be re-inforced by all our available forces with as little delay as practicable. The Secretary of War called and I had a conference with him in relation to various matters of detail relating to the war & its prosecution. Indeed I find it indispensible to give my attention to these details. The Secretary of War is greatly oppressed with the duties of his office, and some of his subordinates, I fear, are indifferent and are fully satisfied if they go through the ordinary routine of their offices, and seem to think that they have earned their salaries & done their duties if they appear in their offices the usual number of hours each day. They do not conceive that any responsibility rests upon them. On this account I aid the Secretary of War in giving all the attention to details that my time will permit.

Among other visitors who called to-day were the Hon. Mr. Farran,[1] a member of Congress from Cincinnatti, Ohio, and Judge Greer of the Supreme Court of the U. S. A number of visitors called between 1 & 2 O'Clock to-day. They were chiefly office seekers. The herd of such people annoy me exceedingly, especially when my whole mind is devoted to the conduct of the War and the other great interests of the country. I give them but little comfort, and indeed am compelled to be almost rude to

[1] James J. Farran, Representative from Ohio 1845–1849, one of the proprietors of the Cincinnati *Enquirer*.

them to prevent them from occupying too much of my time. The Attorney General and the Secretary of State called on business to-day. I omitted to note in this Diary of yesterday that Mrs. Storms of New York, who accompanied Moses Y. Beech, who was a secret agent of the Government, on his recent visit to the City of Mexico, called to-day. She occupied my time on yesterday an hour in giving a detail of her visit. She is an intelligent woman, but I confess when she retired I did not feel that I was enlightened by any information which she had given me.

Unofficial news was received from the army to-day. The advance column of Gen'l Scott's command had taken possession of Jalappa & Perote without resistance.

FRIDAY, *14th May, 1847.*— Before I rose from breakfast this morning my porter announced to me that 40 or 50 persons, male and female, had called in a body to see me. I directed him to show them into the parlour. On meeting them I learned from them that they were members of a Baptist Association now sitting in Washington. They were from several States of the Union, and belonged to the Old Baptists or the old side-Baptists [1] as they are sometimes

[1] The "Old Side" or "Old School" Baptists belonged to a faction originating in the latter half of the eighteenth century which was opposed to missionary societies, Sunday Schools, and similar institutions. They were also called "Anti-mission" and "Anti-effort" Baptists. In 1844 the faction numbered 61,000 communicants, confined to the Southern and Southwestern States; since then the membership has decreased.

called. I received them courteously. They had the appearance of plain but honest people. I spent some time with them and left them, directing my steward to shew them the House, as they expressed a desire to see it.

I transacted business to-day with several of the Heads of Departments and officers of Government, but spent more time with the Secretary of War than with any other. The conduct of the War with Mexico devolves upon him and myself a vast amount of labour. The Subordinate officers at the Head of the different bureau[s] in the War Department are generally Federalists, and many of them are indifferent and seem to think they perform their duty if they are in their offices the usual number of hours each day. They take no sort of responsibility on themselves, and this renders it necessary that the Secretary of War & myself should look after them, even in the performance of the ordinary routine of details in their offices. I opened my office at 1 O'Clock P. M. to-day. A number of persons called, ladies & gentlemen, some on visits of ceremony and others seeking office. This was reception evening. The parlour was pretty well filled with ladies & gentlemen who called. Mrs. Polk had so far recovered from her indisposition as to be in the parlour this evening.

SATURDAY, *15th May, 1847.*—The Cabinet met at the usual hour to-day, all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury, who is still confined to his house by indisposition. His general

health does not appear to be seriously impaired. His throat and organs of speech are so much affected that he has almost entirely lost his voice. Mr. Buchanan brought up several subjects relating to our foreign relations, which were considered and disposed of. They were not of such interest as to make it necessary to note them particularly. Several subjects also relating to the War & the manner of conducting it were considered. The conference was chiefly between the Secretary of War and myself.

Col. Bankhead [1] of the army arrived in Washington from Vera Cruz on yesterday, bringing with him several flags of the enemy which were captured at the surrender of Vera Cruz. They were exhibited to-day in front of the War Office, for the gratification of the public. Col. Bankhead called and paid his respects to me on his arrival in the City on yesterday. He was in the siege at Vera Cruz. I disposed of several matters of business of minor importance on my table to-day.

SUNDAY, *16th May, 1847.*— Having been invited several days ago by Mr. Towles and some of the members of the Association of Old-School-Baptists, now sitting in this City, to attend their meeting to-day, I did so. The service was performed at Shiloh meeting-house in this City, on what is called the Island near the Mall & between the President's House and Greenleaf's Point. It was an humble

[1] James Bankhead of Virginia, Colonel of the 2nd Artillery; brevetted Brigadier General for gallant conduct at the siege of Vera Cruz.

frame meeting House. Col. Walker, my Private Secretary, accompanied me. We arrived about 11 O'Clock & found the Rev. Mr. Barton preaching. After he was done the Rev. Mr. Beecher[?] preached a sermon. The latter enforced the doctrine of predestination more strongly than I had heard it for many years, and perhaps in my life. Service was concluded at 1½ O'Clock P. M. & was to be resumed at 2 O'Clock. I did not attend the afternoon service. In consequence of her late indisposition Mrs. Polk deemed it imprudent to attend church to-day.

MONDAY, *17th May, 1847.*— I was engaged this forenoon in disposing of the business on my table. I saw the Secretary of War and the Navy on business connected with their respective Departments. I have desired very much to gratify the wishes of Gen'l Robert Armstrong, now U. S. consul at Liverpool, to enter the military service of the U. S. Gen'l Armstrong was a gallant young officer in the war of 1812, was under the immediate command of Gen'l Jackson, & was severely wounded (see my letters to Gen'l A. of the 28th & 29th ultimo, and 13th Instant). Gen'l Jackson shortly before his death presented to Gen'l Armstrong the sword which he had worn during the war, as an evidence of his high estimate of him as a military man. Gen'l Armstrong is my personal friend and it would have given me sincere pleasure to have appointed him a Brigadier Gen'l if I could have done so with propriety. When I wrote to him on the 28th ultimo, I thought

I could have done [so]. Since that time, however, I have become satisfied that the public opinion of the country is so strong in favour of Col. Jefferson Davis of Mississippi, who behaved most gallantly[1] in the battles of Monterey and Buena Vista and was severely wounded in the latter battle, that to appoint any other, and especially one who had not been heretofore engaged in the war, however competent and worthy he might be, would give great dissatisfaction. To-day I appointed Col. Davis a Brigadier General, in place of Gideon J. Pillow promoted to be a Maj'r Gen'l. I received company at 1 O'Clock P. M. to-day. A number of persons called. Most of them as usual were office-seekers. Senator Dix called to-night. His family have remained in Washington since the adjournment of Congress. He informed me that he would leave in a day or two.

TUESDAY, *18th May, 1847.*—The Cabinet met at the usual hour to-day, all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury, who is still confined to his house by indisposition. His general health does not seem to be materially affected. He has almost lost his voice from an affection of the throat.

Official despatches from Gen'l Scott received last night, giving a detailed account of the battle of Cerro Gordo and the movements of the army since that

[1] At Monterey Colonel Davis charged Fort Leneria without bayonets, and then led his command through the streets of the city in the face of determined opposition almost to the Grand Plaza. At Buena Vista also his service was brilliant.

time, were read. They were very interesting in the minute details which they gave. Several subjects of minor importance were considered & disposed of. I disposed of much business on my table to-day.

This being reception evening an unusually large number of strangers called. Among them were twenty or more Presbyterian Clergymen from various states, who were on their way to the general assembly of their church, to be held in Richmond in a few days.

WEDNESDAY, *19th May, 1847.*— The Secretary of War called in pursuance of a previous appointment about 10 O'Clock this morning, and remained until near 1 O'Clock P. M. I was considering in consultation with him many matters, chiefly of detail relating to the military service in Mexico. Among these was the arrangement of the staff officers of the Volunteer forces, upon the expiration of the term of the 12 months men. A decision was necessary as to the members of the Staff, who should be discharged & who should be retained at that time. Several vacancies of officers of the army which had occurred, it was necessary to fill. I had repeatedly for several days past called on the Secretary of War for a list of these vacancies. He informed me that he had several times called on the adj't Gen'l for the list, but that it had not been furnished. When a vacancy occurs in the regular army, it is filled usually by regular promotion, down to the grade of 2nd Lieutenancies, and these are usually filled by the

appointment of brevet 2nd Lieutenants who are graduates of West Point, though there is no law requiring this to be done. I had determined to appoint a few private soldiers, who had greatly distinguished themselves in battle. To this the adj't Gen'l & the officers of the army are generally opposed, and this I suspected was the reason that the adj't Gen'l had failed to report a list of vacancies as he had been requested to do. With the assent of the Secretary of War I sent for him & requested him to furnish me with the list. He was disposed to debate the matter with me, and to urge the claims of the graduates at West Point. He promised, however, to furnish the list. He retired & returned in about an hour, but did not bring the list. He resumed his argument in favour of the graduates at West Point. I became vexed at his hesitancy in furnishing me with the information which I had required. His presumption in with-holding the information which I had requested from me, and in attempting to control my action, vexed me, & finally I spoke shortly to him. Among other things I remarked that as I was constituted by the Constitution commander in chief of the Army, I chose to *order* him to furnish the list of vacancies from the records of his office which I had desired. I repeated to him that he must regard what I said as a military order & that I would expect it to be promptly obeyed. I cannot be mistaken in his object. It was to keep open the vacancies which have occurred until the next class at West Point shall graduate, that they might be filled by

them. My policy is to appoint meritorious private soldiers when they are competent & have distinguished themselves.

THURSDAY, *20th May, 1847.*— Having some weeks ago yielded to the request of the Dialectic Society of the University of N. Carolina to sit for my portrait, which they wished to obtain for their debating Hall, Mr. Sully,[1] the celebrated artist of Phila., whom the society had engaged to paint [it], called this morning, and commenced the portrait. I gave him a sitting of 1½ hours. Judge Mason, the Secretary of the Navy, also gave him a sitting for his portrait, which he was taking for the Philanthropic Society of the University of N. Carolina. We both sit in the red parlour above stairs in the President's House. Judge Mason was a member of the Philanthropic, and I was a member of the Dialectic Society when we were at College. The Adj't Gen'l called to-day and made to me the report of vacancies in the army, which I had given him an order to make on yesterday (see Diary of yesterday). The vacancies were 27 in number. This information I have sought for days, but was not able to obtain it until I took the decided stand I did with the adj't Gen'l on yesterday. I will now carry out my intention & appoint to 2nd Lieutancies such meritorous privates in the army as have distinguished

[1] Thomas Sully, 1783–1872; he resided at Richmond until 1809 and at Philadelphia from this time until his death. Among his works are "Washington Crossing the Delaware," and a portrait of Queen Victoria.

themselves. This is not only just to the gallant privates who have distinguished themselves, but is sound public policy. At 1 O'Clock P. M. I received company. A number of persons called. After they retired I disposed of much business on my table.

FRIDAY, *21st May, 1847.*— I gave Mr. Sully, the artist, another sitting of two hours this morning. He is painting my portrait for the Dialectic Society of the University of N. Carolina. After I had sat for him I transacted public business with several of the Heads of Department, and other subordinate public officers who called. At 1 O'Clock P. M. I saw company. Several persons called. I disposed of several matters of business on my table in the after part of the day. About 6 O'Clock P. M. I took a ride on horse back, accompanied with [by] my niece, Miss Rucker. This being reception evening a number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

SATURDAY, *22nd May, 1847.*— I sat again this morning for Mr. Sully, the artist, who is painting my portrait for the Dialectic Society of the University of N. Carolina. The Cabinet met at the usual hour, all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury, who is still so much indisposed as to be confined to his House. The Secretary of War received by last evening's mail a detailed Report from Gen'l Taylor, & also detailed Reports from the subordinate officers under his command at the battle of Buena Vista. They were read & were very interest-

ing. Several matters of public business were considered & disposed of, most of them relating to our military operations. I find it to be necessary to give my personal attention to the minute details of these operations, as far as the other indispensible duties of my office will permit me to do so.

SUNDAY, *23rd May, 1847.*— I attended the first Presbyterian church to-day accompanied by my niece, Miss Rucker, my nephew, Marshall T. Polk, and De Witt Clinton Yell, the son of my lamented friend, Col. Archibald Yell, who fell in the battle of Buena Vista. It was a damp day and Mrs. Polk thought it imprudent to attend church. She had been indisposed a few days ago and feared the exposure might bring on a relapse.

MONDAY, *24th May, 1847.*— I gave Mr. Sully, the artist who is painting my Portrait, another sitting to-day. I transacted much business on my table. At 1 O'Clock P. M. I opened my office for the reception of visitors. Several persons called, chiefly young men, who from their appearance were able to labour for their living, wanting offices. I had no offices for them and disposed of them very summarily. After they retired I resumed my labours at my table.

TUESDAY, *25th May, 1847.*— I gave Mr. Sully, the artist who is painting my portrait for the Dialectic Society of [the University of] N. C., another sitting this morning. The Cabinet met at the usual hour this morning; all the members present. The

Secretary of the Treasury attended for the first time in several weeks. His health is improved, though not restored. He cannot speak louder than in a whisper.

I brought before the Cabinet the propriety of issuing an order to Gen'l Scott to send to the U. S. as prisoners of War all Mexican officers who may be hereafter taken, instead of liberating them on their parole of honour. All agreed that this would be proper, and especially so as we learned that Maj'r Borland,[1] Maj'r Gaines,[2] and other prisoners of our army are confined in prison in the City of Mexico, notwithstanding several hundred Mexican officers & several thousand private soldiers who have been taken prisoner have been set at large on their parole of honour. The Secretary of War was directed to write a despatch to this effect to Gen'l Scott. I brought also before the Cabinet the importance of running an express from Mobile to Montgomery, in Alabama, so as to gain a day upon the regular mail time, and thereby receive at Washington despatches from the army as early as the express of the Baltimore *Sun* newspaper obtains the latest news from the seat of War. After some discussion and some difference of views on the subject, I directed the necessary steps to be taken to have such an express run. It is very important that the Government should have the earliest intelligence from the seat of War.

[1] Solon Borland, Major in Colonel Yell's regiment of Arkansas Volunteers; member of the U. S. Senate 1848–1853, Brigadier General in the Confederate army.

[2] John P. Gaines, Representative from Kentucky 1847–1849, Governor of Oregon Territory 1850–1853.

It has happened several times recently that the Private express of the Baltimore *Sun* [came] a day in advance of the regular mail bringing dispatches to the Government. This should not be, &, moreover, it may be vastly important to the Government to get the earliest news. The Cabinet after attending to some matters of minor importance adjourned about 2 O'Clock P. M.

The Atto. Gen'l, Mr. Clifford, & his wife (the latter having arrived in Washington but a few days ago) Mr. Sully, the artist, Mr. Ritchie, & Mr. Buchanan dined with me to-day.

This was reception evening but I was so much occupied in my office that I did not meet the company in the parlour. A number of persons, I am informed by the family, ladies & gentlemen, called.

Despatches were received from Gen'l Scott to-night.

WEDNESDAY, *26th May, 1847.*— I was much occupied in my office to-day and did not open my office for the reception of Company generally. Several persons were admitted on special business. I was disposing of the business on my table preparatory to my contemplated visit to the University of N. C. Nothing of special interest occurred during the day. I retired late at night, somewhat indisposed & much fatigued from the day's labour.

THURSDAY, *27th May, 1847.*— During this day I was busily engaged in preparing to leave on to-morrow on my contemplated visit to the University of

N. C. I saw at different periods of the day all the members of the Cabinet, except the Secretary of the Treasury. I saw also several other public officers on business. I transacted during the day much business. At 1 O'Clock I opened my office for company. Several persons called, most of them seeking office, but they were promptly answered that there were no vacancies to fill. At a late hour at night I closed the day's work.

FRIDAY, *28th May, 1847.*— At 8½ O'Clock this morning I left Washington on my visit to the University of N. Carolina. I was accompanied by Mrs. Polk & her niece, Miss Rucker, and Col. Walker, my Private Secretary, of my own family; by Judge Mason (the Secretary of the Navy) and his son, John Y. Mason, jr., and his daughter, Betty, & Lieutenant Maury of the U. S. Navy. At the Steam Boat landing at the mouth of Aquia Creek on the Potomac, I was met by a committee from Fredricksburg, Va., who invited me to spend a day on my return from N. C. at that town. I declined the invitation. On arriving at Fredricksburg I was met by the military and a large concourse of Citizens. I received a cordial welcome from them. I did not leave the Rail Road car, but made my apology to them for not stopping longer with them. About 5 O'Clock P. M. I arrived at Richmond. I was met at the Rail Road depot at that City by the Mayor & a committee of Citizens without distinction of political party, who gave me a cordial welcome to their City. The military companies were on parade, & a very

large number of people were present. I was placed in an open carriage and conducted by the mayor and committee to the Capitol, where many thousand persons, ladies and gentlemen, were assembled. I exchanged salutations and shook hands with many hundreds of them. The artillery company fired a salute. Mrs. Polk was received by the ladies of the City at the Executive chamber in the Capitol, that being the place arranged by the committee of reception for that purpose. After remaining 1½ hours I was conducted in an open carriage to the Southern Rail Road depot, preceded by the military companies and a large concourse of citizens. The demonstration of respect at Richmond was without distinction of party and was highly gratifying to me. From Richmond I proceeded on the Rail Road to Petersburg, where we arrived shortly after dark. I was met by a committee of that town at the Rail Road depot. It was a clear night and the moon was shining. I was conducted to a Hotel which was brilliantly lighted up. I found there a very large crowd of people, ladies and gentlemen. In the Portico of the Hotel I was received & addressed by the Hon. Francis E. Rives,[1] the chairman of the committee, to which I made a brief reply. Mr. Rives addressed Judge Mason also, who made a reply. Judge May (a leading Whig) also addressed [me], and both he and Mr. Rives invited me to spend the day at Petersburg on my return, which I declined. After shaking hands with many hundreds of people, and taking

[1] Probably Francis Robert Rives, Secretary of Legation at London during Tyler's administration.

supper, I proceeded on my journey. My reception both at Richmond & Petersburg was very cordial, and was very gratifying to me. I was received by both political parties with like cordiality & kindness, which made it the more agreeable.

SATURDAY, *29th May, 1847.*— Proceeding on my journey from Petersburg, Va., in the Rail Road cars, I arrived at Gaston, N. Carolina, at about 4 O'Clock this morning. I retired to a room in the Hotel, shaved, & dressed. About sun-rise, on entering the parlour below stairs, I was received by a committee of Citizens of North Carolina, & was addressed by Col. John D. Hawkins,[1] their chairman, who welcomed me to my native State. I made a brief reply to this address. The committee was composed of leading gentlemen of both political parties. Gov. Branch also joined me at this point, though he was not of the committee, & accompanied me on my journey. After taking breakfast I proceeded on my journey. At intervals of every few miles, & especially at all the Rail Road depots, many persons, mail [male] and female, were assembled to see me. At most of these places I descended from the cars and shook hands with as many of them as my time would permit. Near Warrenton & near the residence of Mr. Nathaniel Macon,[2] who was greatly beloved in that section of the county up to the hour of his death, I

[1] John Davis Hawkins, 1781–1858, a graduate of the University of North Carolina of the class of 1804.

[2] Nathaniel Macon, 1757–1837, Representative from North Carolina 1791–1815, Senator 1815–1828.

I met a very large crowd of ladies & gentlemen. I observed many carriages, probably 40 or 50 in number, in which the ladies present had come to greet me. At Henderson, where I dined, several thousand persons, ladies & gentlemen, old persons, middle aged persons, young persons, & children, of both sexes were assembled. At this place I remained about 1½ hours & was constantly engaged in being introduced to the people & shaking hands with them. At Franklinton, 20 miles before reaching Raleigh, a very large crowd of ladies & gentlemen were also assembled. I regretted that I could remain with them but a few minutes. I was met by a committee of Citizens of the place & its vicinity, who made a short address to me, to which I briefly responded. I was met at this place also by a committee of Citizens of Raleigh, who welcomed me on my approach to the capital of the State. I responded to them also. The Chairman was Mr. McCrea, accompanied [by] the Hon. John H. Bryan & about a dozen others. This committee took charge of me at this point. I reached Raleigh at about 5½ O'Clock P. M. I was met at the Rail Road depot by the Intendant or mayor of the City (Mr. Wm. Dallas Haywood) the military on parade, & a large concourse of citizens. I was welcomed to the City and returned my thanks in a brief reply. I was taken in an open carriage, accompanied by the Mayor, Judge Mason, & Col. Hawkins, & followed by the military and citizens, and after passing through the principal streets of the City was taken to the Hotel where quarters had been provided for me. At this point I found a very large

number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, assembled. On entering the Portico of the Hotel I was met by Professor Wm. M. Green [1] & a committee of Students from the University of N. Carolina. Mr. Green delivered an address to me, to which I responded. I was conducted into the Hotel and after being introduced to the committee of the University & a few other persons, I was informed that an arrangement had been made for me to meet my fellow citizens generally at the Senate Chamber in the Capitol at 8 O'Clock to-night, to which I of course yielded my assent. I retired to my room much exhausted by the fatigues of the day. At the appointed hour, 8 O'Clock, I was conducted to the Capitol by the Mayor, the committees of the City of Raleigh, & of the University. Judge Mason accompanied me. I spent 1½ hours at the Senate chamber, which was crowded with ladies & gentlemen, many of whom were introduced to the Secretary of the Navy & myself. From the Senate chamber we were conducted to the front of the Capitol, where a very dense crowd of persons, ladies & gentlemen, were assembled. The Street between the Capitol & the Governor's House was brilliantly illuminated, & there was a most imposing display of fire works. About 11 O'Clock I retired to my lodgings, much fatigued. From Gaston to Raleigh was a continued triumphal procession. Salutes were fired at several places. My reception could not have been more gratifying

[1] William Mercer Green, 1798–1887, first Episcopal bishop of Mississippi 1850, one of the founders and later Chancellor of the University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee.

than it has been. I observed not the slightest party feelings, but on the contrary I was received in the most distinguished manner by both political parties as the guest of the State.

SUNDAY, *30th May, 1847.*— Accompanied by Mrs. Polk, the Secretary of the Navy, & my suite, I attended the Episcopal church in the forenoon & the Presbyterian church in the afternoon to-day. Professor Green of the University & a number of other gentlemen accompanied me in the morning. In the afternoon Gov. Branch and others accompanied me. In the course of the evening Gov. Branch & Col. Hawkins mentioned to me the fact that Gov. Graham [1] had failed to call on me had been observed, and had given rise to some excitement among leading Whigs and Democrats, all of whom condemned him in strong terms. About dark Judge Mason informed me that he had been inquired of by Ex Governor Moorehead,[2] whether I would see Gov. Graham to-night, saying that if I would he would bring Gov. Graham to see me. Mr. Mason informed me that he had replied that I was not hide bound or strict in regard to the sabbath; & that, though I was in the habit of keeping the sabbath, he supposed, as I expected to leave Raleigh on to-morrow morning, that I would see Gov. Graham

[1] William Alexander Graham, 1804–1875, Senator from North Carolina 1840–1843, Governor 1845–1849, Secretary of the Navy 1850–1852.

[2] John Motley Morehead, 1796–1866, Governor of North Carolina 1841–1845, President of the Whig National Convention that nominated Taylor for the Presidency in 1848.

if he desired it. About 8 O'Clock Gov. Graham & Ex. Governor Moorehead called. Gov. Moorehead had called on last evening. I received Gov. Graham courteously, but with more dignified reserve than is my habit. He remained near an hour. I have no doubt from what I have learned that Gov. Graham & Senator Badger[1] had by consent determined not to call on me, & that the latter was forced to yield that determination by the overwhelming fear of public opinion among the leading members of his own party. It was a matter of perfect indifference to me whether he called or not. Senator Badger did not call. During the whole of the last session of Congress he did not call on me. He is a bitter partisan, and is no doubt sensible that during the Presidential canvass of 1844 he did me gross injustice. Among other things he took a leading part in propagating the basely false story[2] concerning the Revolutionary services of my Grand-father, Ezekiel Polk. His own consciousness that he had wronged me probably

[1] George Edmond Badger, 1795–1865, Secretary of the Navy in 1841, Senator from North Carolina 1846–1855.

[2] The story asserted that Polk's grandfather sided with the Tories in the Revolutionary War. Polk was extremely sensitive, during the campaign of 1844, to the attacks made on the Revolutionary career of his ancestors, and supplied his friends with facts to be used in refuting them.— Letter of J. Geo. Harris to George Bancroft, September 17, 1887, in Lenox Library, New York. A *Vindication of the Revolutionary Character and Services of Colonel Ezekiel Polk,* by Wm. H. Haywood, was published at Nashville in 1844. The original of the affidavits printed in this pamphlet, endorsed in Polk's own hand, are preserved among the Polk mss. in the Library of Congress.

prevented him from calling on me last winter or on my present visit to N. Carolina.

MONDAY, *31st May, 1847.*— At 9 O'Clock this morning I set out with my family & suite for Chapel Hill. I was accompanied by Professor Green & the committee of students from the University. I was accompanied also by Gov. Branch, Col. Hawkins, and several others, ladies & gentlemen, making quite a long train of carriages. We stopped half an hour at Mrs. Jones's, 10 miles on the way, where we were overtaken by Ex Gov. Moorehead, Gov. Graham, & others. I stopped at Moring's 8 miles from Chapel Hill, & took dinner. Gov. Graham, Gov. Moorehead, & some others did not stop for dinner, but proceeded on to Chapel Hill in advance of me. At about 6 O'Clock P. M. I reached the village of Chapel Hill. On approaching the Hotel at which quarters had been provided for me, I was received by a procession composed of the faculty & students of the college & citizens. I was conducted into the Hotel by professor Green & the committee of Students who had met me at Raleigh, and after remaining there a few minutes was conducted on foot to the college Chapel, where a large assembly of ladies & gentlemen were collected. I was addressed by the Hon. D. Y. Swain,[1] the President of the College, tendering to me a cordial welcome on my return to the classic shades of the University. I briefly

[1] David Lowry Swain, 1801–1868, Governor of North Carolina 1832–1835, President of the University of North Carolina 1835–1868.

responded to his address. President Swain also addressed Judge [Mason], who made a short reply. I was then introduced to the Trustees who were present, to the faculty and many of the students, as well as to many others, ladies & gentlemen. Of all the Professors I had left at the University 29 years ago, Professor Mitchell [1] alone remained. He met me most cordially, and I was much gratified to see him. These ceremonies being over, I returned to the [hotel] where I had the pleasure to meet many old college friends whom I had not seen since I graduated in June, 1818. Our meeting was delightful. Some of the incidents of our college life were at once recited. After supper I attended the chapel & heard a sermon preached by Bishop Ives [2] of the Episcopal church to the students. An annual sermon suited to the occasion is preached at each Commencement by some one of the Christian denominations. After the sermon I was kept from retiring to rest until a late hour in being introduced to the crowd of persons, ladies and gentlemen, who were present, and in conversing with old college friends, many of whom had come from a considerable distance to see me. I have never spent a more pleasant or delightful afternoon & evening. I retired to rest considerably exhausted by the fatigues of the day.

[1] Elisha Mitchell, 1793–1857, noted for his scientific attainments. Mount Mitchell was named after him.

[2] Levi Silliman Ives, 1797–1867, Episcopal bishop of North Carolina 1831; in 1852 he became a Roman Catholic and spent the remainder of his life in the service of Catholicism.

I should note also that among the Trustees who received me at the Chapel on my arrival were Gov. Graham & Ex. Gov. Moorehead.

TUESDAY, *1st June, 1847.*— As soon as I rose this morning I found a large crowd at the Hotel desiring to see me. After Breakfast I visited the college buildings. They have been greatly enlarged and improved since my day at College. I attended the examination of the senior Class on International & Constitutional law. They were examined by President Swain. I visited the Dialectic & Philanthropic Library rooms. I visited also the room which I occupied when I was in college. The old chapel I found had been converted into recitation rooms, and for the use of the Trustees when they attended the University. After dinner I took a walk with some of my old college friends to Vauxhall Spring, and through a portion of the village. Many objects were perfectly familiar to me, and brought up fresh to recollection many of the scenes of my youth. I was constantly surrounded by crowds of people, & was introduced to hundreds, male & female. The weather was warm, & [I] had no rest. After night I attended the Chapel and heard several members of the Sophomore and Freshman classes recite speeches which they had committed to memory. I retired to the Hotel when these exercises were over, and was kept from retiring to rest until a late hour receiving company and being introduced to them, and in conversing with my college friends.

WEDNESDAY, *2nd June, 1847.*— The crowd in attendance was much increased to-day. I was constantly on my feet, receiving & being introduced to them. All seemed desirious to see the President & shake him by the hand. At 11 O'Clock A. M. I attended the Chapel & heard Mr. Osborne of Charlotte deliver a literary address to the two Societies of the college. When his speech was over I attended a meeting of the alumni of the college. Many of them were present, some of whom graduated as early as 1801. At 2 O'Clock P. M. accompanied by Mrs. Polk, Judge Mason, & our families who accompanied us, I dined with President Swain. After dinner Mrs. Polk & myself paid a visit to Professor Green's family. At Candle-lighting I attended the Chapel & heard Judge Mason's speech delivered to the Alumni of the college. It was an able & admirable speech. It received universal applause. On motion, the thanks of the Alumni were tendered to Judge Mason and a copy of the speech requested for publication. After the speech was over I attended a meeting of the Dialectic Society, of which I was a member when I was in college. At the suggestion of Professor Green I made a short address to the society. During the day I shook hands with many hundreds of persons. During the day, too, Mrs. Polk accompanied me through the college buildings, the library rooms, and especially the room which I had occupied when I was in college. She was much interested, and especially in viewing the Dialectic Hall and my old room.

THURSDAY, *3rd June, 1847.*— This was the commencement day of the college.[1] It was to me a most interesting occasion. The number of persons in attendance was greatly increased. Hundreds from the adjoining country had come in. As soon as I left my room in the morning I was surrounded by them, and, except while at breakfast, continued to receive them and to shake hands with them until the hour at which the Commencement exercises commenced. These exercises commenced between 10 & 11 O'Clock. About 1 O'Clock the President announced that there would be a recess of 1½ hours. I returned to the Hotel & took dinner. The crowd in waiting to see me was so great that it was impossible that they could all see me if I remained in the House. Several of my friends who thought the people present, many of whom had come a considerable distance, ought to be gratified, insisted that I should go out to the grove, & I did so. I was soon surrounded by hundreds of persons, and for an hour or more was constantly engaged in shaking hands with them. At the appointed hour the commencement exercises were again commenced. I attended. They were concluded and the Degree of Bachelor of arts conferred on 37 young gentlemen, and the whole ceremony closed about 5½ O'Clock P. M. Being very desirous to reach Washington on Saturday evening, and knowing that I could not do so unless I reached Raleigh on to-morrow morning in time to take the Rail Road cars, as soon as the exercises were over I

[1] For an account of the Commencement exercises see Battle, *History of the University of North Carolina,* I, 504–509.

took leave of President Swain & the Faculty & Trustees, went to the Hotel where our carriages were in waiting, & set out for Raleigh. We set out about 6 O'Clock, and reached Moring's Tavern, 8 miles on the road, where we remained until 2 O'Clock in the morning, when the carriages were brought out & we proceeded on the way to Raleigh. There was moonlight & it was pleasant traveling. We breakfasted at Mrs. Jones's & reached Raleigh at 9½ O'Clock. We were accompanied from Chapel Hill by young Mr. Winburn [1] who graduated to-day, and who was one of the committee of students of the University who had met me at Raleigh on Saturday last. We were accompanied also by Gov. Branch, Col. Jno. D. Hawkins, & several others.

FRIDAY, *4th June, 1847.*— On arriving at Raleigh at 9½ O'Clock this morning, we stopped at the Hotel a few minutes. Learning that the Rail Road cars would not leave before 12 O'Clock, Col. Hawkins, Mrs. Polk, Col. Walker (my Private Secretary) and myself, at the special request of Col. Hawkins, visited the house of the Hon. K. Raynor,[2] whose wife is the daughter of the late Col. Wm. Polk, and whose health was not such as to enable her to call on us. Mr. Raynor had called on saturday evening & made this apology for her. Mr. Raynor is a bitter political opponent, but had acted exceedingly well on the occasion of my visit to N. Carolina. Before I left

[1] Robert Henry Winborne.

[2] Kenneth Rayner, 1808–1884, a Whig, Representative from North Carolina 1839–1845.

Washington he had invited me to make his house my home, and as soon as I arrived on Saturday evening he had called. While we were at Mr. Raynor's, the Hon. Wm. H. Haywood, jr., late Senator in Congress, called. He had been absent from Raleigh as we passed on to the University. From Mr. Raynor's we drove back to the Hotel, where a number of persons were collected. I got out of the carriage & they accompanied me on foot to the Rail Road depot. I there took leave of them, and at 12 O'Clock the cars left. We dined at Henderson, and at this point Col. Hawkins left us. We met many persons at the different depots on the road. At Henderson there was quite a large number collected. We supped at Gaston & travelled all night.

SATURDAY, *5th June, 1847.*—We arrived at Petersburg shortly after day light this morning, & after being detained a short time at the Hotel proceeded to Richmond, where we took breakfast. Proceeding on our journey we arrived at Washington about 5 O'Clock P. M. & thus ended my excursion to the University of N. Carolina. It was an exceedingly agreeable one. No incident of an unpleasant character occurred. My reception at the University, and the attentions paid me on the route going and returning, was all that I could have desired it to be. My visit was wholly unconnected with politics, and all parties greeted & welcomed me in the most cordial manner. Senator Badger is the only leading man of either party, of whom I heard, who failed to call and pay his respects. It was a

matter of perfect indifference to me whether he did so or not. The impression among some of my friends was, that it was his influence which had prevented Gov. Graham from calling when I first reached Raleigh. The Governor, However, finally yielded to public opinion around him & called on sunday evening, as stated in this Diary of that day.

During my absence Mr. Buchanan, the Secretary of State, wrote to me every day, as I had requested him to do. Nothing occurred during my absence which required my presence in Washington.

Between Gaston & Petersburg Judge Mason, the Secretary of the Navy, and his daughter left the cars at a point near the residence of his father, to whom they desired to pay a short visit.

The Post Master Gen'l and the atto. Gen'l called on me shortly after my arrival at home this evening.

SUNDAY, *6th June, 1847.*— I attended the first Presbyterian church to-day accompanied by Mrs. Polk, her niece, Miss Rucker, and Miss Rachel Henrietta Armstrong, the daughter of Gen'l Robert Armstrong, U. S. consul at Liverpool.

Mr. Buchanan, the Secretary of State, called to-night.

MONDAY, *7th June, 1847.*— During the day the Secretaries of State, Treasury, & War and the Atto. Gen'l called on business. Several of the Heads of Bureau and other public officers also called on business. During my absence from the City various matters of public business, none of them of much impor-

tance, but concerning which these officers desired to take my direction, had accumulated. I disposed of them, read my letters, and disposed of many matters of business on my table. At 1 O'Clock P. M. I opened my office for company. Many persons called but none of them had any business of importance with me. The most important business of most of them was that they wished to obtain offices, either for themselves or their friends. There were no vacancies to fill & I soon disposed of their applications. Among others who called was Mrs. Fremont, the wife of Lieut. Col. Fremont of the U. S. army, and the daughter of Gen'l T. H. Benton. She introduced to me Kit Carson,[1] who had been with her husband, Col. Fremont, and had recently returned from California. She informed me that Mr. Carson had been waiting several days to see me, for the purpose of conversing with me and tendering his services to bear despatches to California, if any were to be sent. Mr. Carson delivered to me a long letter from Col. Fremont which had been addressed to Gen'l Benton. It related in part to the recent unfortunate collision between Gen'l Kearney & Commodore Stockton, and between the former & Col. Fremont in California. Mrs. Fremont seemed anxious to elicit from me some expression of approbation of her husband's conduct, but I evaded [making any]. In truth, I consider that Col. Fremont was greatly in the wrong when he refused to obey the or-

[1] Christopher Carson, 1809–1868, famous hunter and Indian fighter. He rendered important assistance to Fremont on the latter's exploring expeditions.

ders issued to him by Gen'l Kearney. I think Gen'l Kearney was right also in his controversy with Com. Stockton. It was unnecessary, however, that I should say so to Col. Fremont's wife, and I evaded giving her an answer. My desire is, that the error being corrected, the matter shall pass over quietly without the necessity of having an investigation by a Court Martial. I saw Kit Carson again after night, and had a full conversation with him concerning the State of affairs in California, and especially in relation to the collision between our land & naval commanders in that distant region.

TUESDAY, *8th June, 1847.*— The Cabinet met today, all the members present except the Secretary of the Navy, who is absent in Virginia on a visit to his father. Mr. Buchanan brought before the Cabinet our relations with Brazil, and stated that from intelligence received from Rio, it was probable that the Brazilian Government would disavow the adjustment of the difficulty growing out of the imprisonment of Lieut. Davis of the U. S. Navy & two sailors at Rio, which had been made between Mr. Buchanan & Mr. Lisboa, the Brazilian Minister at Washington. After considering the subject, it was resolved that Mr. Tod, the successor of Mr. Wise as U. S. Minister to Brazil, should set out on his mission at the earliest practicable period. Several other matters connected with our foreign relations were considered.

Information had been received that a Spanish vessel with a Mexican commission & under Mexican

colours had captured an American Merchant Vessel in the Meditteranean, and it was represented that other privateers with Mexican commissions had been fitted out to prey upon American commerce [and] were in those seas. It was determined to order the U. S. Steam Ship Princeton to proceed without delay to the Mediteranean for the protection of American commerce.

Various matters connected with the operations of our army and navy in Mexico & the prosecution of the War were considered. Among other things it was determined to send Kit Carson with despatches to Gen'l Kearney in California, & to the commander of our Squadron in the Pacific. All the Cabinet agreed that in the unfortunate collision which had taken place between Com. Stockton and Gen'l Kearney, respecting the right to command the land forces in California, Gen'l Kearney was in the right, and that Commodore Stockton & Lieut. Col. Fremont were in the wrong. One object of sending the despatches by Carson was to put an end to this most unfortunate controversy. Several other matters of minor importance were considered.

My Private Secretary (Col. Walker) was indisposed to-day and was confined to his room.

This was reception evening & I met company in the parlour. An unusually large assembly of ladies & gentlemen called.

WEDNESDAY, *9th June, 1847*.— I was busily engaged this forenoon in disposing of the business on my table. I saw the Secretaries of State and War

on business, and also several other persons whom I was obliged to see. Among others who called was the Hon. Mr. Giles, of the Ho. Repts. from Maryland. At 1 O'Clock P. M. I opened my office. An unusual number of persons, chiefly office seekers, called. Nothing worthy of special note occurred to-day.

THURSDAY, *10th June, 1847.*—This forenoon was chiefly occupied in transacting business with public officers who called to consult me & receive my directions. The Secretaries of State and War & Mr. Appleton, the acting Secretary of the Navy, also called on business. The Secretary of War read to me a despatch which he had prepared to Brigadier Gen'l Kearney in California, relating in part to the collision which has recently arisen between Gen'l Kearney and Commodore Stockton. At my suggestion he made two or three modifications of it. I directed Mr. Appleton, who is acting Secretary of the Navy in Mr. Mason's absence, to prepare a despatch of similar import to the commander of our Squadron in the Pacific. At 1 O'Clock P. M. I opened my office to receive company as usual. Many persons called, some on visits of ceremony and others on business & seeking office. After they retired I disposed of some of the business on my table. A small party took a family Dinner with me to-day. It consisted of Mr. Pleasonton, the 5th Auditor, his wife & daughter, Mrs. Watmough of Phila., and Daniel Graham, the Register of the Treasury, & his wife.

FRIDAY, *11th June, 1847.*—This morning the Secretaries of the Treasury and of War called and submitted certain modifications of the regulations of the tariff of duties to be levied in Mexican ports in our military possession as military contributions, which they proposed. I examined the modifications proposed, and after making one or two changes in them, approved them and issued the order accordingly. Mr. Mason, the Secretary of the Navy, who returned to Washington last evening, called this morning. He submitted to me a despatch which he had prepared to the commander of our squadron in the Pacific, to be taken out by Kit Carson & Lieut. Beale of the Navy, as bearers of despatches. The despatch had been prepared by Mr. Appleton as acting Secretary of the Navy, in the absence of Judge Mason, under orders from me. At my suggestion some modification of the despatch was made. Maj'r General Robert Patterson of the U. S. army, who had recently returned, to-day called with his aide-de-camp and Brevet Col. Abercrombie. At 1 O'Clock P. M. I opened my office for company. Several persons called to pay their respects, ladies & gentlemen. Others called seeking office. In the course of the day the Commissioner of the Gen'l Land Office and other public officers called on business. Col. Tod, U. S. Minister to Brazil, and Mr. Young, commissioner of the Gen'l Land office, and his wife, dined with me to-day.

Despatches were received from Gen'l Scott by the mail of this evening.

This was reception evening. Many persons, la-

dies & gentlemen, called. Judge Mason (Secretary of the Navy) returned to Washington last evening.

SATURDAY, *12th June, 1847.*— Maj'r Gen'l Robert Patterson of the U. S. army called this morning. He had recently returned from Mexico, where he has been serving for the last 12 months. I had a long conversation with him in relation to the War and our military operations in Mexico. He gave me many facts, and some interesting views. He remained until the Cabinet met, which was at the usual hour, when he retired. All the members of the Cabinet were present.

Despatches received from Gen'l Scott, dated on the 20th ultimo, were read. They were of a highly exceptionable character. It appears that Gen'l Scott has taken offence because Mr. Trist was sent to his Head Quarters as a Commissioner invested with Diplomatic Powers & full authority to conclude a Treaty of peace. He desired to be invested with this power himself, and although Mr. Trist had been in his camp for six days at the date of his despatch, he states he had not seen him. It is clear from this despatch, as well as one of previous date enclosing a letter from Gen'l Scott to Mr. Trist, that he would not coöperate with Mr. Trist in accomplishing the object of his mission, the conclusion of an honourable peace. His two last despatches are not only insubordinate, but insulting to Mr. Trist and the Government. I gave my views on the subject, in which the Cabinet unanimously concurred. In accordance with them I directed the Secretary of War

to prepare a despatch to Gen'l Scott rebuking him for his insubordinate course, and repeating the order in a peremptory manner to him to carry the despatch borne to him by Mr. Trist addressed to the Mexican Government to that Government, and requiring an immediate answer, to be returned by the bearer of the despatch, whether he had obeyed or intended to obey the former order of the Secretary of War. He deserves for his conduct in this matter to be removed from the command. I conclude[d], however, to delay action on his conduct until his answer to the communication which I have this day ordered to be addressed to him shall be received. The Secretary of the Navy also read a despatch from Commodore Perry, commanding the squadron in the gulf, enclosing a correspondence between Gen'l Scott and Lieut. Sims of the Navy, of a highly insubordinate & unexceptionable [exceptionable] character. Lieut. Sims had been sent to Gen'l Scott's Head Quarters under orders from the Secretary of the Navy, with a view to ask Gen'l Scott's co-operation in procuring the release of passed midshipman Rogers, now a prisoner in Mexico. Gen'l Scott arrogates to himself the right to be the only proper channel through whom the U. S. Government can properly communicate with the Government of Mexico on any subject; which is an assumption wholly unwarrantable & which I will not tolerate. The truth is that I have been compelled from the beginning to conduct the war against Mexico through the agency of two Gen'ls highest in rank who have not only no sympathies with the Government, but are hostile to my administration. Both

of them have assumed to control the Government. To this I will not submit & will as certainly remove Gen'l Scott from the chief command, as she [he] shall refuse or delay to obey the order borne to him by Mr. Trist. My doubt is whether I shall delay to remove him until I can hear further from him.

The Secretaries of War & the Navy read despatches which they had respectively prepared to our commanders of our land and naval forces in California & on the Pacific. The object of these despatches was to remove the collision which had arisen between the two arms of the service in regard to the rank of their officers. The Secretary of War also read a despatch which he had prepared to the commander of our forces at Santa Fe & in New Mexico. I approved these despatches.

The Secretary of the Treasury reported to me that he had received information that the Receiver of Public monies at the Land office at Upper Sandusky in Ohio was a defaulter to the amt. of $7,100. I ordered him to be removed instantly, and directed that Purdy McElvain [1] should be appointed in his place. I also directed that the defaulting Receiver should be prosecuted criminally for a violation of the Constitutional Treasury law. In less than three hours after the case was reported to me the removal was made, a commission issued for his successor, signed, and the orders issued to the U. S. Attorney for the District of Ohio to prosecute criminally the defaulting Receiver, and also to commence suit for the

[1] Purdy McElvaine, nominated to the Senate as Receiver of Land Sales at Upper Sandusky, Ohio, December 22, 1847.

amount of the default against his securities. Some other public business was transacted & the Cabinet adjourned near 4 O'Clock.

Maj'r Gen'l Patterson, his aid-de-camp, and Col. Abercrombie & the Secretary of War dined with me to-day.

My Private Secretary (Col. Walker) his wife, & Miss Rucker set out at noon to-day on a visit to Phila. & New York. Mr. Currin Whitthorne,[1] a clerk in the 6th Auditor's office, and who was a law Student in my office in Tennessee, took Col. Walker's place & will assist me in his absence in attending to the Clerical duties of my office.

SUNDAY, *13th June, 1847.*— Before church hour this morning Mr. Buchanan called and informed me that this was the last day on which letters or despatches could be mailed at this City in time to reach the Steamer which will leave Boston on the 16th Instant for Europe. He stated that he had late on last evening finished an important despatch to Mr. Saunders, the U. S. Minister in Spain, and as it was very desirable that he should get it at the earliest practicable period, he had called to submit it to me for my approval. He read it & I approved it. It related to a recent capture of a merchant vessel of the U. S. in the Mediteranean by a Privateer under a mexican Flag and with a mexican commission, which had been taken into Barcelona, a Span-

[1] Washington Curran Whithorne, Representative from Tennessee 1871–1891 except for a brief term in the U. S. Senate 1886–1887.

ish Port, Mr. Buchanan's despatch [1] instructed Mr. Saunders to protest against the conduct of the Spanish Government in permitting such a proceeding, and to call upon that Government to interpose and prevent a similar proceeding for the future. It was an elaborate and very able despatch.

Mrs. Polk and myself attended the first Presbyterian church to-day.

MONDAY, *14th June, 1847.*— Several public officers called on business this morning. Among others Mr. Buchanan called & read to me a despatch which he had prepared to Mr. Trist. I suggested a modification, which he made. The Secretary of War called and read to me a despatch which he had prepared to Gen'l Scott in reply to the extraordinary despatch from that officer dated the 20th of May. I suggested some modifications of it, and after some conversation on the subject it was agreed that it was of so much importance that it would be proper to submit it to the Cabinet on to-morrow. At 1 O'Clock P. M. my office was opened for the reception of company. An unusual number of persons called, many of them seeking office. Gen'l Patterson of the U. S. army called, and I had a long conversation with him in relation to military operations in Mexico. Among others who called to-day was Mrs. Fremont, the wife of Lieut. Col. Fremont. Lieut. Kit Carson was with her. She expressed a desire that her husband should be retained in California. I informed her that the dispatches which

[1] Moore, *Buchanan,* VII, 334–343.

Lieut. Carson would bear to Gen'l Kearney in California, who was the military officer highest in command in that country, left it to the option of Lieut. Col. Fremont to remain in the service in California or to return to the U. S. & join his Regiment (the Mounted Rifles) now serving in Mexico. The after part of the day was spent in disposing of many matters of business of minor importance which had accumulated on my table.

TUESDAY, *15th June, 1847.*— Maj'r Gen'l Patterson called this morning, and I held a further conversation with him in relation to the War with Mexico. The Cabinet met this morning at the usual hour, all the members present.

Mr. Buchanan read to the Cabinet the draft of a despatch to Mr. Trist, having made the modifications which I suggested to him on yesterday. The Secretary of War also read to the Cabinet the draft of a despatch to Gen'l Scott, having modified [it] as I suggested to him on yesterday. After some conversation they were agreed to by the Cabinet unanimously. Mr. Buchanan thought it better to delay his despatch to Mr. Trist until he heard from him again. In this I differed with him in opinion. On the contrary I thought time was important, and that the two despatches to Mr. Trist and Gen'l Scott should be borne to them with all practicable speed by the same messenger. I expressed in strong terms my disapprobation of Gen'l Scott's conduct, in failing or refusing to communicate to the Mexican Government, as he had been ordered to do by the Secre-

tary of War, the despatch addressed to the minister of Foreign affairs of Mexico by the Secretary of State, which had been borne to him by Mr. Trist, and expressed my determination, if he persisted in disobeying the order, to have him arrested & tried by a Court Martial. I expressed my disapproval of Gen'l Scott's insubordinate conduct as disclosed in his despatch of the 20th ult. & also in one which preceded it, enclosing a copy of a most extraordinary letter which he had addressed on the 7th of May to Mr. Trist. It is manifest from these despatches that he has taken offence because he was not himself clothed with Diplomatic powers (an office for which I consider him wholly unqualified) and that he is now throwing obstructions in the way of the success of Mr. Trist's mission. Such conduct is most reprehensible, and I would recall him without the least hesitation if I was positively sure that he had not before this time reconsidered his course and obeyed the orders of his Government. I have serious fears that the golden moment to make a peace (*viz.*, as our army approaches the City of Mexico) may be lost because of Gen'l Scott's arrogance & inordinate vanity, and because of these, his disobedience of his orders and his failure to act in harmony with Mr. Trist. I shall wait impatiently to hear what his definitive course has been, and will then act promptly in his case.

It was finally agreed that the war Steamer Prin[c]eton, now at N. York, should be despatched without delay to the Mediteranean to protect American commerce in those seas.

Some other public subjects of minor importance were considered.

This being reception evening I attended with Mrs. Polk in the parlour. A number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

After the adjournment of the Cabinet to-day I held another conversation with Maj'r Gen'l Patterson & the Secretary of War in relation to the Mexican War.

WEDNESDAY, *16th June, 1847.*— I sent a note to Gen'l Patterson this morning requesting him to call on me. He did so, and I conferred with him in relation to the operations of our army in Mexico, and especially in relation to the steps which should be taken with a view to obtain a speedy peace.

The Hon. Henry Wheaton, late U. S. Minister to Prussia, was introduced to me by the Secretary of State. I disposed of several matters of business on my table & saw the Secretaries of War & Navy, the Atto. Gen'l, and several other public officers on business. At 1 O'Clock P. M. I opened my office for the reception of company. An unusual number of persons called & especially of females seeking offices for their relations & friends. Many females call on the same business, under the impression, no doubt, that their importunities may prevail when those of their husbands, brothers, sons, or other relations would not. Their applications occupy much of my time and annoy me very much. The office-seekers have fared but badly of late. There are no vacancies to fill, & I decline making vacancies by

removing better men than the applicants to make room for the latter. Whilst my mind, too, is occupied with the war with Mexico and other important public matters, I give but little attention to the applications of the constant throng of persons who besiege me for place.

THURSDAY, *17th June, 1847.*— I saw the Secretaries of State & War & the Atto. Gen'l on business this morning. I saw also several other public officers on business. I disposed of the current business on my table. At 1 O'Clock P. M. I saw company as usual. A crowd of persons came in as soon as my office was opened. Among them were several ladies, who called to pay their respects. None who called had any business of more importance than an ardent desire to serve their country, provided they could be appointed to a good office. As I had none of these to dispose of they were, of course, disappointed.

Nothing worthy of special notice occurred to-day.

FRIDAY, *18th June, 1847.*— I transacted much business of minor importance today. Several public officers called, with whom I conferred on public business. Among them were the Secretary of State, who read to me despatches[1] which he had prepared to the U. S. consul and the U. S. Commissioner at the Sandwich Islands. Mr. Buchanan informed me that he had learned from Mr. Lisboa, the Brazilian Minister, that he had received unofficial information from Brazil that the arrangement which he had

[1] Moore, *Buchanan,* VII, 346–353.

made with this Government last winter for the settlement of the difficulty which had arisen between the two Governments in consequence of the imprisonment of Lieut. Davis and two Seamen of the U. S. Navy by the Brazilian authorities at Rio de Janeiro, had been disapproved by his Government, & that he (Mr. Lisboa) in consequence of the settlement to which he had agreed, would probably be recalled. This rendered it [necessary], in the opinion of the Secretary of State & myself, that Mr. Tod, the U. S. minister recently appointed, should proceed to his post without a moment's delay. He is to go out in the 74 Gun ship Ohio, now at New York. The ship is now delayed in her departure, as I understand, because he is not ready to embark, & because of the additional accommodations which he requires for the unusually large family & attaches which he proposes to take with him, chiefly females. I sent for the Secretary of the Navy, and after consultation I directed the Secretary of State to communicate to Mr. Tod (who is now at New York) the public importance of his sailing without a moment's delay, & I directed the Secretary of the Navy to communicate to the commander of the Ohio to sail without delay. Mr. Tod had requested that the ship should go by the way of Madeira, probably with a view to obtain wines. This would delay him in his arrival at Rio de Janeiro at least 10 days, and the request cannot, therefore, be granted. The communications to the commander of the Ohio and to Mr. Tod were directed to [be] made by Telegraph.

This was reception evening. An unusually large

number of persons attended. All the members of the Cabinet & the ladies of their families, except the Secretary of the Treasury, were present. Mrs. Madison & a large number of strangers & citizens were also present. Among others who called were Mr. Wheaton, late U. S. Minister to Prussia, & Gen'l Leslie Combs [1] of Kentucky.

Hon. Wm. H. Haywood, jr., late of the U. S. Senate, called on me to-day.

SATURDAY, *19th June, 1847.*— The Cabinet met at the usual hour this morning, all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury, who was detained at his residence by indisposition. I informed the Cabinet that I contemplated leaving on tuesday next, the 22nd Instant, on a short tour to the North, that I would (if the state of the public business did not require my return sooner) be absent about two weeks. I have received many invitations to go North, &, among others, two from the Legislatures of New Hampshire and Maine, now in Session, to visit the Capitals of these states. I desire to make the tour at some time during my administration, and unless I do so now I probably cannot do so during my administration. The Attorney General (Mr. Clifford) will accompany me, & the Secretary of State (Mr. Buchanan) may, if the state of the public business will permit it, join me at New York. I gave instructions to the Cabinet to keep me

[1] Leslie Combs, 1793–1881. He was an earnest Whig and a friend of Henry Clay, for whom he made many speeches in the Presidential campaign of 1844.

advised daily of the State of the public business, by letters & through the magnetic Telegraph, and informed [them] that I would, upon receiving intelligence that my presence was necessary at the seat of Government, return without delay from any point on the tour where such intelligence might reach me. I shall at no time be more than two days' travel from Washington.

The Secretary of the Navy submitted for my consideration the manner of executing the acts of Congress of the last Session authorizing the construction of 4 War Steamers. The chief question was, whether either of them should be built by private contract, or at the U. S. Navy yards. I decided without hesitation that they should be built at the Navy yards, and not by private contract. Mr. Buchanan insisted that one of them should be built by a Mr. Soper at Philadelphia. After a discussion of some length he failed to convince me of the propriety of this, and of course my directions to the Secretary of the Navy were unchanged. In regard to the floating docks to be built a considerable discussion took place, but the questions arising were not definitively settled. The Cabinet all agreed that the act of Congress on the subject was an unwise one, and had probably been passed upon limited information and by improper influences, exerted by the owners of the Sectional & balance dock patents. The matter was postponed for the present. Some other public subjects of minor importance were considered. The Cabinet adjourned about 3 O'Clock P. M.

SUNDAY, *20th June, 1847.*— This was a wet morning and Mrs. Polk declined attending church & I remained at home with her. My Private Se[c]-reta[r]y (Col. Walker) and his wife and Miss Rucker returned this morning from a visit of a week to the Northern Cities.

MONDAY, *21st June, 1847.*— It had become generally known that I contemplated leaving Washington on to-morrow on a short tour to the North, and an unusual number of office-seekers pressed in upon me. When I opened my office at 1 O'Clock it was filled with them. Applications were made to me for all grades of office, from a mission abroad to a messenger's place in one of the public offices. The herd of loafers who thus annoyed me seemed to act as though they had concluded that the Government was about to come to an end because of my expected absence, and because [hence] in consequence of it they would loose their chance for that time to get an office. I gave none of them offices, but treated [them] almost harshly.

I transacted much business with the Heads of Departments to-day, preparatory to my leaving. I left instructions with them to keep me advised daily of the State of public business, and if any[thing] occurred which in their judgment would render my return necessary before I had contemplated it, to communicate with me by Telegraph, & informed them that upon receiving such information I would instantly return to Washington. I was kept up until a late hour at night, disposing of many matters of

the details of business and preparing to leave on to-morrow.

Mrs. Polk & her niece, Miss Rucker, accompanied by Mr. Russmann, will go as far as Baltimore with me. On Wednesday morning they will take the Western train of cars for Tennessee, & I will proceed North to Philadelphia. Mrs. Polk expects to return to Washington in about six weeks.

TUESDAY, *22nd June, to* WEDNESDAY, *7th July, 1847.*— At 12 O'Clock M. on Tuesday, the 22nd of June, 1847, I left Washington on a tour through the Northern and Eastern States, and returned to Washington on the evening of Wednesday, the 7th of July, 1847. Mrs. Polk and her niece, Miss Rucker, accompanied me as far as Baltimore, where they seperated from me on the morning of Wednesday, the 23rd of June. At 7 O'Clock on the morning of that day they set out for Tennessee, accompanied by Mr. Russmann, and I set out for Philadelphia. I was accompanied by Mr. Clifford, the Atto. Gen'l of the U. S., Mr. Burke, commissioner of Patents, and Mr. Appleton, the chief clerk of the Navy Department, the latter acting as my Private Secretary. At Philadelphia Commodore Stewart of the U. S. Navy joined me, upon my invitation, as one of my suite, and accompanied me throughout my tour until my return to Philadelphia on the evening of the 6th of July, 1847. On Sunday afternoon, the 27th of June, 1847, Mr. Buchanan, the Secretary of State, joined me, and accompanied me throughout the balance of the tour until my return to Philadelphia, where he

remained a day & arrived at Washington one day after I did. Mr. Appleton left me on my return journey at Portland in Maine, on the morning of monday, the 5th of July, and Mr. Burke left me at Boston on the evening of the same day. The diary of my tour was as follows, *viz.*

TUESDAY, *22nd June, 1847:* Spent the afternoon at Baltimore.

WEDNESDAY, *23rd June:* Travelled to Phila.

THURSDAY, *24th June:* Spent the day in Phila.

FRIDAY, *25th June:* Travelled to N. York.

SATURDAY, *26th June:* Spent the day in New York.

SUNDAY, *27th June:* Spent the day in N. York and went to church three times, once in the morning with the Mayor to an Episcopalian church; in the afternoon with the Hon. Benj. F. Butler [1] to a Presbyterian church, and in the evening with Mr. Oliver, the President of the Board of common council, to the Dutch reformed church.

MONDAY, *28th June:* Traveled to Springfield, Massachusetts, spending some hours at New Haven & Hartford, Connecticut, on the way.

[1] Benjamin Franklin Butler, 1795–1858, lawyer and politician, a close political friend of Martin Van Buren; U. S. Attorney General 1833–1838.

TUESDAY, *29th June:* Travelled to Boston.

WEDNESDAY, *30th June:* Travelled to Lowell, Massachusetts.

THURSDAY, *1st July:* Traveled to Concord, New Hampshire, & returned to Lowell the same night.

FRIDAY, *2nd July:* Traveled to Portland in Maine, which place I left in the evening & proceeded on board the Steamer Huntress to Augusta in Maine, the Seat of [government of] that State.

SATURDAY, *3rd July:* Spent the day at Augusta in Maine until 5 O'Clock in the evening, when I set out on my return journey, and reached Portland between 12 & 1 O'Clock at night.

SUNDAY, *4th July:* Spent the day in Portland and attended a Unitarian church in the morning, in company with the Hon. John Anderson; and a congregational church in the afternoon, in company with the Mayor.

MONDAY, *5th July:* Left Portland at 7 O'Clock in the morning, spent several hours at Portsmouth, N. Hampshire, and after stopping at other cities & towns for a short time, reached Fall River at Nightfall and went on board the Steamer Bay-State, for New York. The boat touched at New Port, R. Island, but I did not go ashore.

TUESDAY, *6th July:* Reached New York at 7 O'Clock A. M., took breakfast, and proceeded to Philadelphia, spending several hours at Trenton, N. Jersey. Reached Phila. at 8 O'Clock P. M.

WEDNESDAY, *7th July:* Traveled from Phila. to Washington, spending 2 or 3 hours in Baltimore, & arrived at Washington at 7½ O'Clock P. M.

My whole tour was an exceedingly gratifying one. My reception was everywhere respectful & cordial. Not an unpleasant incident occurred to mar its pleasure. I saw many hundreds of thousands of my fellow citizens, of all ages & sexes; I saw a section of my country in New England which I had never before visited. I am much delighted with my tour & do not doubt but that I shall be profitted by it.

I do not undertake to record the history of the tour. It would require a volume to do so. Mr. Appleton promised me, when I set out, to keep a regular journal [1] or history of it, and if he has done so I will insert it in this Diary. I will only state that no party feeling any-where manifested itself. On the contrary all political parties received & treated me kindly and with marked respect.

One incident only will I record, *viz:* At New York, as I proceeded North, Mr. Benj. F. Butler delivered me a verbal invitation from Ex. President

[1] Polk left a space of forty pages in the Diary blank for the insertion of Appleton's journal. It was never copied into Diary however. It remained in the possession of Polk's family until 1897, when it passed to Judge J. M. Dickinson.

Van Buren, inviting me to visit him. I declined it, stating that my arrangements, previously made, did not contemplate a visit to that part of the State. I thought also (though I did not say so to Mr. Butler) that if Mr. Van Buren really desired me to visit him he would have written to me inviting me to do so, and that he would not have postponed this verbal message, delivered through Mr. Butler, to so late a period. I considered it a mere act of formal courtesy, which Mr. Van Buren, probably, thought public opinion constrained him to extend to me.

The truth is Mr. Van Buren became offended with me at the beginning of my administration, because I chose to exercise my own judgment in the selection of my own Cabinet, and would not be controlled by him and suffer him to select it for me. I have preserved his most extraordinary letter addressed to me on that subject. I made no reply to that letter, and since that time have had no direct correspondence with him further than to send him under my frank my two annual messages, & to receive two notes from him acknowledging their receipt.

I leave a blank space in this volume in which to insert Mr. Appleton's journal or diary of my tour to the North & East, if he shall furnish it to me as he promised me he would do.

On my arrival at Washington, on the 7th Instant, I found my brother, Wm. H. Polk, Charge d' Affaires to Naples, and his wife at the President's House. My brother arrived in the U. S. a few days ago on leave of absence. I met him at New York on my late tour, when he informed me that he was to

be married in two or three days to Miss Corse[1] of that City. He was married on tuesday, the 29th of June, & had come on to Washington with his wife to spend a few days.

THURSDAY, *8th July, 1847.*— Being much fatigued on my return from my Eastern tour last evening, I did not visit my office or attend to any business. The Post Master General called after I arrived. This morning on coming to my office I found many letters and much business which had accumulated in my absence, none of it, however, of much importance, except despatches which had been received by the Secretary of War from the seat of War in Mexico. I disposed of many minor matters of business in the course of the day. All the members of the Cabinet called at different hours of the day, with whom I had full conversations. Mr. Buchanan arrived from Phila., where I left him on yesterday. The Secretary of War sent to me all the despatches which had been received from Gen'l Scott's column of the army during my absence. I read them carefully, and resolved to call a meeting of the Cabinet at an early hour on to-morrow, and so notified the Secretaries of State and of War.

I saw company at 1 O'Clock to-day. A number of persons called; most of them of course were seeking office.

FRIDAY, *9th July, 1847.*— I convened the Cabinet this morning at 9½ O'Clock, all the members

[1] Miss Mary Corse, daughter of Israel Corse of New York.

present. The subject which I submitted for consideration was the conduct of Gen'l Scott & Mr. Trist, and the angry personal controversy into which these two functionaries had allowed themselves to be engaged. Despatches from Gen'l Scott to the Secretary of War, and from Mr. Trist to the Secretary of State, received during my late tour to the Eastern States, were read. They exhibited a wretched state of things. So far from harmony prevailing between these two officers, they are engaged in a violent personal correspondence. It does not as yet appear that they have [had] any personal interview, although Mr. Trist had been in Gen'l Scott's camp for many days. For a Statement of the cause of their difference, see statements contained in this diary, & particularly of the 12th & 15th of June. From the last despatches received it appears that the breach between them had been widened instead of being healed. Gen'l Scott, it appears, had returned to Mr. Trist the letter from the Secretary of State addressed to the minister of Foreign affairs of Mexico which had been borne to him by Mr. Trist, and [which] he was ordered by the Secretary of War, in a despatch which accompanied [it], to convey to the Mexican Government. Mr. Trist committed a great error in receiving it from his Aid-de-Camp. Gen'l Scott has written very foolish & bitter letters to Mr. Trist & Mr. Trist has written as foolish a letter to him. Between them the orders of the Secretary of War & the Secretary of State have been disregarded; and the danger has become imminent that because of the personal controversy between these self important

personages, the golden moment for concluding a peace with Mexico may have passed. Gen'l Scott's last despatch to the Secretary of War is full of passion & vanity & is highly insubordinate. In view of the whole case & of the present critical condition of affairs in Mexico, I submitted to the Cabinet for their advice whether they should not both be recalled. It is due to Mr. Trist to say that the first outrage was committed by Gen'l Scott, who provoked the controversy between them which distroys the usefulness of both and is likely to defeat the conclusion of a peace. In regard to the recall of Gen'l Scott, I called on the Secretary of War for his opinion first. He condemned the conduct of Gen'l Scott in unqualified terms, but, considering the present critical condition of the army, being now far in the enemy's country, & for other reasons which he assigned at length, he advised against his recal[l] at present, though he was of opinion that his conduct fully justified his recal[l]. Each of the other members of the Cabinet, being seperately asked for their advice, concurred with the Secretary of War in the opinion he had expressed.

I then submitted the question as to the recal[l] of Mr. Trist. Mr. Buchanan was asked for his opinion first. He expressed his decided disapprobation of a part of Mr. Trist's correspondence with Gen'l Scott, but for similar reasons which had influenced him in Gen'l Scott's case he advised against his recal[l] for the present. Each of the other members of the Cabinet expressed opinions agreeing with that given by Mr. Buchanan. I then remarked that such

insubordination & unpatriotic conduct as that of Gen'l Scott, in my opinion would justify his immediate recal[l] and trial by a Court martial, and that I was prepared to take that course. I considered the immediate prospect of a peace defeated by his extraordinary conduct, and [said] that I was prepared to take the responsibility of dealing with him. As the Cabinet, however, advised unanimously a different course, I stated that I would for the present yield to their views and conform my action to them. I expressed my opinion also, that although Gen'l Scott had committed the first wrong, yet Mr. Trist had fallen into some gross errors in his correspondence with him, and that if it had been decided to recal[l] Gen'l Scott I thought the public good would make it proper to recal[l] Mr. Trist also. As Gen'l Scott was not to be recalled, for the present at least, I concurred with the Cabinet that Mr. Trist should remain for the present. I expressed the opinion that it might be proper to associate some distinguished citizen with Mr. Trist in his mission, & suggested the names of Mr. Souleé[1] of Louisiana, and Col. Jefferson Davis of Mississippi, as persons qualified for such a mission. The names of others were also mentioned. The Subject was discussed for some time, but the suggestion being a new one a decision upon it was postponed. It was agreed unanimously that the Secretary of War should address a strong despatch to Gen'l Scott reviewing his conduct and strongly condemning it; and that Mr. Buchanan

[1] Pierre Soulé, native of France, 1802–1870, Senator from Louisiana 1847, and 1849–1853, minister to Spain 1853–1855.

should address a like despatch to Mr. Trist condemning his conduct; and that both despatches should command them to cease their correspondence and personal controversy and to act in harmony, each in his respective sphere, in obeying the orders, and carrying out the views of the Government. It appears from Gen'l Scott's last despatch that he has broken up the post at Jalappa, and left his rear unprotected. Unless, being upon the spot, he has military reasons of which I am not possessed for taking so hazardous a step, I cannot approve it. It strikes me that it is all-important for him to keep his rear open to Vera Cruz. His order closes all communication, unless it be by a very strong force, between his army and Vera Cruz, and between his army and the Government.

The Cabinet adjourned between 3 & 4 O'Clock P. M. I disposed of some small matters of business on my table.

This was one of the regular evenings for receiving company. A number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

SATURDAY, *10th July, 1847.*— As there was a Cabinet meeting on yesterday it was not deemed necessary to hold one to-day, this being the regular day for the me[e]ting of the Cabinet. I saw, in the course of the day, several of the members of the Cabinet at different times and transacted business with them. I read to the Secretary of War two letters which had arrived in my absence, the one from Paymaster Reynolds, written at New Orleans, and the

other from Maj'r Gen'l Pillow, written at Vera Cruz, both making statements of enormous abuses in the Quarter-master's & commissary's Department. The Secretary of War stated that [he had] often conversed with Gen'l Jesup on the subject of abuses in the Quarter-master's Department, & had done every thing in his power to have alleged abuses corrected. He suggested to me that it would have a good effect if I would send for Gen'l Jesup and Gen'l Gibson, and read them these letters and converse with them on the subject. I told him I would do so. I accordingly addressed a note to Gen'l Jesup & Gen'l Gibson, and they called between 7 & 8 O'Clock P. M. Gen'l Gibson called first and I had read to him a part of the letters before Gen'l Jesup came in. When Gen'l Jesup came I stated to him that I had received such letters from two officers, representing great abuses and frauds in his Department and in the commissary's Dept., at New Orleans & Vera Cruz. I told him I had sent for him and Gen'l Gibson that I might read such parts of these letters as related to the subject to them, with a view to call their attention to the facts stated, that the proper corrective might be applied if it was found that such abuses and frauds existed. I opened one of the letters & was about to read, premising doing so by stating that they were from officers in whom I had confidence, and that it was unnecessary to give their names. Gen'l Jesup seemed to be excited and spoke very petulantly, and required the names, and seemed to be averse to hearing the letters without the names. I promptly replied in an emphatic and

spirited tone that I was the judge of that, and that it was his duty, if the President of the U. S. gave him information of alleged abuses by the subordinate officers of his department, to take prompt steps to correct them. I told him that the names of my informants were not necessary to enable him to do this; that if false information had been given to me and I as[c]ertained the fact to be so, I would judge of the propriety of arresting and trying officers who gave the information. I told him that I withheld the names because, if it was understood in the army that any officer who gave information to me in unofficial letters of abuses which he had observed, was to have his name given up before an investigation could be had, that many officers who might not desire to become accusers, would with-hold the information. Such officers, too, might observe general abuses which ought to be known, in order to be corrected, but might not be able to adduce proof fixing the fault on any particular officer. If the names were given, moreover, they would be persecuted by those [who] perpetrated the abuses & frauds. I spoke in such a tone that Gen'l Jesup said he was satisfied. I read the letters and had a full conversation with Gen'l Jesup & Gen'l Gibson in relation to the management by their subordinates of their respective Departments. I told them that I had not sent for them to find fault with the conduct of either of them, but to place them in possession of complaints which had reached me against the careless and wasteful, if not corrupt conduct, in the conduct of some of their subordinates. I told them that I

desired them to exercise vigilance, & prevent, as far as it was practicable, the perpetration of such abuses as were alleged. They retired, & I hope my interview with them may do some good.

In the course of the day I saw several persons who called, and attended to the business on my table.

SUNDAY, *11th July, 1847.*— I attended the first Presbyterian church to-day in company with the wife of my brother, Wm. H. Polk, who is spending some days at the Presidential mansion with her husband. They were married in N. York on the 29th ultimo.

MONDAY, *12th July, 1847.*— I was occupied to-day in attending to the business on my table. I saw several of the members of the Cabinet and other public officers, & transacted public business with them. The Secretary of State & the Secretary of War called together and read to me despatches which the former had prepared to Mr. Trist and the latter to Gen'l Scott, in pursuance of the resolve of the Cabinet on friday, the 9th Instant (see this diary of that day). I approved these despatches.

The Secretary of War laid before me despatches which he had received from Gen'l Taylor at Monterey, of as late date as the 16th of June. In one of these despatches Gen'l Taylor repeats the opinion which he had previously expressed that he could not march with his present force on San Louis Potosi, and advises that he shall not attempt it, but occupy a defensive line. He states further that he will encamp

the forces not required to maintain his present position at the town of Muir [?], and intimates that a part of his forces may be spared to re-inforce Gen'l Scott's column. I informed the Secretary of War that I approved this suggestion, and that I thought an order should be given to Gen'l Taylor to send all the forces which he did not require to maintain his present position to Gen'l Scott's column. No positive direction was given, but I will bring the subject before the Cabinet on to-morrow. I saw many visitors to-day, office seekers & others.

I gave a small dinner-party to my brother & his wife to-day. Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Marcy & his wife, Mr. Mason & his wife, Mr. Daniel Graham & his wife, Senator Downes of Louisiana & two young ladies who were with him (Miss Barrett & Miss McCaleb) Judge Woodworth of N. Y., & Mr. Arnold Harris of Arkansas, were of the party.

The weather is extremely warm, & after dinner I transacted but little business.

TUESDAY, *13th July, 1847.*—The Cabinet met at the usual hour to-day, all the members present. The Secretary of War read a despatch which he had prepared to Gen'l Scott, in pursuance of the decision of the Cabinet at a special meeting on friday last. The Secretary of State also read a despatch which he had prepared to Mr. Trist, now with the Head Quarters of Gen'l Scott. This was also prepared in pursuance of the decision of the Cabinet at its special meeting on friday last (see this diary of that day). Both despatches were fully discussed, and modified

in some particulars, not very important. Other matters connected with Mexico & the prosecution of the War were considered. Gen'l Scott has undoubtedly committed a great military error by breaking up the post at Jalapa & leaving his whole rear exposed to the enemy. Our latest accounts are that Gen'l Cadwallader was marching with a reinforcement of some 1,500 or 1,800 men, and that Gen'l Pillow was marching some days in Gen'l Cadwallader's rear with a force of 1800 or 2000 men, both from Vera Cruz, to Gen'l Scott at Puebla, and that both had been several times attacked by large guerrilla parties & were fighting their way through them. The guerrillas were undoubtedly encouraged to make these attacks by the fact, which was known to them, that Gen'l Scott had left his rear unprotected.

The Secretary of War read a despatch from Gen'l Taylor of the 16th of June, in which he represents the impracticability of his making a forward movement upon San Louis Potosi, and recommends that he should occupy a defensive line and send all the troops destined for his immediate command to Gen'l Scott's column. In these views of Gen'l Taylor in this respect I fully concurred, as did the Secretary, and the Secretary of War was directed to prepare a despatch to Gen'l Taylor directing him to send to Gen'l Scott's column all the troops which he did not require to [maintain] the defensive line which he proposed to hold. Col. Lewis D. Wilson[1] of N. Carolina, who is the Colonel Commandant of one of

[1] Louis D. Wilson, Colonel of the Twelfth Infantry, died August 12, 1847.

the 10 Regiments raised in pursuance of the act of Congress of February last, called to-day. He had returned from Mexico a few days ago, and was now on his return. Being engaged when he called, I requested him to call again in the evening. He did so about 8 O'Clock P. M. The Secretary of War was present. I had a full conversation with him in reference to the present state of things in Mexico, and communicated to him confidentially the facts, as far as they are known, of the unfortunate controversy between Gen'l Scott and Mr. Trist. I deemed it proper to do this in the hope that when he arrived at the Head Quarters of Gen'l Scott he might be enabled to interpose between them & induce them to act in harmony, with a view to the conclusion of an honourable peace. I expressed to him my conviction that this unjustifiable and foolish conduct of Scott in the first place, and the error of Trist in the second place, in his foolish correspondence with him, had been the cause of suffering the propitious moment for making a peace to pass.

Before I concluded the conversation with Col. Wilson I was called to the parlour to see company, this being my regular evening for seeing company. After the company dispersed Col. Wilson returned to my office & I finished the conversation with him. Col. Wilson will leave here on to-morrow morning, & will be the bearer of the despatch of the Secretary of War to Gen'l Scott, and of the Secretary of State to Mr. Trist. He will proceed with the least possible delay to Vera Cruz.

Quite a number of persons, ladies and gentle-

men, called this evening & I received them in the parlour.

WEDNESDAY, *14th July, 1847.*— Col. Wilson of N. C. left for Vera Cruz this morning, bearing with him the despatches from the Secretary of War to Gen'l Scott and from the Secretary of State to Mr. Triste (see this diary of yesterday). I transacted business in my office until 11½ O'Clock A. M., when, accompanied by the Atto. Gen'l, I attended the annual commencement of the Columbian college in this City. I returned about 3 O'Clock P. M. and found many persons in waiting for me. They were chiefly office-seekers. None of them had any business of importance. In the course of the day I had official interviews with the Secretaries of State, War, and the Navy on official business relating to their respective Departments. Late in the day the Secretary of War sent to me the draft of a despatch to Gen'l Taylor, prepared in pursuance of my directions on yesterday. I read it hastily, but postponed a more careful examination of it until to-morrow. At 8 O'Clock P. M. Gen'l Jesup called, & I had a conversation with [him] in relation to the business of his Department, and in reference to the matters which I had brought to his notice on Saturday evening last (see this diary of that day). He was in a pleasant humour and seemed to be desirous to correct alleged abuses and, so far as his duties were concerned, to promote the public interests.

THURSDAY, *15th July, 1847.*— I was engaged this morning in transacting various matters of busi-

ness which was [were] on my table, and with several of my Secretaries & other officers of Government. At 12 O'Clock M. I received Mr. Bodisco, the Russian Minister, who called on an official visit, in the parlour below stairs. He delivered to me an official letter from the Emperor, his sovereign, announcing the important event of the birth of a grandchild. This ceremony which has been often repeated since I have been President by the Representatives of Foreign [governments] is to a plain American citizen a most ridicilous one. I said to Mr. Bodisco jocosely that I was sorry I could not reciprocate the civility by making a similar announcement on my part. When Mr. Pakenham, the Brittish Minister, announced to me some months ago that Victoria, his sovereign, had given birth to another child, I congratulated him upon the fact that there was no likelyhood of a failure in the direct line of a successor to the Throne. He replied humourously, "Oh! No Sir; I have made a similar announcement to this Government every year since Her Majesty has been married." I have of course to sign a stereotyped answer to all such communications. Had I not found such to be the settled practice I never would have signed or sent such answers.

Col. Anthony Butler, former Minister of the U. States to Mexico, called at 12½ O'Clock and held a long conversation with me about Mexican affairs, and with a view to obtain from the Government compensation for certain information which he had obtained about a passage from the Gulf of Mexico to

the Pacific through the Istmus of Tehuantepec. [T]he conversation was of no sort of interest to any one but himself. He occupied my time, however, for an hour or more. It is not the first time I have been thus annoyed. He called on yesterday, and insisted that I should appoint a time when he could have a private interview with me, and I granted his request under the impression that he wished to see me on some matter of great public importance. I revised with the Secretary of War the draft of his letter to Gen'l Taylor, the rough draft of which he sent me on yesterday. Some slight modifications in it were suggested and made.

I received a letter this evening from Maj'r Gen'l Pillow of the U. S. army, dated at Jalapa on the 28th of June. He was on his march from Vera Cruz to join Gen'l Scott with re-inforcements at Puebla. He disapproves Gen'l Scott's order breaking up the post at Jalapa & leaving his rear unprotected; and recommends that additional re-inforcements be speedily sent to the army.

After night Mr. Buchanan called and informed me that he had received by this evening's mail a despatch from Mr. Trist.

The Adj. [General] in pursuance of my direction furnished me to-day a statement of the amt. of force which had arrived at Vera Cruz & were in Gen'l Scott's column up to the date of the latest returns received at his office. They amounted to over 17,000 men. Other forces have been ordered to that column & are en route, besides the re-inforcements which will soon join him from Gen'l Taylor's column.

FRIDAY, *16th July, 1847.*— I sent for the Secretary of War this morning and conferred with him upon the necessity of speedily re-inforcing Gen'l Scott's column, and especially of opening his communication with Vera Cruz. With this view I suggested that the mounted Regiment from Texas under the command of Col. John C. Hays, who has a high character as an officer, be ordered to proceed without delay to Vera Cruz to co-operate with other troops in dispersing the bands of guerrillas who infest the road from Vera Cruz in Gen'l Scott's rear. He concurred in the suggestion, and in the course of the day sent to me the draft of a letter to Col. Hays to that effect. I suggested one or two modifications & returned [it]. I conferred very fully also with the Secretary of War in relation to many other details of military operations, all looking to the speedy strengthening of Gen'l Scott's column & opening his communication with his rear, which I cannot but think he acted very unwisely in closing.

I sent to Mr. Buchanan for the despatch which he had informed [me] last evening he had received from Mr. Trist. It conveyed very important information. Gen'l Scott & himself up to its date (13th of June) had held no personal intercourse. Mr. Trist had written to the Brittish Minister in Mexico, informing him that he was with the Head Quarters of the army and that he was invested with full Diplomatic Powers to negotiate for peace, & enquiring of that Minister if he would be the medium of delivering the despatch from Mr. Buchanan addressed to the minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico,

if it was forwarded to him. The Brittish minister without the least delay sent Mr. Thornton, his Secretary of Legation, to Puebla, where Mr. Trist was, who took the despatch and returned with it to Mexico. This was the same despatch which Gen'l Scott was ordered by the Secretary of War to convey to the Mexican Government, but who after having retained it several days after it had been conveyed to him with the Secretary's order by Mr. Trist, had failed to do so & returned it to Mr. Trist. Mr. Trist learned from Mr. Thornton that had it been delivered at the time Gen'l. Scott first received it, which was shortly after the battle of Cerro Gordo, there was but little doubt that peace would have been made. The protraction of the war may properly be attributed to the folly & ridiculous vanity of Gen'l Scott. He deserves to be recalled & tried for his disobedience of orders in refusing to forward the despatch by the first opportunity after he received it. Upon this point I have yielded my own opinion to the unanimous opinion of my Cabinet, at least for the present (see this diary of the 9th Instant).

I saw company at 1 O'Clock to-day. A large number attended. I transacted much business in the afternoon.

This was reception evening. A considerable number of ladies and gentlemen attended.

SATURDAY, *17th July, 1847*.—The Cabinet met at the usual hour this morning, all the members present. An hour or more was taken up in considering measures relating to the war, and to the orders which

had been issued within the last three days for withdrawing a part of Gen'l Taylor's forces & strengthening Scott's column. I am devoting all my time & energies to these matters, & am examining all the details of everything that is done, as far as it [is] possible for me to do so. The Secretary of War is almost overwhelmed with his labours, seems to be careworn, and is almost broken down with his great labours.

The Cabinet concurred in what had been done since the last meeting by the Secretary of War with my concurrence.

Mr. Buchanan read the despatch of Mr. Trist of the 13th of June, which I had examined on yesterday. The Cabinet were all of opinion that the golden moment for effecting a peace may have been lost by the failure of Gen'l Scott to forward the despatch of the Secretary of State to the Mexican Government, which had been borne to him by Mr. Trist and which he was ordered to forward by the Secretary of War as soon as it came into his possession (see this diary of the 9th & 16th Instant).

Some other matters connected with our Foreign relations, and particularly a difficulty which had arisen between the French consul in California & Li[eu]t. Col. Fremont, were brought forward by Mr. Buchanan & considered.

After the Cabinet adjourned, I transacted business as usual.

At 6 O'Clock this morning my brother, William H. Polk, and his wife, who have been in my family for several days, left for New York.

There was music as usual on the President's grounds this afternoon, after which Mrs. Madison, Miss Payne, Mr. Buchanan, Judge Mason, Mr. Cave Johnson, & his wife, took tea with my family.

SUNDAY, *18th July, 1847.*— I attended the Methodist Church (The Rev'd Mr. Slicer's) to-day. I was accompanied by Daniel Graham, Esqr., of Tennessee, now Register of the Treasury. It was a Quarterly meeting of the church. Mr. Slicer did not preach. The Presiding Elder, whose name I did not learn, preached a good sermon from the text found in the 3rd verse of the 63rd Psalm.

The Secretary [of War] called to-night with a despatch which he received by this evening's mail from Mr. Dimond at Vera Cruz, transmitting a printed copy in Spanish of Mr. Buchanan's despatch of the 15th of April last to the Minister of Foreign affairs of Mexico, which was taken out by Mr. Trist and which Gen'l Scott has refused to forward as he has been ordered by the Secretary of War to do (see this diary). Gen'l Scott's course is deeply to be deplored as the delay in transmitting that despatch may defeat a peace.

MONDAY, *19th July, 1847.*— I sent for Mr. Buchanan this morning, and after consultation with him it was concluded to publish a copy of his despatch to the Mexican Government of the 15th of April, as it appears from a despatch received by the Secretary of War by last night's mail that it has been

published in Spanish in Mexico (see this diary of yesterday).

The Secretary of War called and read to me a despatch which he had prepared to Gen'l Scott in pursuance of a previous consultation with me, which I approved. I transacted other business with the Secretaries of State, War, and the Navy to-day.

I disposed of much business of an unimportant character which had accumulated on my table. At 1 O'Clock P. M. I opened my office for the reception of company. Many persons called, but none of them had any business of importance. Col. John D. Hawkins of N. C. happening to call near my Dinner Hour, I invited him to take a family Dinner with me and he did so. Judge Mason, who was in my office when dinner was announced, also dined with me.

By this evening's mail the Secretary of the Navy received despatches of the 4th Instant from Commodore Perry, who was at Vera Cruz, which I read.

TUESDAY, *20th July, 1847.*— I disposed of much business of detail which was on my table this morning. The Cabinet met at the usual hour, all the members present.

Mr. Buchanan read despatches which he had received from [the] U. S. ministers to Denmark & Constantinople, and a private letter from the U. S. Minister to Prussia. They were not important. Some other subjects, chiefly relating to the War with Mexico, were considered. There being nothing

very important presented for consideration to-day, the Cabinet held a shorter session than usual. They adjourned between 1 & 2 O'Clock P. M.

This being reception evening a number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

WEDNESDAY, *21st July, 1847.*—This morning was occupied as usual in attending to the business of my office. I conferred severally with the Secretaries of State, War, and the Navy, and transacted business with them. At 1 O'Clock P. M. I opened my office for the reception of company. A number of persons called, but they had no more important business than to seek office. As I had no offices to fill, I despatched [them] very summarily. In the afternoon I continued to dispose of various matters of business in my office, but nothing of much importance was attended to.

Mr. Whitaker of N. C., a bearer of despatches to Gen'l Taylor, left this morning for his Head Quarters.

THURSDAY, *22nd July, 1847.*—Nothing of interest transpired to-day. I attended as usual to various matters of business with some of my sec[r]etaries and other public officers. Despatches were received by last evening's mail from Gen'l Kearney in California and from Commodore Shuberick[1] and Commodore Biddle in the Pacific, from which it appears that the unfortunate collision between the

[1] William B. Shubrick, on duty with the Pacific Squadron in 1847.

officers of the army and Navy in that distant region, in regard to their respective rank, had been adjusted, & that they were acting in harmony. I opened my office at 1 O'Clock P. M. when a number of persons called. None of them had any business of importance. I disposed of several matters of business on my table in the course of the day.

Mr. Lisboa, the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from Brazil, called at 12 O'Clock and presented a letter from the Emperor of Brazil, his sovereign, recalling him from his Mission. The cause of the recall of Mr. Lisboa he did not state, but I understand it to be in consequence of the adjustment made by Mr. Lisboa with Mr. Buchanan last winter in relation to the imprisonment by the authorities of Brazil of Lieut. Davis and three sailors of the U. S. Navy at Rio in November last. In answer to Mr. Lisboa's speech which expressed his kind feelings for the Government & people of the U. S., & his gratitude for the manner in which he had been received & treated during his residence here, I expressed to him my regret at his recall, and assured him of the good feeling of the Government & people of the U. S. towards him. I informed him that in answer to the Emperor's Letter which he had just delivered to me I would take pleasure in expressing these opinions. He appeared to be much affected & deeply grateful to me for the expression of these sentiments.

The Secretary of the Treasury (Hon. Rob't J. Walker) left Washington this morning with the intention of spending a few days on the sea-shore for

the benefit of his health, which has been for some time very feeble. Intending to attend to some public business during his absence, he took two clerks of his Department with him.

FRIDAY, *23rd July, 1847.*— The Secretary of the Navy called at an early hour this morning and read to me despatches which he had received from Commodores Biddle, Shubrick, & Stockton in the Pacific. They related to affairs on the West coast, and particularly in California. I read to him a despatch received by the War Department from Gen'l Kearney, commander of the land-forces in California.

At 1 O'Clock P. M. my office was opened as usual for the reception of company. Quite a number of persons called; almost the whole of them were seeking office. As there were no vacancies to fill I disposed of them quite summarily. I disposed of several matters of business on my table.

This was reception evening. A few persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

The Secretary of War, I learn, is confined to his house by indisposition to-day.

SATURDAY, *24th July, 1847.*— My brother, William H. Polk, reached Washington from New York in this morning's train of cars, and took up his quarters at the Presidential Mansion. He left his wife with her friends in N. York and is on his way to visit his relations in Tennessee.

The Cabinet met at the usual hour, all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury,

who is absent from the City for the benefit of his health, and the Secretary of War, who is confined to his house by indisposition. Some matters of minor importance were considered and disposed of.

One incident occurred in the Cabinet which I will note. It was this.—I called Mr. Buchanan's attention to a letter which had been prepared at the Department of State and sent to me for my signature, addressed to the Emperor of Brazil, in answer to the Emperor's letter notifying me of the recall of Mr. Lisboa as Envoy Extraordinary & Minister Plenipotentiary to the U. S. (see this diary of the 22nd Instant). To one part of it I took exceptions & remarked that I thought it was unusual in similar cases and improper. It was that part of the letter which informed the Emperor that he might place full credence in whatever Mr. Lisboa might say to him in my behalf. I told Mr. Buchanan that this was usual in a letter of credence given to our own Ministers who went abroad, but that I was not aware that it had ever been done with a Foreign Minister on his return to his own country. I told Mr. Buchanan that that part of the letter which expressed my satisfaction with Mr. Lisboa's conduct as the representative of his Sovereign near this Government, and that part of it which expressed my respect for the Emperor & my desire that the most amicable relations should exist between the Governments of Brazil & the U. S. should continue, was proper; but that I objected to that part of it which informed the Emperor that he should give full credence to whatever Mr. Lisboa might say to him on my part. Mr.

Buchanan replied that the part of the letter which I objected to was the usual form of such letters in such cases, that it was indeed the Stereotype form, from which Mr. Hunter, one of his clerks, had prepared it for my signature. I repeated that such was not my recollection, and that if it was so it was wrong. He insisted that he was right. I then jocosely said to him, I will stand you a basket of champaign that this letter is not in the usual form as you insist, and that the precedents in the State Department will not sustain it. He promptly said, Done, I take you up, and rising in a fine humour, said, now I will go over to the Department & bring the precedents. I replied, very well. He left my office and after some time returned with a bound letter book, remarking as he entered the office, I think I have got you. He said, now I will read you a letter from Gen'l Jackson to the King of the French. When the letter was read it did not sustain Mr. Buchanan, and had no such paragraph in it. Mr. Buchanan admitted that they were not similar. He searched the letter book for sometime and could find no such precedent. He seemed to be confounded & disappointed & said, Well, if I don't find such a precedent to-day, I will send you the basket of champaign. I smiled and told him I would not accept it, and that I had been jesting when I proposed [it], and had done so only to express in an earnest manner my conviction that I was right. But, he said, if I had won it I would have made you pay it, & I will pay it to you. I repeated that I would

not accept it. I record this incident for the purpose of showing how necessary it is for me to give my vigilent attention even to the forms & details of my [subordinates'] duties. The truth of the matter is that Mr. Buchanan had trusted the preperation of the letter to his clerk, in whom he had confidence, and concluded that it was, of course, in the usual form. The Clerk no doubt made the mistake because Mr. Buchanan [said] that I desired in my letter to the Emperor to express my satisfaction with Mr. Lisboa's conduct as minister of Brazil since I had been President. The members of the Cabinet laughed heartily at this incident. Mr. Buchanan, after the Cabinet adjourned, took the draft of the letter back to the Department and had another prepared omitting the exceptionable paragraph, and sent it to me and I signed it.

I disposed of some unimportant business after the Cabinet adjourned.

SUNDAY, *25th July, 1847.*— I attended the first Presbyterian church to-day and was accompanied by Mrs. J. Knox Walker and her little daughter and by Mrs. Daniel Graham. The clergyman who preached was a very young man. His name was Dashield. He is, I understand, the son of a clergyman of that name who had a congregation for some time at Franklin, Tennessee, and who now has a congregation at Shelbyville, Tennessee. I knew the father when he resided at Franklin. The son, I understand, has just finished his course at one of the

Theological Seminaries at the North, and has just obtained orders to preach. His sermon to-day was a fair one for a man of his age.

MONDAY, *26th July, 1847.*—Nothing of much importance transpired to-day. Before 10 O'Clock A. M. I was called upon to know what decision I had made on the application of a man named Krouse[?] of D. C., convicted of an assault with intent to kill, for a pardon. On the papers before me, I had on saturday night declined for the present to grant the pardon, and so endorsed on the papers. The Mayor of Georgetown called about 12 O'Clock, and made an earnest appeal to me to interpose. I still declined, thought [though] not without some doubts. The Mayor (Mr. Addison) left me & in the course of one or two hours returned with a note from Judge Crawford, who had tried the case, somewhat modifying the views expressed in a letter addressed to me on saturday last. I then requested him to go and request Judge Crawford and Mr. Key, the U. S. Attorney, to call on me. They did so, & I held a personal conversation with them, the result of which was a change in my decision on the case made on saturday, & I granted the pardon. I have endorsed on the papers the reasons for the action which I finally took. I note this case, among the hundreds of applications for pardons which are presented to me, because I became satisfied upon a personal conference with the Judge & U. S. Attorney, and with the Mayor [of] Georgetown, that the ends of the law had been vindicated in this case, and

being satisfied of this I did not hesitate to change my first decision & grant the pardon.

I opened my office for the reception of company at 1 O'Clock P. M. to-day. An unusual number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called; and, what is not usual, most of them had no business but to pay their respects to me. A few of them wished to obtain office. The Secretaries of State and of the Navy called in the course of the day on business. I disposed of the business on my table, but none of it was of such importance as to require special notice.

TUESDAY, *27th July, 1847.*— My brother, William H. Polk, left this morning on a visit to his mother and other relations in Tennessee. He left his wife with her relations in New York a few days ago.

This was the regular day for the meeting of the Cabinet. All the members attended at the usual hour except the Secretary of the Treasury, who is absent from Washington for the benefit of his health, and the Secretary of War, who has been confined to his house for several days by indisposition. As soon as the Cabinet assembled I informed them that I had nothing of importance to lay before them to-day, & enquired of them if either of them had anything requiring attention to submit. Each answered that he had not. I then informed them that I had accepted an invitation to attend the annual commencement of Georgetown College, D. C., to-day, if my public duties would permit, & that I would leave them in my office, unless they would accompany me.

They all declined except the Secretary of the Navy, who did accompany me. The exercises at the College were quite interesting. The young gentlemen who delivered speeches acquitted themselves well. Mr. Semmes, an alumnus of the college, delivered an able address. At the request of the President of the College I took a seat with him on the elevated platform after the speaking had closed, and delivered the Diplomas to the graduating class, and the medals & premiums to those who had distinguished themselves in their respective classes. I returned about 3½ O'Clock P. M. The Hon. John Blair & Mr. Boyce of Tennessee dined with me to-day.

This was reception evening. A number of ladies & gentlemen called.

WEDNESDAY, *28th July, 1847.*— The Summer Session of the Georgetown College closed its Session on yesterday, and DeWitt Clinton Yell, the son of the gallant Col. Yell of Arkansas, who fell at the battle of Buena Vista, came from the college where his father had placed him and remained at the Presidential mansion last night. He left this morning to visit his relations in the West, and would proceed directly to his Uncle, Gen'l. William Moore's, of Lincoln County, Tennessee. I gave him $50 to bear his expenses, and wrote a letter to Gen'l Moore (see my letter Book).

I transacted business with several of my Secretaries & other public officers to-day, and also disposed of several matters of business on my table; but nothing of much importance occurred.

The Secretary of War called at my office to-day for the first time in several days, having been detained at his home by indisposition.

THURSDAY, *29th July, 1847.*— I transacted business as usual in my office this morning. Between 11 & 12 O'Clock the Secretary of the Navy called on business, and shortly afterwards the Post master General & the Secretary of War, the latter having been indisposed for several days past. The subject of a publication of a letter of the Rev. Wm. McCalla in the newspapers, relating to the employment of two Catholic Priests to attend the army, was one of conversation. The letter of Mr. McCalla contains a positive and absolute falsehood, to wit, that in conversation with him I had informed him that I had sent them to the army nominally as chaplains, but really as spies. It was stated that the letter was attracting much public attention, would likely produce some excitement, and the question was whether the falsehood should not be contradicted in the newspapers. Upon this point there was doubt. The Statement made by Mr. McCalla I knew to be false, but whether the President of the U. S. could with propriety enter into a controversy with him upon a point necessarily involving a question of veracity, was very questionable. I sent for the Secretary of State, who thought no notice should be taken of it, but if there was, it should be a very positive but short denial of his statement by the Editors of the *Union*. The matter was finally left open & undecided. The conduct of Mr. McCalla in this matter

is of the basest character. He called on me some time ago and applied to me to appoint him a chaplain in the army. I had not before known him, & treated him, as I do all persons who call on me, courteously. I told him I could not gratify his wishes. He wished to know why I had appointed two Catholic clergymen to attend the army in the character of Chaplains. I told him that by law I had no power to appoint & commission chaplains, but that there were always many employes in an army, such as teamsters, labourers, bearers of despatches, couriers to bear & bring back information, &C. I informed him that early after the war with Mexico broke out, great efforts had been made to impress the mexicans with the belief that our object was to destroy their churches & make war upon their religion; that if this false impression should prevail generally among the mexicans, it would make the war one of ferocity & fanaticism. I told him that for the purpose of satisfying the mexican people that such was no part of the object of the War, it was deemed prudent to employ these Catholic Priests, who professed the same religion with the mexicans, to accompany the army, that they might disabuse their minds on this subject, & thereby not only mitigate the horrors of the war, but facilitate peace. Mr. McCalla manifested in the conversation much excitement, & a spirit of persecution and religious fanaticism against the Catholics. Indeed he seemed occasionally to speak like a deranged man on the subject. He left my office, having failed to get the office which he called to seek, and after the

lapse of several weeks had the baseness to state this falsehood, in answer to a letter of P. A. Brown,[1] a leading Native American of Phila., & his letter is published in the newspapers. I cannot adequately express the horror I feel for a man who can be so base as to veil his hypocrasy under the cloak of religion, and state the base falsehood he has done. If I were a private citizen I should have no hesitation in exposing him to the world, but it is doubted whether, as President of the U. S., I should descend from my station to notice him at all. His object is to produce a religious controversy in the country. He is a Whig & a religious fanatic, and from his publication it is clear to my mind that he is unprincipled.

I transacted business with other public officers & disposed of business on my table, but nothing worthy of special notice occurred.

The Hon. Mr. Hopkins,[2] Chargé d' affaires of the U. S. to Portugal, called this evening, and spent an hour or two with me. He is on his way to Portugal to enter upon the duties of his mission.

FRIDAY, *30th July, 1847.*—A telegraphic despatch was received about 8 O'Clock this morning from Richmond, Va., communicating later intelligence from the army, which if true is of great importance. It is to the effect that Gen'l Pierce had had an engagement with the enemy in considerable force at the National Bridge, and had routed them;

[1] Peter A. Browne of Philadelphia.

[2] George W. Hopkins of Virginia.

and that Gen'l Pillow had had an engagement with the enemy at a pass in the mountains beyond Jalapa, and had routed them, and had overtaken & joined Gen'l Cadwallader's command at Perote, and that the Mexican Government had appointed three commissioners to meet & treat with Mr. Trist at a place 8 leagues beyond Puebla. The telegraphic despatch also communicated the intelligence of an engagement of a body of our forces under Col. Derussy, who had formed a part of the garrison at Tampico, with a vastly superior number of the enemy, the result of which was that Col. Derussy lost 30 men killed & wounded & that the enemy lost 270 men killed & wounded, and the enemy fled to the chapperel.

The mail of to-night brings despatches from Vera Cruz of no later date than the 13th Inst. They in part confirm the telegraphic news. Other portions of this news were brought by the vessel which left Vera Cruz two or three days later. The news may be, and probably is, substantially true, but it rests mainly on the unauthenticated rumours which had reached Vera Cruz. All communication between Vera Cruz and Gen'l Scott's army had been cut off, except by strong bodies of troops.

SATURDAY, *31st July, 1847.*—The Cabinet met at the usual hour to-day; all the members present, except the Secretary of the Treasury, who is absent from the City for the benefit [of his health]. No very important subject of public policy was consid-

ered. Several questions of some importance, chiefly connected with our military operations in Mexico & the prosecution of the war, were considered and disposed of. One of these related to the relative rank of Volunteer officers in the service of the U. S. Gen'l Scott had decided in the case of the Palmetto S. C. Regiment, that they should take precedence of rank according to the priority of their being mustered into the service of the U. S. The commander[1] of the Palmetto Regiment insisted that Volunteer officers should take rank according to the date of their respective commissions from the States. The question was attended with its embarrassments & difficulties. After some discussion, there was some division of opinion in the Cabinet, but it was finally deemed to be inexpedient to disturb Gen'l Scott's decision for the present at least, he (Gen'l Scott) having organized the Volunteer forces under his command according to the decision which he had made, & the army was now acting under it.

Others questions, chiefly relating to details, were considered and disposed of.

I disposed of several matters of business on my table in the course of the day.

The Southern mail of this evening brought no further news from the seat of War, except something of details in relation to the vague & unsatisfactory news of yesterday.

SUNDAY, *1st August, 1847.*— I was somewhat in-

[1] Pierce M. Butler, killed at Cherubusco August 20, 1847.

disposed to-day and did not attend church as is my usual habit. I rested and remained quiet through the day, seeing no company. I had taken some cold & was, moreover, wearied by my unceasing labours & responsible duties in my office.

MONDAY, *2nd August, 1847.*— Monday is usually a busy day with me, and to-day has been so. During the morning & before my usual hour for receiving company, several persons who wished to see me sent in their names & I could not refuse to see them. I saw the Secretaries of State, War, & Navy & the Post Master Gen'l, & transacted business with them. I also disposed of several matters of business on my table. At 1 O'Clock P. M. I opened my office for the reception of company. An unusual number of persons called, most of them to pay their respects, but some as usual seeking office. Nothing of much interest transpired to-day.

TUESDAY, *3rd August, 1847.*— I was in my office as usual at an early hour this morning. The Cabinet met at the usual hour; all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury, who is absent from the City for the benefit of his health; and the Post Master General, who left the City this morning on a visit to Old Point Comfort for the benefit of his health. No subject of general importance engaged the attention of the Cabinet. Upon conferrence with the Secretary of War, I made several military appointments to fill vacancies which had occurred. Several other matters of minor importance were disposed of. At

6 O'Clock P. M. I took a ride with Judge Mason in his buggy.

At 8 O'Clock P. M. Mr. Buchanan called & reported to me an interview which Mr. Lear,[1] the acting Chargé d'affaires of Brazil, had sought & held with him this afternoon. The substance of Mr. Lear's communication was that he was instructed by his Government to make known that the adjustment of the difficulty in relation to the imprisonment of Lieut. Davis & two American sailors at Rio d'Janeiro, which had been made between Mr. Buchanan & Mr. Lisboa some months ago had been disavowed by his Government; and that his Government would refuse to receive & accredit Mr. Tod as Minister of the U. S. in Brazil, unless he went out clothed with authority to treat of an adjustment of that difficulty. Mr. Buchanan informed me that he told Mr. Lear that this was too grave a matter to be the subject of a verbal conferrence alone, & desired him to communicate in writing the orders of his Government. Mr. [Leal] replied that he would either do [so] in a note, and would furnish him with a copy of his instructions.

This was reception evening. Several persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

WEDNESDAY, *4th August, 1847*.— On going into my office this morning I found on my table a Telegraphic letter received at Washington at "4 O'Clock & 40 minutes" on yesterday as follows, viz:

[1] Señor Dom Felippe Pereira Leal, *chargé d'affaires ad interim* of Brazil at Washington 1847–1849.

"WHEELING, August 3rd, 1847.

For his Excellency
James K. Polk:

Mrs. Polk arrived here a few minutes since. She may be in Washington to-morrow night

S. RUSSMANN."

It seems that this communication was laid on my table last night, but my attention was not called to it by my messenger. At 7 O'Clock P. M. I rode in my carriage in company with Mrs. Walker & my nephew, Marshall T. Polk, to the Rail Road depot and awaited the arrival of the cars, but Mrs. Polk did not come. She probably rested instead of travelling last night, which was what I would have desired her to do, though I was very anxious to see her.

The Secretary of State (Mr. Buchanan) and my Private Secretary (J. Knox Walker) left at 12 O'Clock to-day on a visit of a few days to Old Point Comfort. I transacted business, but not of an important character, and saw several public officers on business in the course of the day. At 1 O'Clock P. M. I opened my office for the reception of visitors, when quite a number of persons called; a due proportion of them as usual were seeking office.

THURSDAY, *5th August, 1847.*— I was engaged as usual in my office to-day. I transacted business with public officers and disposed of several matters of official details on my table. I saw company at 1 O'Clock P. M. The Secretaries of War and of the Navy called on business in the course of the day. I

had anxiously hoped to receive intelligence from the army by this mail, but none was received. Mrs. Polk arrived at Washington this evening on her return from her visit to Tennessee. I met her with my carriage at the Rail Road depot about 7 O'Clock. She is in good health, but much fatigued by the journey.

FRIDAY, *6th August, 1847.*— Nothing worthy of note transpired to-day. I was in my office as usual, and transacted business on my table and with public officers who called. I saw company at 1 O'Clock P. M. It was a wet day and but few persons called.

This was reception evening, [but] being wet & damp, but few persons called.

SATURDAY, *7th August, 1847.*— This was the regular day for the meeting of the Cabinet. The Attorney Gen'l called at the usual hour of meeting and requested to be excused, as he was much engaged in his office in closing the examination of claims under the Peruvian Treaty,[1] this being the last day of the period limited by law for that purpose. He was excused and retired. The Secretaries of War and the Navy were the only members of the Cabinet who attended. The Secretary of State and the Post master General are absent on a visit to Old Point Comfort, and the Secretary of the Treasury on a visit to Rockaway, N. Y., for the benefit of his health. I held a long conversation with the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy on many points connected

[1] *U. S. Stat. at Large,* IX, 815–817.

with the War. The question of calling out 5,000 more volunteers was discussed, and it was finally concluded to postpone making such a call until further information should be received from Gen'l Scott, which we are expecting daily. It was decided to order Brigadier Generals Marshall and Lane of the Volunteers to proceed at once to Vera Cruz & join Gen'l Scott's army. It was agreed further that Maj'r Gen'l Butler's services were much needed in Gen'l Scott's army, if the State of the wound received at Monterey and his general health were such as to enable him to resume his command in the field. I[t] was agreed that I should write an unofficial letter to Gen'l Butler on the subject. I wrote the letter after night (see Letter Book). Gen'l Butler['s] presence with the army is desirable for many reasons, and among them are, first, that he would be 2nd in command, & 2nd, contingencies may arise soon that would require the chief command to be devolved on him, & 3rd, if any accident should happen to Gen'l Scott, or he should leave the army or be recalled, a question of rank might arise in the camp between Maj'r Gen'l Pillow and Brev[e]t Maj'r-Gen'l Worth. Gen'l Pillow would undoubtedly be entitled to the command, but I learn unofficially that Gen'l Scott has without authority assigned Gen'l Worth to his Brevet rank, and the Secretary of War apprehends that in the event of the absence of Gen'l Scott a question of rank might arise in the camp, which might be very embarrassing to the service. If Gen'l Butler is there this would be avoided. I have great confidence in Pillow, but

he is young in the service & the country do[es] not know his merits as well as I do.

SUNDAY, *8th August, 1847.*— I attended the first Presbyterian church to-day accompanied by Mrs. Polk and my nephew, Marshall T. Polk. The youngest child of my Private Secretary, J. Knox Walker, named Sarah Polk, has been very ill for several days, and is considered by Dr. Miller, the attending physician, to be in a very critical condition to-day. This afternoon the child was baptized by the Rev. Mr. French of the Episcopal Church. At the suggestion of Dr. Miller, he was requested to call in Dr. Hall as a consulting physician to-night. I wrote to J. Knox Walker (who is at Old Point Comfort) on friday night last, informing him of the extreme illness of his child and advising him to return to Washington immediately.

MONDAY, *9th August, 1847.*— I was in my office at the usual hour this morning. Between 8 & 9 O'Clock A. M. a Telegraphic despatch was received from Richmond to the effect that Gen'l Scott's army after an engagement with the enemy had entered & taken the City of Mexico. On the arrival of the mail this afternoon the same information was contained in the New Orleans [papers]. Though it may be true, it comes in a questionable shape and requires confirmation. No official despatches were received. I saw company today at 1 O'Clock P. M. as usual. A number of persons called, some to pay their respects and others seeking office. Learning

that the Secretary of War had been taken quite ill on yesterday, I called at his house this afternoon to see him, and found [him] in bed with a fever. This morning I wrote again to my private Secretary, J. Knox Walker, informing him that his sick child was no better, but was dangerously ill, and requesting him to return to Washington immediately. The child, I fear, will die. Col. Walker is at Old Point Comfort, having gone down with Mr. Buchanan to spend a few days at that place. I transacted business in my office as usual to-day, but nothing of much interest occurred.

The Secretary of War was taken quite ill on yesterday. I called to see him at his house this afternoon and found him in his bed. He was better than he was yesterday, but was still quite sick. I received to-day a despatch prepared by Mr. Buchanan, who is spending a few days at Old Point Comfort, to Mr. Donelson, the U. S. Minister to Prussia. He sent [it] to me for my approval. I approved it and directed Mr. Derrick, the acting Secretary of State, to transmit it to Mr. Donelson.

TUESDAY, *10th August, 1847.*— My Private Secretary, J. Knox Walker, returned from Old Point Comfort this morning. His child is still very sick and its recovery doubtful.

This was the regular day for the meeting of the Cabinet. The Secretary of the Navy & the Atto. Gen'l were all who attended. The Secretary of War is confined to his house by sickness. The Secretary of the Treasury is at Rockaway, N. Y., for

the benefit of his health, & the Secretary of State and the Post Master General are at Old Point Comfort. No business of importance was transacted. I saw some of the subordinate officers, and transacted business with them. I also disposed of many matters of detail which had accumulated on my table.

This was reception evening. Quite a number of persons, ladies and gentlemen, called.

WEDNESDAY, *11th August, 1847.*— This morning I sent my nephew, Marshall T. Polk, to a school on the heights of Georgetown of which the Rev'd[s] Mr. Whittingham and Spencer, are Principal[s]. I have had him at Georgetown College for the last two years. He is idle & inattentive to his studies, & indeed has made very little progress in that time. It gives me great pain to find that he has disregarded my repeated admonitions & is so inattentive to his studies. It is now vacation at the college, and I conclude to give him another trial at the school to which I now send him. If I find that he does no better than he has done, I must send him home to his mother. I transacted business in my office as usual to-day, and saw an unusual number of visitors. Nothing transpired which is worthy of being noted.

I omitted to note in this diary of yesterday that among other[s] who called was the Hon. Mr. Leake,[1] a member of the last Congress from Virginia. He desired to obtain an appointment as

[1] Shelton F. Leake, Representative from Virginia 1845–1847, and 1859–1861.

charge d'affaires abroad. There was no place vacant. Such personal applications are extremely embarrassing and painful to me.

THURSDAY, *12th August, 1847.*—This morning I directed my porter to admit no company before 2 O'Clock, unless they were officers of the Government, or persons who might represent that they wished to see me on important public business. Senator Bagby and a few others were admitted before that hour. I gave this order because much of my time is very unprofitably consumed by the unceasing calls of office-seekers & persons who have no business with me. I wished to-day to commence the preparation of my reasons, to be communicated to the next Congress, for withholding my assent to a Harbour Bill, presented to me on the last day of the last Session of Congress, and which Bill I retained in my possession for want of time to assign my reasons for not approving it. I deemed this a more leisure [leisurely] time to prepare my message than I would have as the next Session of Congress approaches. I commenced my paper and made some progress in it.

At 2 O'Clock P. M. I opened my office, but few persons called. The Secretary of War is still confined to his house by sickness. I called to see him this evening & was glad to find him better than he had been for several days past. I transacted business with the adj't Gen'l of the army to-day, which would have been transacted with the Secretary of War had his health permitted him to attend to it. I disposed of several matters of business which had

accumulated on my table. Yesterday and to-day have been very warm days.

FRIDAY, *13th August, 1847.*— I kept my office closed until 2 O'Clock to-day. I saw officers of the Government and a few other persons before that hour. Among them were Maj'r General Patterson of the U. S. army and his aid-de-camp, Col. Abercrombie. Gen'l Patterson came to Washington, as I presume, to receive orders for further service. He has been at home at his residence in Philadelphia since the discharge of the 12 months volunteers in June last. Nothing of much importance occurred to-day. I transacted business in my office as usual.

This being one of the regular evenings set apart for the reception of company, a number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

I called to see the Secretary of War this evening and found him much better. He has been confined to his house for several days by indisposition.

SATURDAY, *14th August, 1847.*— This was the regular day for the meeting of the Cabinet. All the members were present except the Secretary of State & the Secretary of the Treasury, who are still absent from the City. The Post Master General returned from Old Point Comfort, where he had spent a few days, last evening. The Secretary of War had so far recovered from his illness as to be present for a short time. Several matters of business, chiefly of detail but not of general importance, were con-

sidered and disposed of. I saw the adj't Gen'l on business. After obtaining information from him as to the present disposition of the volunteer forces in Mexico, I called in the afternoon to see the Secretary of War at his house, and after consulting with him, it was determined to order Maj'r Gen'l Patterson to proceed to Vera Cruz, report to Gen'l Scott, and resume his command. I sent for Gen'l Patterson after night and informed him that orders to this effect would be issued to him on Monday next. He said that was what he desired, and that he would proceed to the seat of War as soon as he could return home and attend to some private business, which might require possibly a week's time. I had a full conversation with Gen'l Patterson in relation to the War and the operations of the army in Mexico. Despatches were received from Lie[u]t. Col. Wilson, Military commander at Vera Cruz, Col. Louis D. Wilson of the 12th Infantry, and Mr. Dimond of the Quarter master's Department by this evening's mail, bearing date as late as the 1st Instant. No despatches were received from Gen'l Scott. We learn from the despatches from Vera Cruz that Gen'l Scott was still at Puebla on the 30th of July, and that he would probably march upon the City of Mexico in a day or two. Gen'l Pierce was at Perote on his march to join him, and as soon as he reached him Gen'l Scott would probably move forward. The prospects of peace were still uncertain. No steps had been taken by the Mexican Government to meet & negotiate with Mr. Trist, though it was rumoured they would do so, rather than suffer

the American army to enter their Capital. All this however rests on rumour and may not be true.

SUNDAY, *15th August, 1847.*— I attended the First Presbyterian church to-day accompanied by Mrs. Polk, Mrs. Daniel Graham, & my nephew, Marshall T. Polk. We took Mrs. Graham into the carriage on our way to the church.

MONDAY, *16th August, 1847.*— Mr. Buchanan, the Secretary of State, called this morning, after an absence of several days from the City on a visit to Old Point Comfort. The Secretary of War, I learn, is again confined to his house by sickness. I had important business with him, but learn that he [is] so ill as to make it prudent for him to see no company. I sent for the adj't Gen'l and gave him directions in regard to a part of the business about which I wished to see the Secretary of War. I saw also some other public officers on business, and transacted business as usual in my office. I saw company at 2 O'Clock P. M.

The information for several days past has indicated the probable defeat of Gov. A. V. Brown [1] and of the Democratic party in the Tennessee election. This is contrary to the information which I had received from many sources before the election. I attribute this result mainly to the following causes, *viz.,* 1st, The Taylor feeling, which the Democratic

[1] Aaron Venable Brown, 1795–1859, Governor of Tennessee 1845–1847, Postmaster General during Buchanan's administration.

party have been afraid to meet boldly by taking the ground that they would oppose him or any other man, who refused to avow his principles, and who was not the regularly nominated candidate of his party. This was the mistake committed in the canvass in Tennessee.

2nd, The dispensation of the patronage of the Federal Government, and especially in the appointments to military offices, has given offense to many leading men in the State, who have been lukewarm & inactive. All the leading men in Tennessee know me personally, and many of them aspire to high commands in the army who could not be gratified. It illustrates beyond doubt the truth of the opinion which I have long since formed that the Patronage must necessarily [weaken] any President. Many of the leading [men] of the Democratic party whose political principles hang loosely about them, and who have sought office from me and have been disappointed, not [only] in Tennessee but throughout the Union, have taken ground & led off in favour of Gen'l Taylor. They have no higher object than to have another chance for getting an office if he should be elected.

3rd, Another cause of the result in Tennessee, [is] the over-confidence of the Democratic party in their strength, and the consequent failure to make the proper exertion in the late contest.

TUESDAY, *17th August, 1847.*— Before the hour for the meeting of the Cabinet to-day Senator Benton called. He returned to Washington from the

West, he informed me, two or three days ago. After some general conversation of a pleasant character he introduced the subject of the difficulty between Col. Fremont (his son-in-law) and Gen'l Kearney in California. He remarked that he had some time ago addressed a letter to the Adj't Gen'l demanding that Col. Fremont should be recalled and a Court of Inquiry organized in his case, as due to the Col's honour & military character. I replied that I had read his communication, but that it had not been deemed necessary to take any action upon it. I told him that there had been some difficulty between the officers in California, which I much regretted, and that I had hoped it might not be necessary to institute any trial by a Court Martial. I also made a general remark to the effect that I had not deemed it necessary to do so. Gen'l Benton to this remarked in substance, I am glad to hear from you, Sir, as President of the U. States, that there has been nothing in Col. Fremont's conduct which requires a Court Martial in his case. I instantly said to him that he must not understand me as expressing any opinion in reference to the difficulty which had arisen between Col. Fremont, Gen'l Kearney, & Commodore Stockton in California; but that what I meant to say was that I hoped that the difficulty upon the arrival of the instructions of the 5th of November last had been settled, that they would act in harmony in carrying out the views of the Government, and that it might not be necessary to institute proceedings by a Court Martial in reference to the matter, & that I desired to avoid doing so if it could

be done. To this Gen'l Benton said there was of course no commitment on my part. I told him certainly not, that if proceedings by Court Martial did take place, I would, in a certain contingency, have to act officially, and ought not & could not with propriety decide or express an opinion in advance in reference to the matter. He said he did not desire me to have anything to do with it, unless it should come regularly before me for my official action; that he had addressed his communication demanding a Court Martial to the adj't Gen'l, and not to the Secretary of War or the President, that he had done so purposely that the case might take the usual course, according to military usage & law. He then remarked that he was a Senator & I was President, & that each would act officially in his place, without reference to any former friendships between us; and added he should introduce a resolution into the Senate institution [instituting] a full investigation into this whole California business. I answered him with some spirit that so far as the administration was concerned I had nothing to fear from the most searching investigation, and indeed that [I] would court such an investigation as he proposed to institute. He remarked that he did not propose it in reference to the conduct of the administration, but that investigations before Courts Martial were technical and limited, but in the Senate they could be broad & full & embrace transactions & matters which a Court Martial could not take cognizance of. I repeated that I could have no objection to the fullest and broadest investigation which might be instituted.

He said such investigations were usual in the British Parliament, where all matters could be spread before the public. I then said to Gen'l Benton that he could, if he wished, have access to all the official correspondence between the War & Navy Departments with Com. Stockton & Gen'l Kearney, and to all the records of the action of those Departments in relation to difficulty which had occurred between our officers in California. I told him that I thought he ought to see them before he took action in relation to the Court of Enquiry, & that I desired that he should do so if he desired it. I told him that every facility would be afforded him at the War & Navy Departments for that purpose, if he desired to do so. He thanked me. He was evidently much excited, but suppressed his feelings and talked in a calm tone. While we were conversing on the subject, Mr. Buchanan came in & shortly afterwards Mr. Johnson, & the conversation ceased. Gen'l Benton retired & I communicated what had occurred to Mr. Buchanan & Mr. Johnson, and whilst I was doing so Mr. Mason came in, and afterwards Mr. Clifford. This was the regular day for the meeting of the Cabinet; all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury, who is still absent from the City, & the Secretary of War, who is confined to his house by sickness.

I submitted to the Cabinet whether more volunteers should be called out for the Mexican War. The situation of Gen'l Scott's army & the whole subject was fully considered. Each member of the Cabinet present individually expressed his opinion that the

additional force should be called out. Of the 50,000 volunteers authorized by the act of May, 1846, there remains 6,000 who have not been at any time during the war called into the service. The Cabinet advised me to call for this force. I concurred in the opinion that it would be prudent to do so. The state of the Treasury to meet the additional expense was mentioned, & after a short conversation, in which the opinion was expressed that there could be no doubt on that point, I remarked that I would send for Mr. McClintock Young, the Chief Clerk & acting Secretary of the Treasury, and inquire of him on the subject, in order to be perfectly sure. I did so, & Mr. Young called. He represented that a considerable part of the loan had not been called for, & that the receipts at N. York had been very large lately, and that the Treasury was in good condition. I requested Mr. Young to furnish me with a statement of the available means in the Treasury & also with the balance unexpended of the appropriations for the War Department, and especially under the head of the Pay, Quarter Master's, & Subsistence Departments. He said he would do so on to-morrow morning.

Mr. Buchanan informed me that he had received from the Charge d'affairs of Brazil the instructions sent by that Government disavowing the settlement made by their Minister, Mr. Lisboa, with Mr. Buchanan, in relation to the imprisonment of Lieut. Davis & two sailors of the U. S. Navy by the Brazilian authorities at Rio de Janeiro. Mr. Buchanan read a translation of the instructions. The subject

was discussed & it was agreed by the Cabinet that Mr. Buchanan should prepare an answer.

This was reception evening. A number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

WEDNESDAY, *18th August, 1847.*— Shortly after I entered my office this morning Mr. Buchanan called & informed me that he had called to see Gov. Marcy, Secretary of War, last night, and that from what the Secretary of War had said he had some apprehensions that the appropriations for the War Department might not hold out until the meeting of Congress, if the additional volunteer force[s] agreed in Cabinet on yesterday to be called out, were called. This struck me with great astonishment, and [I] at once said that this could not be possible, for the appropriations had been made for the fiscal year, which would not end until the 30th of June, 1848. I said to him, however, that Mr. Young, the acting Sec. of the Treasury, as he knew, would Report to me this morning. About 10 O'Clock the Secretary of War sent his messenger to inform me that he was better, but was very feeble, & that he would leave to-day at 12 O'Clock for New York & desired to see me before he left. He had informed me some days ago that as soon as he was able he would go to the North for the benefit of his health and to see his mother, who was in bad health. I went immediately to his house, & found him quite feeble, but still he thought himself able to travel. I told him that I would appoint Mr. Mason, the Secretary of the Navy, the acting Secretary of War during his absence from the seat of

Government, to which he agreed. I informed him of what Mr. Buchanan had told me of his conversation with him last evening, in relation to the appropriations for the War Department, & expressed to him my surprise that there should be any deficiency, if the fact was so, in the second month of the present fiscal year. He replied that Mr. Buchanan had probably not understood him, & expressed the opinion that there would be no deficiency before the meeting of Congress. I enquired particularly about the appropriations for the Quarter Master's Department. He replied that the appropriations were 12 or 13 millions, and that he had signed requisitions, he thought, for about 6 millions. I then asked him his opinion about calling out 6,000 additional volunteers, and informed him of the views of the Cabinet as expressed on yesterday. He concurred in opinion that they should be called out. I returned to my office & sent for Judge Mason & appointed him acting Secretary of the Navy [of War]. I requested Judge Mason, on taking charge of the War Department, to examine the amount of unexpended appropriations under each head of the app[rop]riation, & to ascertain the probable expenditure per month, if the 6,000 additional Volunteers were called out. After he left Mr. Young, the acting Secretary of the Treasury, [called] and submitted to me a statement of the condition of the Treasury, from which it appeared that there was now available between 9 & 10 millions of dollars, inclusive of the balance of the loan not yet called in. He submitted also a statement of balances of appropriations for

the War Department which remained unexpended. I was astounded when I saw the amount which had been expended in the Quarter-Master's and Commissaries' Departments, and had great apprehensions that the balances remaining would not last until the meeting of Congress. I immediately sent for Judge Mason, the acting Secretary of War, and gave him the information I had received. He informed me that he had called on the Bureau & Clerks in the War Department for a statement of the amount of expenses under each head and of the balance remaining of the appropriations for the present fiscal Year, and was surprised to find that there was no balance sheet, such as was kept in the Navy Department, which would show at a glance the information which was wanted. He said he could obtain the information at the 2nd Comptroller's Office but that each Department should keep its own accounts, as was done in the Navy Department, as a check upon the accounting officers of the Treasury. The greatest confusion and largest expenditure is in the Quarter Master's Department. Gen'l Jesup, the Head of that Bureau, is, I learn, absent from the City. He is wholly unfit for his place. I sent for Gen'l Gibson, the Commissary Gen'l, and conversed with him on the subject. I am greatly troubled upon the subject. I had not given, as I could not give, my personal attention to these expenditures, but took if [it] for granted that the Secretary of War had kept an eye to them, and that all was right. I have serious apprehensions that the appropriations for the Quartermaster's Department may not last

until the meeting of Congress. The Secretary of War, I suppose, has been so much occupied with other duties that he has not looked to the expenditures. I requested Judge Mason to write to Gen'l Jesup to return immediately to Washington. I will put a check upon him, and hereafter give all the attention to his operations which I possibly can, in the midst of my other constant & most responsible duties. The truth is that Gen'l Jesup and some others of the subordinate officers are wholly reckless and seem to act as though he [they] had no responsibility.

THURSDAY, *19th August, 1847.*— Judge Mason, the Acting Secretary of War, called over this morning & again expressed his astonishment at the large expenditures which had taken place in the Quarter master's Department, & [said] that unless a check was put upon Gen'l Jesup the whole fund appropriated by Congress for the fiscal year commencing on the 1st of July last, would not last more than a month longer. I told him a check must be put upon his reckless extravagance. I directed him to write immediately by Telegraph to Gen'l Jesup at New York, where I understand he is, ordering him immediately to Washington. None of his clerks seem to be able to give any explanation of the extraordinary development of the probable deficiency of his funds, and I will upon his return require him to explain it & hold him to a strict accountability. Judge Mason informed me that in case of necessity there were yet unexpended about a million & an half

of the Mexican hostility fund, which had been assigned to the Navy Department, being a part of the 10 millions appropriated by Congress in May, 1846, which he could transfer to the War Department. This relieved me somewhat, as it may enable me to avoid calling Congress together, though it does not excuse Gen'l Jesup. It is possible, & I think it cannot be otherwise, that the large amts. drawn from the Treasury by the Quarter Master's Department may be in the hands of disbursing officers at New Orleans and elsewhere, and may not have been expended. I hope it may turn out to be so. It is, I think, impossible that so large an amt. can have been expended in so short a time. When Gen'l Jesup arrives he will be able to explain how the matter stands. The accounts are badly kept in his office, or his clerks would be able to give more satisfactory explanations of their actual condition. The funds appropriated by Congress on every head or branch of the service, except the Quarter master's, & perhaps the Commissary's, are more than sufficient to last until after the meeting of Congress. This subject gives me great anxiety. I have postponed making a call for additional volunteers until I can see Gen'l Jesup, and learn more satisfactorily the condition of the State of the funds of the Quarter master's Department.

Gen'l Benton called to-day to introduce Col. Campbell of St. Louis. He was pleasant and agreeable. I mention this because after my conversation with him on tuesday last (See this diary of that day) I was not certain how this would be. I handed

to Gen'l Benton a letter which had been addressed to him by Col. Fremont and which was handed to me by Kit Carson on the 8th of June last. Mrs. Fremont had written to me from Missouri requesting me to return the letter.

I opened my office at 2 O'Clock P. M. to-day for the reception of company. Several persons, male and female, called. Some of them as usual were office seekers.

FRIDAY, *20th August, 1847.*— Judge Mason, the acting Secretary of War, called to-day and communicated to me a Report from the 2nd Comptroller of the Treasury, shewing the balances of appropriations remaining unexpended for the War Department for the present fiscal year. This Report I had called for two days ago, and especially as related to the Quarter master's and Commissary's Department[s]. It exhibited an astonishingly large amt. in these two Departments as having been drawn from the Treasury within the last two months. An explanation from Gen'l Jesup, the Quarter master General, is indispensible. This matter continues to give me great anxiety. Gen'l Jesup has not yet returned to Washington, but has been addressed at New York by telegraph requiring his immediate presence here. I disposed of much business on my table to-day. I was frequently inter[r]upted by calls through the day. I saw and transacted business with several of the public officers. At 2 O'Clock P. M. I opened my office for the reception of visitors. Many persons called, but none of them had

any business of more importance than to solicit me for office.

This being reception evening, quite a number of persons, ladies and gentlemen, called.

I saw McClintock Young, chief Clerk and acting Secretary of the Treasury, to-day, and directed him to write to Robt. J. Walker, Esqr., the Secretary of the Treasury, informing him that I deemed it important that he should return to the Seat of Government at his earliest convenience. The prudent management of the finances require[s] it.

SATURDAY, *21st August, 1847.*— The Cabinet met at the usual hour, all the members present except the Secretaries of the Treasury and of War, who are both absent from the City for the benefit of their health. I explained to the Cabinet the unexpected embarrassment which had come to my knowledge since the last meeting, in relation to the exhausted state of the funds in the Quarter master's Department, and that for that reason I had postponed making the call for additional volunteers, as the Cabinet had decided would be proper at their last meeting. The subject was discussed, and all were surprised at the enormous amount which had been drawn from the Treasury within the last two months. Judge Mason informed me that Gen'l Jesup, the Quarter Master Gen'l, had returned to Washington, and had informed him this morning that a large amnt. which had been drawn from the Treasury was yet unexpended in the hands of disbursing officers at New Orleans & in Mexico. There being nothing else of

importance before the Cabinet I immediately sent for Gen'l Jesup, that I might receive his explanation in person. All the members of the Cabinet retired except Judge Mason, the acting Secretary of War. Gen'l Jesup called. I exhibited to him the 2nd comptroller's Report received on yesterday, showing the very large amounts which he had drawn from the Treasury, and the comparatively small sum appropriated for the Quarter master's Department which yet remained in the Treasury, and asked an explanation. He stated that on the 1st day of the present month there was unexpended in the hands of Quarter masters at New Orleans & in Mexico upwards of four millions of Dollars, and after the expenditures of the present month were made there would still be in their hands a large sum. I enquired of him why so large a sum had been placed in their hands at one time & so long before it was needed. He stated that Gen'l Scott had estimated that he would require for his line of operations alone a million of Dollars per month, and that he had placed the funds where they would be available to meet the requisitions from the army in Mexico. I then told Gen'l Jesup that I had contemplated calling out 5,000 additional volunteers, but that during his absence from Washington, upon discovering the exhausted state of his funds, I had postponed doing so until he could return to Washington and give an explanation of the matter. I told him that on applying to the subordinate officers of his Department in his absence, they could give no explanation of the matter, and expressed to him my sur-

prise that the accounts were kept in such way that his books would not at all times show the amount of appropriations & expenditures under each distinct head. He said this could be learned at the 2nd Comptroller's office. I replied that each Department should be a check upon the other, and that the accounts of the Navy Department were so kept as to show at a glance the information which I had in vain sought to obtain from his office. I then told him that I wished to know whether, if I called out 5,000 additional Volunteers, he would have funds enough in the Quarter master's Department to defray expenses of the army with this additional force until after the meeting of Congress in December next. He replied that he would by making contracts to be paid after that time. He said there was an exception in the act of 1820 which prohibited such contracts as a general rule, by which the Quarter master Gen'l might make such contracts. I told him I would not, unless in a case of great emergency, sanction such contracts in advance of appropriations made by Congress, by which the faith of the Government would be pledged. He said that Congress had cut down and reduced his estimates for his Department at its last session, and appropriated much less than he had asked for. I asked him, if a million of Dollars of the 10 millions appropriated for Mexican hostilities in May, 1846, was transferred from the Navy Department to the Quarter master's service, if the funds of his Department would last until after the meeting of the next Session of Congress. He said he thought the fund would be sufficient to do so.

I then told him that I desired before I made a call for additional volunteers to know certainly that there would be no deficiency of funds in his Department, and directed him to examine the subject & Report to me. I told him to base his Report upon the number of troops now in the field and an addition to that number of 5 Regiments, say 4,500 men. I told him that I would not call for this additional force until I received his Report. Gen'l Jesup is a gallant officer, but I consider him unfit for the office of Quarter master General.

I was engaged during the afternoon in disposing of the business on my table.

After night my brother, Wm. H. Polk, came in, having just returned from his visit to Tennessee. He informed me that my nephew, Sam'l P. Walker, and my niece, Jane Barnett, and her husband had accompanied him from Tennessee & had stopped at Coleman's Hotel. My brother took up his quarters at the President's house.

SUNDAY, *22nd August, 1847.*—This morning I sent my carriage to Coleman's Hotel for my relatives, Sam'l P. Walker & Mr. & Mrs. Barnett, who arrived last night with my brother, Wm. H. Polk, from Tennessee, and brought them to the President's House, where upon my invitation they took up their Quarters.

I attended the first Presbyterian church to-day accompanied by Mrs. Polk. This afternoon my brother, William H. Polk, left for New York, where his wife is.

MONDAY, *23rd August, 1847.*— The attorney Gen'l called this morning on official business, and after disposing of it we entered into a conversation about the mexican war. He expressed the opinion strongly that I should immediately call an additional volunteer force into the field; and also that if the war was not closed before the meeting of Congress, it should be prosecuted with the whole strength of the nation if necessary. He was utterly opposed to with-drawing our forces, as destructive of National character & interests, as well as destructive of the Democratic party & of the administration. He thought there was but one course to pursue and that was to fight boldly through, holding all the places we have conquered until there is an honorable peace. In this respect he differed from the views of Mr. Buchanan as several times expressed by him in Cabinet. Judge Mason, the acting Secretary of War, called and held a further conference with me in relation to the contemplated call on the states for an additional volunteer force of 5 Regiments of men.

I sent for Gen'l Jesup and Gen'l Gibson, and conferred further with them in relation to the adequacy of the funds in their respective Departments to defray the expenses until after the meeting of Congress. They both assured me that I could safely call forth the additional force proposed, and that the money on hand unexpended would be sufficient to defray the additional expense. I am greatly vexed by the looseness with which Gen'l Jesup has kept an account in his office of the funds for the Quarter Master's Department, and am resolved that there

shall be a reform in this respect. I disposed of much business on my table to-day. At 2 O'Clock P. M. I opened my office for the reception of visitors. Many persons called, most of them seeking office. Among them were several females asking office for their husbands & relations. The practice has become quite common for men to send their wives to importune me for offices for them. I have no offices to confer without turning out better persons than those who apply, and therefore my answer was a very summary one. The annoyance to me of the loafers who hang about the City teasing me for office is very great. Nine out of ten of them, I have reason to believe, are actually unworthy.

I took a ride on horseback in the afternoon with my nephew, Sam'l P. Walker of Tennessee, who is on a visit to me.

TUESDAY, *24th August, 1847.*— This was the regular day of the meeting of the Cabinet. The Secretaries of State & the Navy and the Atto. Gen'l attended. The P. M. Gen'l left this morning for New York on official business connected with his Department. The Secretaries of the Treasury and of War are still absent from the City. About the time the members of the Cabinet present had assembled Gen'l Jesup, the Quarter master Gen'l, called, and I stepped into my Private Secretary's office & saw him. He informed me that on examination with his clerks last night & this morning of the accounts and records of his office, he had discovered that there was of the appropriation for the Quarter

master's office about Two millions of Dollars unexpended more than he had reported to me on yesterday and on Saturday. He stated that this difference of the amt., as stated to me on yesterday & saturday & now, grew out of the fact that about Two millions which had been drawn out of the Treasury had not yet reached the Disbursing officers at New Orleans and elsewhere, but was *in transitu,* and that he had discovered this fact from a private memorandum which he had kept. I told him that I was astonished that the accounts of his office were kept in such a manner that there should be any difficulty at any time in ascertaining the true amt. of the appropriations under each head which had been drawn from the Treasury, and in what disbursing officer's hands it was. I told him that I had been for several days endeavouring to as[c]ertain the true condition of the funds of the Quarter Master's Department, and that it seemed to be almost impossible to get the true information. He said that he and one of his clerks had been absent from the City when I called for the information. I told him that his books should be kept in such manner that any one familiar with accounts should be able on inspecting to see at once the amounts drawn from the Treasury, in whose hands the funds were, and the amounts remaining undrawn, and should not be left to rest upon the personal knowledge of himself and his clerks, or upon any private memorandum which he might keep. He said that much of this information could always be obtained at the 2nd Comptroller's office. I replied to this that the War & Navy Departments should

keep their own accounts in such a manner as to be checks on the accounting officers of the Treasury. I told him that since I had instituted this investigation I had as[c]ertained that the accounts of the Navy Department were so kept, and that a balance sheet was made out in that Department at the end of every month by each Head of Bureau, and laid on the Secretary's table, by which he could at a glance at any time tell the amt. available under each head of appropriation at the beginning of every month. I told him that I learned, also, that the same practice had been followed in the War Department until some time in the year 1843, when it had been discontinued, and that to this cause I attributed the great difficulty and delay which had occurred in furnishing me with the information which I had called for several days ago. I told him the accounts must be so kept hereafter. He said he would require more clerks in his office to do it. I told him that was comparatively a small consideration & there must be a reform in this respect in his office. Yesterday, I informed him, he had reported to me the amt. of available funds for the Quarter master's Department, and today he had reported to me two millions more, and that such looseness in the manner of keeping his accounts must be corrected immediately. I called Judge Mason out of the Cabinet room into my Private Secretary's office, and he heard a part of this conversation. On my return to my office I reported to the members of the Cabinet present the conversation which I had held with Gen'l Jesup, and expressed strongly my dissatisfaction at the state of

things existing in relation to the public accounts in both the War & Treasury Departments. In view of all the information we had members of the Cabinet were still of opinion that I should call for 5 additional Regiments of Volunteers, as had been agreed upon at a former meeting. I ordered it to be done accordingly, *viz.,* 1 Regiment from Indiana, 2 Regiments from Tennessee, & 2 Regiments from Kentucky, all to be infantry.

After the Cabinet adjourned I sent for McClintock Young, Esqr., chief Clerk of the Treasury Department, and informed [him] of what Gen'l Jessup had told me, but could get no satisfactory information from him. I asked him if he had, as I had directed him a few days ago, requested Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, by Telegraph to return immediately to Washington. He said he had done [so]. I directed him to send another Telegraphic despatch to him forthwith, and inform him that I desired his immediate return to the Seat of Government. He left me saying that he would do so.

Gen'l Benton called at 3 O'Clock P. M. & informed me that he would leave this afternoon for the West. I gave [him] a statement of the unfortunate collision between Gen'l Scott & Mr. Trist in Mexico, & [said] that in consequence of it the golden moment to conclude a peace with Mexico had probably been suffered to pass, and expressed the opinion that the duration of the War might be indeffinite. I informed him of the amt. of force in the field, and of the present condition of things, & that I had resolved to call out an additional force. He fully ap-

proved it, & advised that the additional force should be called out.

WEDNESDAY, *25th August, 1847.*— Immediately after breakfast this morning, Gen'l Jesup, the Quarter Master General, called at my office and informed me that he desired to make a confidential communication to me, but that he desired me, after I heard it, to consider it as confidential or not. He then went on to state that since his conversation with me on yesterday, he had been investigating and tracing the two additional millions which had been drawn from the Treasury and had not been expended, of which he informed me on yesterday. He stated that on the 17th of June last Mr. Young, the chief clerk of the Treasury Department, called on him in company with Mr. Corcoran of the banking house of Corcoran & Riggs, and requested him to draw a requisition on the Quarter Master's funds for Two Millions of Dollars to be transferred to New Orleans, and that he had done so, and that in the first statement he had made to me this amount had not been included, as it had not been paid over to the Quarter Master at New Orleans. He stated that he had not required the Transfer to be made, but had drawn the requisition at the request of the Treasury Department made known to him by Mr. Young, the Chief Clerk. He stated that the Two Millions of Dollars had been drawn out of the Treasury about the 17th of June and that on the 27th of July Four Hundred Thousand Dollars of it had been paid over to the Quarter Master at New Orleans, and that the remaining

Sixteen Hundred thousand Dollars remained in the hands of Corcoran, or Corcoran & a Banker in New York named Morgan. He stated further that he had learned that Five Hundred thousand Dollars of it would be paid at New Orleans during this month, which would still leave Eleven Hundred Thousand Dollars in their hands. He stated further that these Bankers had been and were, as he understood, using the money in speculations in stocks. He said he had seen the 2nd Comptroller, who agreed with him that this was all wrong. I told him I was astonished at what he told me, and that the information was of such a character that I could not & would not regard [it] as confidential, but that I would, on the contrary, cause the matter to be immediately investigated. He said at once that he had no objection to this course and that I could use his name for the information which he had given me. I expressed in strong terms my unqualified disapprobation of the transaction, & my determination to probe it to the bottom forth-with. Gen'l Jesup seemed to be much concerned, & said he may have erred in drawing the requisition, but that he had done so at the instance of the Treasury Department as he had stated, and that he had obtained the information as to the use which had been made of the money last evening & had felt it to be his duty to communicate the facts he had learned to me, & leave it to me to consider it confidential or not. I told him it was the last thing on earth which should be regarded as confidential. Gen'l Jesup left, and I immediately sent for Mr. Buchanan and told him all Gen'l Jesup had communi-

cated to me. He was greatly surprised at it. I expressed to him my utter astonishment at it, and told him, as the fact was, that I had not been so much troubled since my administration began, & that it had almost made me sick. I told him that I could not rest until it was investigated and explained. I told him that I had caused two telegraphic despatches to be sent to Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, within the last two or three days, requesting his immediate return to Washington, but that he had not yet come; but that when he did arrive I should communicate the whole matter to him and require an explanation, and that I hoped he might be able to explain it satisfactorily. Mr. Buchanan concurred with me in the determination I had expressed, and in the hope that the matter might be satisfactorily explained.

Mr. Buchanan then informed me that he had prepared the rough draft of a letter,[1] in answer to an invitation which he had received to attend the Harvest Home celebration in Berks County, Pennsylvania, on Saturday next, which he wished to read to me. It was in favour of the election of the Democratic candidate for Governor (Gov. Shunk) and in favour of extending the Missouri compromise line on the subject of slavery West to the Pacific ocean, over any territory that the U. S. might acquire from

[1] Moore, *Buchanan,* VII, 385. This letter defining Buchanan's position on the question of the disposition of the territory acquired from Mexico with respect to slavery, really constituted his bid for the nomination of his party for the Presidency in the following year.

Mexico. The trend of the letter was to satisfy Northern Democrats that that Compromise line should be adhered to. I made some suggestions to him with a view to make it more acceptable to the South. They were not, however, very material, but such as to prevent his views from being misunderstood or misconstrued. I do not know whether he will adopt my suggestions or not.

Shortly after 12 O'Clock M. Capt. Whitfield, lately of the army in Mexico, Mr. Sam'l Williams of Hickman County, Tennessee, and one or two others called. While they were in my office Judge Mason called & they retired shortly afterwards.

I commenced telling Judge Mason the astounding disclosures which had been made to me by Gen'l Jesup this morning, when Mr. Robert J. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, was announced. He had returned in the 12 O'Clock train of cars to-day. His health has greatly improved since he left about a month ago. After some general conversation I told him I was very glad he had returned; and proceeded to detail to him the vexation and trouble I had had for a week past in endeavouring to ascertain the state of the funds appropriated by Congress for the prosecution of the Mexican war, and particularly in relation to the appropriations for the Quarter Master's Department, being the same vexation and trouble which is detailed & recorded in this diary during the past week (which see) and informed him of the disclosure which Gen'l Jesup had made to me to-day, & told him I wished the whole matter explained. I told him that it seemed very large sums of money had

been drawn from the Treasury which had not been needed for disbursement, and which, according to Gen'l Jesup's statement to me to-day, were in the hands of bankers who were using it [them] in stock speculations, and that this I could not approve. He said that he had objected originally to make transfers at all for the War Department, but had finally yielded & done so. That he had effected the transfers from New York to New Orleans in several modes; 1st, by authorizing Bills to be drawn at New Orleans on New York, but if these could not be sold at par, then, 2nd, by having the actual specie carried from New York to New Orleans at great risk & expense, and 3rd, by making arrangements with Capitalists to pay them the specie in New York & contracting with them to place it in New Orleans at short dates. He said he had spent sleepless nights on the subject when the actual specie had been sent, until he heard of its actual arrival, and that the 3rd mode had been the one attended with less risk and which he had adopted. I remarked to him that without undertaking to decide at present whether that mode was proper or the best mode, it certainly could not be right to have so large an amt. as that drawn from the Treasury on the 17th of June last, as stated by Gen'l Jesup, for so great a length of time out of the Treasury and in the hands of bankers who used it (if such should turn out to be the fact) in stock speculations, or otherwise for their own private purposes. He seemed to have no distinct recollection of the requisition of two millions drawn from the Treasury as long ago as the 17th of June last.

He said the time usually given was 20, 30, or 40 days. I told him that I had made to him Gen'l Jesup's statement to me, & that I was greatly concerned about it. I told him that I regarded it, in the first place, to be illegal to take money out of the Treasury and place it in the hands of individuals for long periods for their private use; and secondly, that I hoped my administration would be saved from such an explosion as occurred in the defalcation of Swartout.[1] He said it was necessary to resort to this mode, & that the guaranty of capitalists rendered the funds more secure than they could be if the actual specie was transferred by a messenger or officer of the Government. He said if such an explosion took place he would be blown higher than anybody else, and made a remark, the words used I do not retain, in reference to his continuing to hold the office of Secretary of the Treasury. I told him that I made no such intimation as that he should retire, but that I desired the astounding disclosure made known to me by Gen'l Jesup this morning to be immediately investigated & explained; and that if it was true that Mr. Corcoran or Morgan, or both, had held in their hands $2,000,000 drawn from the Treasury on the 17th of June, and yet held $1,600,000 of it in their

[1] Samuel Swartwout of New York, 1783–1856, was appointed Collector of the Port of New York by Jackson, which office he held until into Van Buren's administration. His defalcation of over a million dollars occasioned a great political scandal which entered into the Presidential campaign of 1840. An account of the affair is given by Von Holst, *Constitutional and Political History of the United States,* II, 350–360.

hands, that they must forthwith pay it over. I told him that the thing was wholly wrong in itself and that I had had no knowledge of any such transaction having been made at the time; that I could not rest easy while the matter remained in its present condition; that bankers were rich to-day and poor to-morrow, & might blow up, honestly or dishonestly, any day, and that the money they held must be forthwith paid over. He said he had never made such arrangements except when the War Department wished funds transferred. I repeated to him Gen'l Jesup's statement to me. He said if he abandoned this mode of transfer it would derange the money market, produce a pressure, bring the Independent Treasury into odium, & greatly diminish the receipts of revenue at the Custom-houses. I told him the first duty of the Government was to execute the law as it was, and that no money should ever be drawn from the Treasury except as it was needed for public use, and when it was to be disbursed at distant points from those at which it had accumulated it should be drawn out only a sufficient time in advance to make the transfer of it to the place where it was foreseen it would be wanted. I told him I could not conceive anything to justify the drawing so large [an] amt. from the Treasury and suffering it to remain for more than two months in the hands of individuals. The conversation continued for a considerable time, Judge Mason being present and hearing it all. Finally I repeated to Mr. Walker my request that he would immediately investigate the matter & Report to me on the subject. The matter troubles me very

greatly. The President of the U. S. is compelled by his other indispensible duties to leave the performance of all these details to the Departments and their subordinate officers charged with them, and cannot possibly give them his personal attention. I had every confidence that all was right and that this branch of the service was going on in the usual & legal way, until the events and developments of the past week, and especially that made to me by Gen'l Jesup this morning, have awakened my suspicions that all may not be right. I am resolved to have an immediate & searching scrutiny into the whole matter. Mr. Mason, the acting Secretary of War, read to me requisitions which he had prepared on the Governor of Indiana for one Regiment of Infantry; on the Gov. of Tennessee for two Regiments of Infantry; and on the Gov. of Kentucky for two Regiments of Infantry. Mr. Walker approved the resolution of the Cabinet made in his absence to call for this additional Volunteer force.

THURSDAY, *26th August, 1847.*— The Secretary of the Treasury called this morning and introduced a friend. He informed me that he was causing the investigation to be made, which I directed on yesterday, and would report to me soon. I told him that I was impatient to have the Report, as I desired to learn the true condition of the public money which had been drawn from the Treasury by the war Department, and especially for the service of the Quarter master's Department. I told him I wished to learn in whose hands such portions of it as had not

been expended was, and how long it had been in their hands (see this Diary of yesterday). He said that no transfer of funds had been directed by the Treasury Dept. for the service of the War Dept. except upon the solicitation and request of the latter Dept. I told him I wished to see the Official Report of the whole matter.

I transacted business with Judge Mason relating both [to] the War and Navy Departments to-day. I saw other officers on official business. I also transacted much business, chiefly of details, on my table. I saw company at 2 O'Clock P. M. A large number of persons called, seeking office as usual. Among others, three females called. One of them had an infant in her arms, which she said she called James K. Polk. She asked me for a present for the child. I gave her a half-eagle. The other two wanted presents also.

Maj'r Gen'l Patterson called on yesterday. He is on his way, under orders from the War Department, for the seat of War in Mexico.

FRIDAY, *27th August, 1847*.— My brother, Wm. H. Polk, and his wife, arrived this morning & took lodgings in the President's House.

The Secretary of the Treasury called this morning and informed me that he was busily at work in having the Report prepared which I had requested on yesterday and the day preceding. I told him that it was strange to me that the information I wanted could not be furnished in an hour from the Books of his Department. I told him what I most wished

to know was, how much money had been drawn from the Treasury upon the requisitions of the Quarter master's Department, when it was drawn, and in whose hands it was, and upon what contract or arrangement it was held; & I repeated to him the statement which had been made to me by Gen'l Jesup on monday last. Mr. Walker presented a written statement from Mr. Young, his chief Clerk, to the effect that no money had been drawn from the Treasury on account of the War Dept. but upon a requisition of that Department. I told him that might be, but still that was not information which I had called for. I told him I wanted to know upon what contract or arrangement the $2,000,000, which Gen'l Jesup had informed me had been drawn on the 17th of June, had been made. I told him I desired to know whether it or any part of it was in the hands of Corcoran & Riggs, or any other Bankers, and if so how long it had been in their hands, & what amt. they still held. I again expressed to him my disapproval of the transaction as it had been communicated to me by Gen'l Jesup, and that I must have an official Report on the subject. I expressed, as [I] had done on monday last (see this diary of that day) my apprehension of defalcation under such a practice. Late in the evening Mr. Walker addressed me a communication, enclosing one from Mr. Young, his chief clerk, purporting to give the information in part, but it is not satisfactory. To-morrow I will peremptorily require the report which I have demanded.

Judge Mason, the acting Secretary of War, called

to-day and spent two or three hours in my office on official business connected with the War in Mexico. Whilst he was in my office, Maj'r Gen'l Patterson called, and I held a conversation with him on the same subject, Judge Mason being present and engaging in the conversation.

I opened my office for company at 2 O'Clock P. M. & but few persons called, which is not often the case. I transacted much business on my table to-day. This was the regular evening for receiving company in the parlour. Quite a number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

SATURDAY, *28th August, 1847.*— The Cabinet met at the usual hour to-day; all the members present except the Secretary of War and the Post Master General, who are absent from the city. The Secretary of the Treasury stated that the Report which I had required to be made to me, in relation to the amt. of funds drawn from the Treasury on account of the War Department to be transferred to New Orleans and which had not yet been paid over at N. Orleans, was not yet completed. He stated that $600,000 of the $2,000,000 drawn on the requisition of the Quarter master's Department on the 17th of June last remained yet to be paid over, and that the balance of the original sum had already been paid over at New Orleans. He stated that by the contract the remaining $600,000 was to be paid by Corcoran & Riggs on the 15th of September next, and that it would be paid on that day. I expressed the opinion that if the mode of transfer adopted was

legal and proper, the time given had been too long and the amt. too large, for the safety of the funds. Mr. [Walker] Insisted that he had never drawn for any amt. except upon the requisition of the War Department, and read some communications to him from the War Department to establish that fact. I told him I wishe[d] to see the full report when it was ready, & that my only object in making the enquiry I had done was to be satisfied that the transaction was legal and the public money safe. Mr. Walker suggested that the legality of the mode of transfer which he had adopted had probably [better] be referred to the Atto. Gen'l for his opinion. Mr. Clifford suggested that as the mode had already been adopted and practiced upon, that his opinion would be unnecessary, and after some conversation among the members of the Cabinet it was not insisted upon by Mr. Walker. Mr. Buchanan was clearly of opinion that the mode of transfer which had been adopted was clearly legal. The policy of laying an export duty on specie in the ports of Mexico in our military possession was considered, as was also the practicability of furnishing the army in Mexico with specie by means of Bills drawn on the U. States. It was agreed that Mr. Walker would consider of the subject, and Report at the next meeting of the Cabinet.

Mr. Buchanan read a long despatch [1] which he had prepared to the Charge d'Affaires of Brazil, on the subject of the imprisonment of Lieut. Davis and three American sailors at Rio d' Janeiro in October

[1] Moore, *Buchanan,* VII, 388–404.

last, and also on the subject of the complaints of the Brazilian Government, of the conduct of Mr. Wise, U. S. Minister at that Court. It was an able paper, & was approved by the Cabinet.

A telegraphic communication was received from Richmond this morning, and an official despatch from Lieut. Col. Wilson, commanding at Vera Cruz, dated on the 15th Instant, announcing that Gen'l Paredes, Ex. President of Mexico, had arrived at Vera Cruz in the Brittish mail Steamer on the morning of the 14th Instant in disguise & under an assumed name, and had made good his passage through Vera Cruz before it was known to the commander or officers of the U. S. forces that he had been there. This was most unfortunate, as the return of Paredes to Mexico may protract the War.

Maj'r Gen'l Patterson of the U. S. army called to-night, & I had a further conversation with him about affairs in Mexico.

I deeply regret to learn by the despatches from Vera Cruz that Col. Louis D. Wilson of N. C., commanding the 12th Regiment of Infantry, died at that place and was interred on the 14th Instant. He was a patriotic and excellent man. He was a patriotic & highly intelligent man, and was my personal friend. He left this City about a month ago to assume the command of his Regiment. I had a full and free confidential conversation with him on the subject of the War & the operations of the army in Mexico, & gave him my views fully. He was the bearer of despatches to Gen'l Scott.

SUNDAY, *29th August, 1847.*— I attended the first Presbyterian Church to-day accompanied by Mrs. Polk, the wife of my brother, Wm. H. Polk, and my nephew, Sam'l P. Walker of Tennessee.

Intelligence reached the City to-day of the sudden death by apoplexy of the Hon. Silas Wright,[1] late Governor of New York. He was a great and a good man. At the commencement of my administration I tendered to him the office of Secretary of the Treasury, which he declined to accept. I was intimate with him when he was in Congress. He was my personal and personal [political] friend, and I deeply regret his death.

MONDAY, *30th August, 1847.*— This was a very busy day. I transacted much business with public officers, and saw more company than usual. Though I did not direct my office to be open for company until 2 O'Clock P. M., many persons were introduced by public officers before that hour. Maj'r Emmory of the 3rd Dragoons notified the adjutant Gen'l today that he declined to accept the office of Major in that Regiment, being unwilling to relinquish his commission in the Topographical Engineers which was a permanent position, whereas the 3rd Dragoons was [were] to be discharged from service at the end of the war with Mexico. My brother, Wm. H. Polk, who has repeatedly pressed me to give him a position in the army, was very desirous to be appointed to the majority relinquished by Maj'r Emmory. Upon a full view of the subject I concluded

[1] Died at his home, Canton, New York, August 27, 1846.

to gratify his wishes. He will have to resign his mission as charge d'affaires to Naples, and I will commission him as Maj'r of Dragoons on to-morrow. Maj'r Gen'l Patterson called twice to-day. He will leave for Vera Cruz on to-morrow, but will be detained a day or two at Norfolk, Va. My brother will leave for Vera Cruz to join his Regiment on thursday next, and his arrangement is to join Gen'l Patterson at Petersburg or some other point on the route and accompany him to Gen'l Scott's army.

TUESDAY, *31st August, 1847.*— The Cabinet met at the usual hour to-day, all the members present except the Secretary of War, who is still absent from the City. I submitted to the Cabinet a legal question whether I possessed the power under the act of June 18th, 1846, to appoint in the recess of the Senate the Staff of the Quarter master's, Commissary's, and medical Departments to serve with the new Regiments of Volunteers lately called into service. The facts are these: when the 12 months volunteers were called out I appointed, with the advice & consent of the Senate, the requisite number of these staff officers. When the term of the 12 months men expired in May or June last (and since the last session of the Senate) a portion of the staff officers were disbanded, retaining only a sufficient number for the Volunteers at that time in the service for the War. Since that time several Regiments of Volunteers have been called out, & the question was whether I could legally re-appoint the same officers of the staff, having once discharged them, or to appoint others

in their place. Mr. Walker and Mr. Mason were of the opinion that they were vacancies happening in the recess of the Senate, and that I could appoint them. Mr. Clifford and Mr. Buchanan thought otherwise. Mr. Johnson inclined to concur with them in opinion, but advised me to make the appointments, as they were indispensible for the organization of the new Regiments. I expressed the opinion, which I had formed after careful examination, that I possessed the power, but disliked to exercise [it] when my Cabinet were so equally divided. The subject was fully discussed, when Mr. Buchanan said there was in [his] mind some doubt on the subject, but the necessity for these staff officers was very great, and therefore he advised me to make the appointments. Mr. Clifford said that entertaining his opinion he was bound when called upon to express it, but that if he entertained the opinion which I had expressed, he would advise me to make the appointments. At one time I intimated that I would desire the written opinion of the atto Gen'l before I decided, but I reconsidered in [the] further progress of the discussion. Before the Cabinet met, Senator Bagby had called at my office & I had submitted the question to him. He expressed the opinion that the office still existed, had been once filled, and had become vacant, and he had no doubt I had the power to fill it, subject to the confirmation of the Senate at the next Session. This was my own opinion and my only reason for hesitating grew out of the divided opinion of the Cabinet. I finally concluded that the public necessity for the services of these staff

officers was so great that I would make the appointment. Mr. Buchanan & Mr. Johnson advised me to do it. Mr. Walker and Mr. Mason were clear that I was bound to do so; and Mr. Clifford repeated the opinion that with my opinions he would certainly do so, remarking at the same time that the opinion on the question of power which he had expressed was an off-hand opinion, and not one formed upon mature examination.

I next submitted to the Cabinet the propriety of issuing positive orders to Gen'l Scott to exact military contributions [from] the Mexicans, and especially if he should take and occupy the City of Mexico. I stated that such instructions had been heretofore given to both Gen'l Taylor and Gen'l Scott, but leaving to them a discretion on the subject, and, as the Cabinet knew, neither of them had made such exactions. I thought that the orders to Gen'l Scott should now be more peremptory and stringent, and that nothing should prevent him from levying such contributions upon the wealthy inhabitants of Mexico to defray the expenses of his army, unless he should find that by adopting such a policy, his army could not be subsisted. The subject was discussed. Mr. Buchanan expressed some doubts, upon the ground that the wealthy inhabitants were understood to be favourable to peace and that such a policy might make them change their policy. I thought if they were made to feel the burthens of the War they would be more likely to be sincere in their desire to bring about a peace. The other members of the

Cabinet concurred in the policy of levying such contributions, or, in other words, in favour of quartering upon the enemy.

My brother, William H. Polk, was commissioned as Maj'r of the 3rd Dragoons to-day, and immediately received orders to proceed and join his Regiment, under the command of Gen'l Scott in Mexico.

This was reception evening. Many persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

My brother, William H. Polk, upon being appointed Maj'r of Dragoons, resigned his mission to the King of the Kingdom of Two Sicilies.

WEDNESDAY, *1st September, 1847.*— I was in my office as usual at an early hour this morning. I saw several public officers and transacted public business with them. I disposed of much business which had accumulated on my table. I opened my office at 2 O'Clock P. M. Several persons called. The business of most of them was to seek office. It was known only on yesterday that my brother, Wm H. Polk, had resigned his mission to Naples and accepted the commission of Maj'r of Dragoons in the army; and to-day I had three applications for his place. My nephew, Samuel P. Walker, and my niece, Jane Barnett, and her husband, who had been in my family for the last ten days, left for New York.

This was a very busy day, in attending to very many details, and I did not retire to rest until a later hour than usual.

THURSDAY, *2nd September, 1847.*— At 8 O'Clock this morning my brother, Wm H. Polk, left for Vera Cruz via Pensacola to join his Regiment as Major of the 3rd Dragoons. He left his wife with my family. She will remain for some weeks and then return to her friends in New York. Judge Mason, the Secretary of the Navy, and also acting Secretary of War during the absence of Judge Marcy from the Seat of government, received information last night of the dangerous illness of his father in Virginia, and left by the Southern boat this morning to visit him. I appointed Mr. Buchanan to be acting Secretary of War, and Mr. John Appleton, the chief clerk of the Navy Department, to be acting Secretary of the Navy. My Private Secretary, J. Knox Walker, left this morning on a visit to the North. Mr. W. C. Whitthorne, a clerk in the 6th Auditor's office, took his place. Mr. Whitthorne was a law student in my office in Tennessee before I was elected President. I was very busy today. I opened my office as usual at 2 O'Clock, and several persons called, and all, I believe, were seeking office either for themselves or their friends. It is very annoying to have my time taken up by such people. I sometimes almost loose my patience and good temper.

FRIDAY, *3rd September, 1847.*— I was much occupied in my office to-day though nothing of special importance transpired. During the absence of the Secretary of War much of my time is occupied with the details of the War Department connected with

the Mexican War. I saw the adj't Gen'l & the Quarter master Gen'l to-day & conferred with them, and gave directions in reference of [to] many of these details. I saw also several other public officers and transacted business with them. I disposed of much business on my table. No intelligence from the army was received by the Southern mail to day. I am waiting with great anxiety for the next news.

Thi[s] was reception evening. Quite a number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

SATURDAY, *4th September, 1847.*— The Cabinet met at the usual hour to-day; all the members present except the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy, who are both absent from the City. After the transaction of some business of minor importance the Secretary of the Treasury, who had been requested at a former meeting to examine & Report upon the policy and propriety of levying an export duty on specie, as a military contribution in the ports of Mexico now in our military possession. He made a verbal Report and recommended that an export duty on specie be levied of the same amt. which had been levied by the Mexican laws before the War commenced. The Post master Gen'l and the Atto. General were in favour of the measure. Mr. Buchanan was opposed to it and assigned his reasons at some length for his opinion. Mr. Walker enforced his views in favour of the measure. The other members of the Cabinet participated in the discussion. My opinion had been decidedly in favour of the measure and I had so expressed myself. The views

presented by Mr. Buchanan were plausable, if not sound, and struck me with some force. I finally informed the Cabinet that I would consider the subject further, and would not decide the question to-day.

I brought before the Cabinet the importance of uniting the forces of Gen'l Taylor with those of Gen'l Scott, except a sufficient number to hold Monterey and the line of the Rio Grande. This had been in effect ordered by the Secretary of War under my direction after consultation in Cabinet, in a despatch to Gen'l Taylor dated July 14th, 1847. I sent to the War Department for that despatch and read it to the Cabinet. We have no answer from Gen'l Taylor, and do not therefore certainly know that it has reached him. It was sent out by Mr. Whitaker of N. C., a special bearer of despatches. Mr. Whitaker wrote to the Secretary of War from Camargo on the 9th of August. He was at that place on his way to Gen'l Taylor, who was at Monterey. I expressed the opinion that a more stringent and positive order should be sent to Gen'l Taylor. In this the Cabinet concurred, but it was concluded to postpone sending a second order for a few days, in the expectation that further intelligence might be received from Gen'l Taylor.

I remarked to the Cabinet that it was time we were considering what was to be done and what distinct policy I should recommend to Congress, if the war should continue until the meeting of that body. I remarked that we should deliberately settle upon our plans & policy and be prepared to maintain them,

before Congress met. I remarked that I called the attention of the Cabinet to this most important subject to-day, not for the purpose of asking a decision upon it at this time, but to draw the attention of the Cabinet to it with a view to have the aid of their matured advice when it did come up for decision, which must be before long. I then went on to state my present impressions, which were in brief that we should unite the two columns of the army, except a sufficient force to hold Monterey and the line of the Rio Grande, and press the war upon the capital and vital parts of Mexico by all the means which the nation could command, until a peace was obtained. I expressed the opinion further that as our expenses had been greatly enlarged by the obstinacy of Mexico in refusing to negotiate, since Mr. Trist's instructions were prepared in April last, if a treaty had not been made when we next heard from Mexico that his instructions should be modified. I remarked that if we were compelled to continue the war at so great expense I would be unwilling to pay the sum which Mr. Trist had been authorized to pay, in the settlement of a boundary by which it was contemplated the U. S. would acquire New Mexico & the Californias; and that if Mexico continued obstinately to refuse to Treat, I was decidedly in favour of insisting on the acquisition of more territory than the provinces named. I repeated that these were my present impressions, and that they were thrown out now that the Cabinet might reflect upon them by the time it would be necessary to decide upon them. No formal expression of opinion was made

by the Cabinet, but there seem[ed] to be an acquiescence in these views.

After the Cabinet adjourned I transacted business on my table. When I retired at night I was much fatigued, having passed a week of great labour and responsibility, and of great solicitude & anxiety. With me it is emphatically true that the Presidency is "no bed of roses."

SUNDAY, *5th September, 1847.*— I attended the First Presbyterian church to-day accompanied by Mrs. Polk.

MONDAY, *6th September, 1847.*— Nothing of much importance transpired to-day. The adjt. General of the army spent a considerable time with me in consultation in relation to various details connected with the military operations in Mexico, and in filling the staff appointments for the new Regiments of volunteers recently called into the service. The Secretary of State called on business. At 2 O'Clock, when my office was opened for company, several persons called, all of them seeking office except one, and he was a hale, stout looking young man, who was begging money. I had neither offices nor money to give, and got rid of them as summarily as possible.

Judge Mason returned from his visit from [to] his father this evening. He had been absent since thursday last (See this Diary of that day).

TUESDAY, *7th September, 1847.*— The Cabinet met at the usual hour this morning; all the members

present except the Secretary of War, who is still absent from the seat of Government.

I stated to the Cabinet that I had considered of the proposition which was discussed at the last meeting (see this diary of the 4th Inst.) to levy an export duty on specie in the ports of Mexico in our military possession, and that I felt so much doubt upon the subject that I would postpone any decision on the subject at present.

I submitted for consideration to the Cabinet, whether, as the Mexican Government had continued stubbornly [to refuse] to enter upon negotiations for peace for several months after they had been notified that Mr. Trist was with the Head Quarters of the army clothed with full diplomatic powers, and as the U. S. had been subjected to great expense since Mr. Trist's instructions were given to him in April last: whether under the changed circumstances since that time the instructions to Mr. Trist should not be modified. The distinct questions submitted were, whether the amt. which Mr. Trist had been authorized to pay for the possession of New Mexico and the Californias and right of passage through the istmus of Tehuantepec should not be reduced, and whether we should not now demand more territory than we now did. All seemed to agree that the maximum sum to be paid for the cessions above described should be reduced. Mr. Buchanan suggested that this sum should be reduced from 30 to 15 millions, & that the cession of the right of passage through the istmus of Lower as well as Upper California & New Mexico should be made a *sine qua non.* He suggested

also that the line should run on the parallel of 31° or 31° 30′ of North Latitude from the Rio Grande to the Gulf of California, instead of on the parallel of 32° which Mr. Trist had been authorized to accept. Upon the question of acquiring more territory than this there was some difference of opinion. The Secretary of the Treasury & the Attorney General were in favour of acquiring in addition the Department or State of Tamaulipas, which includes the port of Tampico. The Secretary of State was opposed to this. The Post master Gen'l and the Secretary of the Navy concurred with him. I expressed myself as being entirely agreed to reduce the sum to be paid from 30 to 15 millions, and to modify the line as suggested by Mr. Buchanan. I declared myself also as being in favour of acquiring the cession of the Department of Tamaulipas, if it should be found practicable to do so. The subject was fully discussed & at full length. The Secretary of the Navy stated an objection to the modification of Mr. Trist's instructions until we could hear again from the army. He thought if the instructions should be modified, and before they reached Mr. Trist he should have concluded a Treaty upon the basis of his first instructions, it would embarrass the administration in approving and ratifying it. He thought if any Treaty could be made it would probably be accomplished before Gen'l Scott's army entered the City of Mexico, and he suggested that we had better wait a few days, as we were in daily expectation of hearing the result of Gen'l Scott's advance upon the City of Mexico. The Cabinet finally concluded not

to decide the question submitted to them to-day, but to wait a few days, and until we should again hear from the army. In the course of the discussion The Attorney Gen'l expressed the opinion that if an army took possession of the City of Mexico, and the Mexicans still refused to make peace, that Mr. Trist should be recalled, and that Mexico and the world should be informed that we had no further propositions of peace to make, and that we should prosecute the War with the whole energy of the nation and over-run and subdue the whole country, until Mexico herself sued for peace. The Secretary of the Treasury expressed his concurrence in these opinions. I dissented from the opinion that Mr. Trist should be recalled, but concurred with the Atto. Gen'l in his views in all other respects. I thought we should still keep our minister with the Head Quarters of the army ready to receive any propositions of overtures of peace which Mexico might have to make. The Post master Gen'l appeared to concur with the Atto. Gen'l in his views. The Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Navy were not distinct in the expression of their views. It was finally concluded to postpone the whole subject until we could hear again from the army.

Some minor matters were considered & disposed of in the Cabinet.

This was reception evening. Many persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

Judge Mason, having returned from his visit to his father last evening, resumed his duties as Secretary of the Navy and also as Acting Secretary of

War, this morning. Mr. Buchanan, who had been acting Secretary of War during Judge Mason's absence, desired that Judge Mason should resume the duties of that office.

WEDNESDAY, *8th September, 1847.*— I was very busily occupied to-day with public officers, and in transacting various matters of official business, but none of them of great importance. I spent two or three hours with Judge Mason, the acting Secretary of War, & the adjt. Gen'l of the army, in filling up vacancies which had occurred in the army, and in appointing the staff of the Quarter master's, commissary's, and medical Departments, rendered necessary by the increased volunteer forces recently called to the field. I disposed also of much business on my table.

THURSDAY, *9th September, 1847.*— This morning I directed no one to be admitted into my office until 2 O'Clock, desiring to devote myself to the examination and preparation of a message which I design to send in to the next Congress, assigning my objections to the Harbour Bill which passed on the last day of the last Session, and from which I withheld my approval. Public officers and other persons on special business called in such numbers that I was unable to make any progress in the paper. The Secretary of State and Judge Mason, the acting Secretary of War, occupied a considerable portion of my time on business connected with their respective Departments. I disposed of some business on

my table. A letter was received by the Southern mail this afternoon from F. M. Dimond, ass't Quarter master of the army, dated at Vera Cruz, Aug't 27th, 1847, and addressed to the Secretary of War, giving unauthentic information in which Mr. Dimond had confidence, to the effect that the army under Gen'l Scott had on the 20th of August met the Mexican forces under Santa Anna and Valencia and defeated them, that they had retired into the City, asked a truce, and called the Mexican Congress to assemble to consider of Mr. Trist's terms of peace. The rumour at Vera Cruz seems to be well-founded. I sincerely hope that a Treaty of peace may have been concluded and signed.

FRIDAY, *10th September, 1847.*—Nothing of much importance transpired to-day. I transacted business in my office as usual. I saw company at 2 O'Clock. Several persons called.

This being reception evening I saw company in the parlour. A number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

SATURDAY, *11th September, 1847.*—The Cabinet met at the usual hour; all the members present except Gov. Marcy, the Secretary of War, who is still absent from the City. In consideration of the information received from the army since the consultation in Cabinet at the last meeting on tuesday last, in relation to the proposed modification of Mr. Trist's instructions, that subject was not brought up to-day. The information from the army received on

the 9th Instant (see this diary of that day) renders it probable that if an adjustment with Mexico could be concluded a Treaty has probably been concluded before this time, & therefore I will await further intelligence from Mr. Trist before deciding upon the modification of his instructions as to the terms of peace.

No subject of general importance was considered to-day. Several matters of minor importance were disposed of. While the Cabinet were in Session, Brigadier General Kearney of the U. S. army called. Gen'l Kearney returned recently from California. I received him in my office & introduced him to my Cabinet. He stated that he had arrived in Washington this morning, and had called to pay his respects & to report himself to me. I received him kindly, for I consider him a good officer. He has performed valuable and important services in his late expedition to New Mexico & California. He remained but a few minutes. I invited him to call again.

My nephew, Sam'l P. Walker of Tennessee, returned from New York to-day. Mr. John T. Leigh, who resides near my plantation in Mississippi and at whose house I have been very hospitably entertained, called with his son to-day. I invited them to take a family dinner with me, and they did so. Judge Mason, who is an old acquaintance of Mr. Leigh, also dined with me.

SUNDAY, *12th September, 1847.*— This was a damp wet day, & was so uncomfortable that Mrs.

Polk declined attending church and we remained at home & spent a quiet day. My nephew, Sam'l P. Walker, who arrived here from New York on yesterday, left this afternoon for his residence in Tennessee.

MONDAY, *13th September, 1847.*— I gave directions to my messenger this morning to admit no company and to bring no cards from any one, except members of the Cabinet or Officers of the Government on public business, until 2 O'Clock P. M. I occupied the day until that hour in preparing my objections to the Harbour and River Bill, which passed Congress at the close of the last session. The Secretary of War, the Secretary of State, and some other public officers called before that hour. I disposed of the current business on my table and at 2 O'Clock I received company. Many persons called, some to pay their respects & other[s] to seek office. Mr. Barnett, who married my niece, Jane Walker, returned this morning from New York and took up his quarters in the President's house.

TUESDAY, *14th September, 1847.*— The Cabinet met at the usual hour to-day, all the members present except Gov. Marcy, the Secretary of War, who is still absent from the City. Several matters of minor importance were considered and disposed of, but none of general interest was considered. Judge Mason and Mr. Walker remained after the other members of the Cabinet had retired. The question of organizing the Batallion of Volunteers raised in

the District of Columbia & Maryland into a Regiment was brought up by them. It had been for some time contemplated to give this Battallion a Regimental organization as soon as a sufficient number of companies to compose a Regiment should be raised. Indeed this was contemplated before Lieut. Col. Hughes, who commands the Battallion, left for the seat of War. It appears that 3 companies have been raised in the D. C. and 3 companies in Maryland, and are now in Mexico; and that 1 additional company has been organized in Maryland, and 2 additional companies are in progress of being raised in the D. of C. Judge Mason and Mr. Walker advised me to give the corps a Regimental organization at this time, by adding to it detached companies from other states; and to promote Lieut. Col. Hughes to the command of the Regiment and to appoint Lieut. Emmory of this District, of the Engineer corps, Lieut. Col. in Col. Hughes's place. I expressed doubts whether I could legally and with propriety appoint both the Col. & Lieut. Col. of the regiment, if so organized, until there were more than 3 companies from the D. C. They thought I could and advised me to do so. I told them I would look into the subject further. I should observe that I have heretofore appointed the Lieut. Col., and the Governor of Maryland has appointed the Maj'r of the Battallion now in Mexico.

The Southern mail of this evening brought intelligence (which had been conveyed a part of the way from New Orleans by a Government express) of two

battles[1] between the forces under the command of Gen'l Scott and the Mexican army, before the City of Mexico. They were fought on the 19th and 20th of August, and resulted in decisive victories of the American arms, though with heavy losses on both sides. An armistice was entered into between the two armies after the battles, which had been followed by the appointment of commissioners by Mexico to meet and negotiate for peace with Mr. Trist. A despatch was received from Mr. Trist, dated on the 29th Aug't, stating that he had had two meetings with the Mexican commissioners as [and] was to meet them again on the next day, the 30th of Aug't.

This being reception evening, the company, ladies and gentlemen, had assembled in the parlour for some time before I met them. I had been detained in my office examining the despatches from Mr. Trist and the unofficial information received from officers of the army in letters addressed to persons in Washington. Official letters were also received from Vera Cruz, but none from Gen'l Scott. When I met the company in the parlour I communicated to them the substance of the information which had been received.

WEDNESDAY, *15th September, 1847.*— Further details of the battle before the City of Mexico were received to-day through the New Orleans papers, but no official Report has come to hand. I fear Gen'l Scott has agreed to an armistice for two [too] long

[1] Contreras and Cherubusco.

a time. Judging at this distance, I would think he should have improved his victories by pressing the Mexican Government to an immediate decision upon the terms of peace which Mr. Trist was authorized to offer to them, and if they refused these terms I think he should have taken immediate possession of the City, and levied contribution upon it for the support of his army. I fear the armistice was agreed to by the Mexican Commander only to gain time to re-organize his defeated army for further resistance. The battles were fought on the 19th and 20th of August, and it appears that on the 29th,[1] from Mr. Trist's Despatch of that date, that no decision had been made upon the terms of peace which had been proposed by him. I shall wait very anxiously for further information from the army.

Judge Mason and Mr. Walker called together today and renewed their recommendation that I should give to the D. C. & Maryland Battallion a Regimental organization, promote Lieut. Col. Hughes to be Colonel, and appoint Lieut. Emmory to be Lieut. Col. (see this Diary of yesterday). I repeated the doubts which I had expressed to them on yesterday but said as soon as the 2 additional companies now being raised in this District were mustered into the service, I was inclined to do so, if on an examination of the law, which I had not yet had time to make, I should think that I could do so legally and properly. Judge Mason, who is at present

[1] The phrase "that on the 29th" has been crossed out, after having been written, in the Diary.

the acting Secretary of War in the absence of Gov. Marcy from the seat of Government, informed me that men enough had been raised to form 1 of the additional companies in this District, which would make 4 companies from the District & 4 companies from Maryland, and that he thought it important that they should be formed into a regiment, by attaching 2 companies from other States to them. He urged too there was a propriety in my appointing the Col. and Lieut. Col. from the D. C., inasmuch as the gov. of Maryland had already appointed the Major of the Battallion now in the field, and inasmuch as he had appointed the Lieut. Col. of the Battallion of 12 months men raised in Maryland & the D. of C. shortly after the War broke out. Mr. Walker concurred in these views and urged them. They both expressed the opinion that I possessed the clear legal authority to do so. I told them I would examine the subject this afternoon. After they retired I sent for the Atto. Gen'l, who came to my office, and Mr. Buchanan who had called on other business. I submitted the question to them, stating to them all the facts, and also what had occurred on yesterday and to-day between Judge Mason, Mr. Walker, and myself. The Atto. Gen'l turned to the acts of Congress relating to the Militia of the D. C. and after some conversation both he and Mr. Buchanan expressed a clear opinion that I possessed the legal authority to give the Battallion a Regimental organization, and to appoint the Col. and Lieut. Col. to command it, and they advised me to do so.

I disposed of much business on my table to-day, saw several public officers on business, & saw company as usual at 2 O'Clock P. M.

THURSDAY, *16th September, 1847.*—I sent for Judge Mason, the acting Secretary of War, to-day, and informed him that after having consulted the Atto. Gen'l & Mr. Buchanan on yesterday, I was satisfied that I possessed the legal power to organize the Battallion of volunteers from the D. C. and Maryland into a Regiment, and to appoint the Col. and Lieut. Col., and that I would do so as soon as the 4th Company from the D. C. was mustered into the service of the U. S. I sent also for Mr. Walker, the Secretary [of the Treasury], and stated the same to him (see this diary of yesterday and the day before). Mr. Walker's anxiety on the subject arose from the fact that he desired Lieut. Emmory, who is his brother-in-law, to be appointed Lieut. Col. He was perfectly satisfied with my decision.

I received by the Southern mail this evening a letter from Lieut. Col. Wilson, Governor of Vera Cruz, enclosing a short note to him from Gen'l Scott's ass't Adj't Gen'l dated at the Head Quarters of the army near the City of Mexico, Aug't 28th, directing Col. Wilson by order of Gen'l Scott, to have a Steamer in readiness to carry despatches to the Government, which he expected to transmit to him in two or three days afterwards.

I saw public officers & transacted business to-day as usual. I saw company at 2 O'Clock P. M. A number of persons called.

Brigadier Gen'l Kearney [of the] U. S. army called to-day, and [I] had a conversation of more than an hour with him, in relation to his late expedition to California and to affairs in that country. He is a good officer & an intelligent gentleman. He gave me much valuable information in relation to affairs in California, and the Military operations in that country. No conversation took place in relation to his recent difficulty with Commodore Stockton & Lieut. Col. Fremont. Col. Fremont is under arrest, charges having been preferred against him by Gen'l Kearney, & I preferred not to converse with him on that subject. I did not introduce the subject, and I was glad that he did not. My conversation with him was a pleasant and interesting one.

FRIDAY, *17th September, 1847.*— I saw and transacted business to-day with the Atto. Gen'l, the Secretary of the Navy, and some other public officers. Being engaged in my office, I directed no one to be admitted until 2 O'Clock P. M. At that hour I opened my door, and quite a number of persons called. Most of them were on the patriotic business of serving themselves by seeking office. I had no offices to bestow and dealt with them in a very summary manner. Some beggars for money were also among the number. To one poor woman I gave something. I also made a donation towards the building of the Washington Monument. No news was received from the army to-day. Mr. Barnett, who married my niece, Jane Walker, left for his residence in Tennessee to-day. This was reception

evening. A number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

SATURDAY, *18th September, 1847.*— Gov. Marcy, the Secretary of War, returned from his visit to New York this morning. He had been absent from the seat of Government about a month.

The Cabinet met at the usual hour to-day, all the members present. The War and the operations of our army in Mexico were the chief topics of conversation. I informed the Secretary of War of the chief events in relation to our military operations, and the action which had been taken upon them by the Government during his absence. Mr. Buchanan read the last despatches received from Mr. Trist, the last of them dated August 29th, '47. No action was taken upon any specific proposition.

I learned last evening that Lieut. Col. Fremont had arrived in this City. Brigadier Gen'l Kearney had arrested him and ordered him to report to the Adj't General at Washington. Gen'l Kearney filed charges against him with the Adj't Gen'l some days ago. I was informed in the parlour last night by Mr. Jones, the brother-in-law of Col. Fremont, that it was the Col's desire to be absent for a few days to visit his sick mother in Charleston, S. C., but that he had desired him to say to me that he wished to have his trial speedily and that he would be ready in 30 days. I also received a letter from Senator Benton on the subject this morning. Col. Fremont's case was the subject of conversation in the Cabinet. The Secretary of War sent over to his Department for the

charges which were exhibited against Col. F. by Gen'l Kearney. They were brought over & were read in Cabinet. I requested the Secretary of War to examine the charges and report to me as soon as practicable, whether in his opinion the charges preferred by Gen'l Kearney were of such a character as to make it proper to order a Court martial for the trial of Col. Frémont, or whether he would deem it better to order a Court of Enquiry in the first instance. No other business of importance was considered in Cabinet. I transacted some business on my table as usual to-day.

Bishop Otey [1] of the Episcopal church, who resides at Columbia, Tennessee, and his wife and daughter (Mrs. Minor) [2] dined with me to-day. Judge Mason and his wife also dined with me. Bishop Otey was with Judge Mason and myself at College at the University of N. Carolina 30 years ago.

Mrs. Polk, the wife of my brother, Wm. H. Polk, who has been a part of my family since her husband set off to Mexico as a Major of Dragoons, left this morning on a visit to her mother and other relations in the City of New York.

No further news was received from the army in Mexico to-day.

[1] James Hervey Otey, 1800–1863, first Episcopal bishop of Tennessee, founder of Columbia Institute (Tennessee) and one of the founders of the University of the South at Sewanee.

[2] Virginia Maury Minor was the daughter of James Hervey Otey and the wife of Benjamin Blake Minor, editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger* 1843–1847.

SUNDAY, *19th September, 1847.*— It rained this morning and the day was so inclement that Mrs. Polk declined attending church. I took my carriage and drove to the residence of Mr. Clifford, the atto. Gen'l, and Mr. Daniel Graham, the Register of the Treasury, who took seats with me and accompanied me to church. We attended Trinity church, and heard a very eloquent and able sermon delivered by Bishop Otey of the Episcopal church.

The Southern mail this afternoon brought nothing beyond Georgia, and of course no further intelligence was received from the army in Mexico.

MONDAY, *20th September, 1847.*— Nothing of sufficient interest to be noted occurred to-day. I was busy in my office as usual, transa[c]ted business with public officers, disposed of business on my table, and at 2 O'Clock P. M. saw company.

TUESDAY, *21st September, 1847.*— The Cabinet met at the usual hour to-day, all the members being present. No business of importance was transacted. Several subjects of minor interest were considered. The Cabinet dispersed at an early hour and I gave my attention to the business on my table. This was reception evening. A number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

I had some conversation with the Cabinet to-day, in which I directed that the annual estimates of appropriations for the next fiscal year should be prepared at as early a period as practicable. I directed the Secretaries of War & the Navy to make their esti-

mates upon the basis of the military and naval force now employed.

WEDNESDAY, *22nd September, 1847.*— I was engaged to-day chiefly in preparing a message which I design to send to the Ho. of Repts. at the next Session of Congress assigning my reasons for with-holding my approval of a Bill making appropriations for Harbours and Rivers, which was presented to me near the close of the last Session of Congress and which I retained. I have at different times since the adjournment of Congress given some attention to the subject, had investigated it and written some paragraphs. I now design to put my views into form while I have leisure, and before it shall be necessary to give my attention to the preperation of my annual message to be communicated at the opening of the next Session of Congress.

At 2 O'Clock P. M. I saw company as usual. Quite a crowd of persons called, some to pay their respects, some seeking office, and one man with one leg begging money. To the latter I contributed something. In the evening I remained in my office until a late hour at night.

No news was received from the army in Mexico to-day.

THURSDAY, *23rd September, 1847.*— I continued the preperations of my paper on the subject of Harbours and River appropriations to-day, upon which I was engaged on yesterday, and nearly completed it. I transacted business with public officers as usual

and disposed of the business on my table. I saw company at 2 O'Clock P. M. A number of persons called, most of whom were seeking what I had not to give — offices. The applications for place are unceasing. No news was received from the army in Mexico to-day. My anxiety to hear from the army is very great. Nothing of any general interest transpired today.

FRIDAY, *24th September, 1847.*— This was a wet, gloomy day, and but few persons called. Gen'l Robert Armstrong, U. S. consul to Liverpool, who came over in the last Steamer from England, called today. I transacted business in my office and saw public officers on business as usual. Nothing of importance transpired. This was reception evening. It was a stormy, wet night, and but three or four persons called.

SATURDAY, *25th September, 1847.*— The Cabinet met at the usual hour to-day; all the members present. Several subjects of minor importance were considered and disposed of. No recent news having been received from the army, no further [measures] were deemed necessary, in reference to military movements, in the absence of later intelligence from the seat of War. I am waiting with great anxiety for the next arrival from Mexico. Shortly before the meeting of the Cabinet this morning Lieut. Col. Fremont called. Col. Fremont is under arrest but had [made] no allusion to that fact or to his case while in conversation with me.

Among other matters before the Cabinet to-day, the Secretary of War submitted a list of officers to compose the Court Martial in Col. Fremont's case. I informed him that I had not sufficient knowledge of the officers named to form an opinion as to their fitness to compose the Court, & that I left the selection to him.

The Secretary of War also stated a disagreement which had occurred among the surgeons and [at] Vera Cruz, *viz.,* between Surgeons Barton & McFarlane on the one hand & surgeon Porter on the other hand. After hearing the papers read I directed that Dr. Porter should be ordered to service elsewhere, and Drs. Barton and McFarlane should be retained at Vera Cruz. The Secretary of War did not seem to concur in this opinion, but I had no doubt on the subject & issued the order accordingly.

About the time the Cabinet retired (between 2 and 3 O'Clock P. M.) I felt symptoms of a chill, and soon discovered that I had one. It was not severe, but I had some fever after it was over and spent an uncomfortable and restless night. The day was chilly for the season, and I was uncertain whether it was a regular attack of chills and fevers, or the effects of a change of weather. I took some simple medicine, and will wait until I see whether I have a second chill before I send for a physician.

SUNDAY, *26th September, 1847.*— I felt too unwell to attend church to-day. Mrs. Polk [and] Col. & Mrs. Walker attended Trinity Church to hear

Bishop Elliott[1] of the Episcopal church preach. The Bishop and his wife called on yesterday. Mrs. Elliott was Miss Charlotte Barnwell before her marriage, [and] is an old acquaintance and friend. She spent a winter in the same boarding house in Washington with Mrs. Polk and myself some fifteen years ago. Her husband is the Bishop of Georgia.

Gen'l Robert Armstrong called about 12 O'Clock and spent the balance of the day with me. I rested on a Sopha in my office. Gen'l Armstrong in the course of our long familiar conversation upon various subjects inquired of me how Mr. Charles J. Ingersoll of Phila. stood affected towards my administration. I told him that Mr. Ingersoll had become very hostile to me, and had written to me a very exceptionable letter, complaining of me because after he was rejected by the Senate as minister to France I had not renominated him, or kept the office vacant from the end of the last to the beginning of the next Session of Congress, so as to give him another chance to be confirmed. I told him that I had answered his letter, and that I thought Mr. Ingersoll would never venture to publish the correspondence. Gen'l Armstrong then told me that Mrs. Maury (an English woman who visited the U. S. a year or two ago & after her return to England had published a Book on her travels and observations in the U. S.) had shown him a letter addressed to her by Mr. Ingersoll, complaining of me because I had not appointed his (Mr. Ingersoll's son) to an office in the army of the

[1] Stephen Elliott, 1806–1866, appointed first Episcopal bishop of Georgia in 1840.

U. S., that he had applied to me to do so, and that I had refused. I note this fact because it shows the want of discretion and principle on the part of Mr. I., an American Representative, when he can so far forget the proprieties of his position and his own self respect as to be making known his complaints of his own Government, and his personal griefs and disappointments, to a gossipping woman of a Foreign Kingdom. Doubtless he calculated to have the sympathies and condolence of this English woman & her English friends with him in his sore troubles & griefs.

MONDAY, *27th September, 1847.*— I went to my office at the usual hour this morning. About 10 O'Clock I discovered that I was taking a chill. It continued upon me for two or three hours and was succeeded by a considerable fever. I sent for Dr. Hall, who called and prescribed for me about 2 O'Clock P. M. I requested him to invite Dr. Miller to call with him in the evening. I retired to my room and took the medicine which Dr. Hall had prescribed. In the evening Drs. Hall and Miller called. I spent a restless night.

TUESDAY, *28th September, 1847.*— This morning I was under the operation of Medicine & was quite unwell. The physicians called & made a further prescription. I was closely confined to my room, and about 4 O'Clock P. M. had another chill. The physicians called frequently and continued to prescribe. I had fever and spent a bad night.

WEDNESDAY, *29th September, 1847.*— I was closely confined to my bed during the whole day, and was very sick. The physicians called frequently. At night I was very ill and had no rest.

THURSDAY, *30th September, 1847.*— I was closely confined to my bed to-day, but suffered less than I did on yesterday. The Physicians called frequently in the course of the day. I rested something better to-night than I had done for the two preceding nights.

FRIDAY, *1st October, 1847.*— I was better this morning, but was still closely confined to my bed. I continued to take medicine through the day, and at night rested better than I had done before. I had been clear of fever during the day.

SATURDAY, *2nd October, 1847.*— I was clear of fever this morning and was much better, but was feeble from the effects of medicine. I continued quietly on my bed during the day. I sat up about half an hour in the course of the day. My disease is broken, and with care I hope to resume my official duties in a few days. I have transacted no business of any kind since monday morning last. I rested well at night.

SUNDAY, *3rd October, 1847.*— I was clear of disease this morning, but felt very feeble. I remained on my bed most of the day. I sat up two or three hours in the course of the day. I rested well at night.

MONDAY, *4th October, 1847.*— I felt much better this morning, but was still feeble. I continued to take some medicine. I rose & dressed myself about 10 O'Clock, and wrapping myself up walked to the office, but was so feeble that I returned to my chamber in a few minutes. I sat up most of the day, and transacted some business with the Secretaries of State, the Treasury, and War, whom I saw in my chamber.

I resolved to-day to recall Mr. Trist as commissioner to Mexico, and requested Mr. Buchanan to prepare the letter [1] of recall.

I directed the Secretary of War to prepare another letter to Gen'l Scott, directing him more stringently than had been done to levy contributions upon the enemy, and make them as far as practicable defray the expenses of the war.

TUESDAY, *5th October, 1847.*— I continued to feel better this morning. I walked to the office, but after being there but a few minutes I deemed it prudent to return to my chamber.

When the Cabinet assembled in my office at the usual hour, I requested my Private Secretary to invite them to meet me in my chamber. They did so; all the members were present.

Mr. Buchanan read the letter of recal[l], which he had prepared to Mr. Trist. All the Cabinet agreed that it was proper to recall him. The letter was discussed at some length, and by my direction some modifications were made in it.

Gov. Marcy read a draft of the letter to Gen'l Scott

[1] Moore, *Buchanan,* VII, 425.

which I had requested him to write on yesterday. It was not finished, but he said he would complete it this evening.

The unofficial information received shows that Mexico has refused to treat for peace upon terms which the U. S. can accept; and it is now manifest that the war must be prosecuted with increased forces and increased energy. We must levy contributions and quarter on the enemy. This is part of the object of the letter to Gen'l Scott. Mr. Trist is recalled because his remaining longer with the army could not, probably, accomplish the objects of his mission, and because his remaining longer might, & probably would, impress the Mexican Government with the belief that the U. S. were so anxious for peace that they would ultimate[ly] conclude one upon the Mexican terms. Mexico must now first sue for peace, & when she does we will hear her propositions.

The Cabinet remained upwards of three hours, and when they adjourned I found myself much exhausted & fatigued.

WEDNESDAY, *6th October, 1847.*—This was a damp & gloomy day, and from this cause, as well as from over-fatigue on yesterday, I did not feel so well as I had done on yesterday. In the course of the day I saw the Secretaries of State, War, & the Navy on business. The Secretary of War read his draft of a letter to Gen'l Scott. I suggested some modifications which were made.

The Secretary of State submitted to me his re-

vised draft of his letter to Mr. Trist. I suggested one or two modifications of it which were made.

I sent my nephew, Marshall T. Polk, to a school in Alexandria to-day. Mr. Benjamin Hallowell is the principal of the School. My Private Secretary went to Alexandria with Marshall, and on his return gave a favourable account of the school as far as he was enabled to judge of it.

THURSDAY, *7th October, 1847.*— The weather continued to be damp to-day, and I remained all day in my chamber. I saw the Secretaries of State and of War & the Post Master Gen'l in the course of the day, and transacted business with the two former.

I was occupied a part of to-day in reducing to writing my views & policy in relation to the Mexican War. These paragraphs may be of use to me when I come to prepare my next annual Message to Congress.

Mrs. Polk was unwell this evening, & thinks she had a slight chill.

FRIDAY, *8th October, 1847.*— I remained the greater part of to-day in my chamber, having walked to the office two or three times & remained there for a short time. I felt much better than I had done since I was taken unwell. I saw the Secretary of State and the Secretary of War & transacted business with them.

Mrs. Polk, who was taken ill on yesterday afternoon, continued to be unwell today. She rested on the sofa and get [sat] up through the day. She

was unwilling to send for a physician, hoping that her indisposition might pass off. She did not pass a comfortable night.

SATURDAY, *9th October, 1847.*— Mrs. Polk had another chill this morning, when I sent for Dr. Miller, who prescribed for her. Her chill was followed by a high fever.

I met the Cabinet in my office to-day at the usual hour, all the members being present. Several subjects of minor importance were considered and disposed of. Upon returning to my chamber I found Mrs. Polk quite sick, and fear she may have a severe attack.

SUNDAY, *10th October, 1847.*— I spent this day in my chamber until about 4 O'Clock when I took [a] short ride in my carriage for exercise. I drove to the House of the Post Master Gen'l who joined me in the ride. I am still very weak from my late attack, and felt fatigued on my return from my ride. Mrs. Polk was no better to-day. She had another chill and suffered much and rested badly through the day and night. The physician (Dr. Miller) called several times in the course of the day and after night, and prescribed for her. She is very nervous and restless, had fever in the latter part of the day, and I thought her very ill.

MONDAY, *11th October, 1847.*— Mrs. Polk, having spent a restless and uncomfortable night, was quite ill this morning. The physician called at 8

O'Clock A. M. and several times during the day and night. At night he pronounced her better, but I did not perceive much change in her situation for the last two days, except that she is becoming more debilitated. The Physician left between 8 & 9 O'Clock P. M. having prescribed for her during the night.

I was much better to-day and visited my office on business for short periods several times. I remained chiefly in the room with Mrs. Polk and assisted the servant maid in waiting upon her. I saw the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy and some other public officers, & transacted business with them in the course of the day.

TUESDAY, *12th October, 1847.*— I met the Cabinet to-day in my office, all the members present. No business of General importance was considered and definitely acted on. I communicated to the Cabinet [my] views in regard to the future prosecution of the War in Mexico. I cannot undertake to state these views in detail. They were in substance that the war should be prosecuted with increased energy, that I was opposed to withdrawing the army altogether, or retiring to a defensive line, but that I was in favour of holding all the ports, towns, Cities, and Provinces which we had conquered, of pressing forward our Military operations, and of levying contributions upon the enemy for the support of our army. I was in favour, also, of establishing more stable Governments than those established over the Cities or Provinces which we have conquered, by the

right of conquest. I was in favour, also, of avowing in my message to Congress in December next that the Provinces of New Mexico and the Californias should be retained by the U. S. as indemnity, & should never be restored to Mexico, and that in these Provinces permanent territorial Governments should be established. The Cabinet were unanimous in concurring with me in these views. I then told them that I would prepare shortly a rough draft of my message to Congress upon the subject, embodying these views, & would submit it to them for consideration.

Mrs. Polk continued to be quite ill to-day, and I left the Cabinet two or three times during its session to visit her in our chamber. The physician thought her better than she had been.

This was the regular evening for the reception of company, but none was received. Neither Mrs. Polk nor myself have been in the parlour on reception evenings since I was taken ill on the 25th ultimo.

WEDNESDAY, *13th October, 1847.*— I visited my office on business several times for short periods to-day. I saw several public officers on business. I am free from disease, but am still weak from my late attack. I commenced preparing today the paragraphs of my message in relation to Mexico & the Mexican War. I occupied a room near to Mrs. Polk's chamber. I could not remain in my office without being subject to constant interruptions from

visitors. I saw several public officers on business to-day.

Mrs. Polk is better to-day, and I hope will speedily recover. The physician thinks her disease is removed.

THURSDAY, *14th October, 1847.*— I attended in my office occasionally to-day when called there on business. The greater part of the day I spent in my room near Mrs. Polk's chamber, and was engaged in preparing my views to be communicated to Congress on the subject of our relations with Mexico, and the Mexican War. Mrs. Polk continues to improve & is decidedly better to-day.

The Secretary of State called & sent me a message that he had come with the Hon. Henry A. Wise, late U. S. Minister to Brazil, who desired to pay his respects. I went to my office, and a few minutes afterwards the Secretary of State and Mr. Wise came in. Mr. Wise appeared at first to be somewhat embarrassed. I received him courteously, and he was soon apparently at his ease. He very soon returned to me his thanks, and expressed his gratitude to me for my kind treatment to [of] him while in Brazil. He said he desired to express to me his personal gratitude as well as [that of] a public functionary. I entered into a free conversation with him in regard to affairs in Brazil. No allusion was had to his former hostility to me, and his unprovoked and unjustifiable assaults upon me when I was speaker of the Ho. Repts. in 1836 & 1837. He and Baylie Peyton were

then acting a part for John Bell,[1] who used them for his own malignant purposes. I can never justify Mr. Wise's course at that time, but it has long since passed & I forgive it. He is now very grateful to me for not having recalled him from Brazil, and for having approved his conduct in the recent difficulties in which he was involved with the Government of that country. I learn that he returns to the U. S. my friend, & his expressions of gratitude to me to-day were as strong & decided as human language could make them, so that I have lived to conquer the hostility of at least one of my political opponents & persecutors. This I have done by performing my duty in a magnanimous and liberal manner. Mr. Buchanan was present during my whole interview with him.

To-day I continued the preparation of my views in relation to the Mexican War. It is an important subject & I desire to have the first draft of it prepared & submitted to the Cabinet before I shall be pressed with other duties as the meeting of Congress approaches.

[1] Henry A. Wise and Bailie Peyton had been law partners for a brief time in Tennessee, but meeting with no success the partnership was dissolved. Wise returned to Virginia and Peyton went into politics. John Bell of Tennessee was a Representative in Congress 1827–1841, and Senator 1847–1849. In 1860 he became the nominee of the Constitutional Union party for the Presidency. He supported Jackson in the Presidential election of 1832 but turned Whig the following year, and in 1834 was elected over Polk Speaker of the House. Henceforth he was the bitter opponent of Polk in the field of Tennessee politics.

FRIDAY, *15th October, 1847.*— I attended to business in my office occasionally to-day. I saw several public officers & transacted business with them. Mrs. Polk was so much better that she set [sat] up most of to-day. I continued the preparation of my views in relation to Mexican affairs to-day and finished the first draft, which I will submit to the Cabinet.

Nothing worthy of being noted occurred to-day.

The Secretary of the Treasury left the City to-day to be absent for three or four days as he informed me. He informed [me] he was going to Rockaway to accompany his wife and children, who had been spending the summer at that place, back to Washington.

SATURDAY, *16th October, 1847.*— I attended the meeting of the Cabinet in my office to-day, all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury, who was absent from the City, and the Secretary of State, who was detained in his office.

I read to the members of the Cabinet who were present the draft which I had prepared within the last few days of my views of our relations with Mexico, and our future policy in the conduct of the War. They all expressed their approbation of it.

No business of importance was transacted.

In the evening I sent the draft of my views on Mexican affairs to Mr. Buchanan, for his examination and any suggestions he might have to make.

Mrs. Polk continues to improve in her health.

SUNDAY, *17th October, 1847.*—Neither Mrs. Polk nor myself had sufficiently recovered from our late attacks of fever to attend church to-day. Mrs. Polk set [sat] up most of the day. I consider myself well, but have not yet recovered my strength.

MONDAY, *18th October, 1847.*—I was in my office almost the whole day; saw several public officers on business & transacted business on my table. Senator Yulee called. He had been on a visit with his wife to Kentucky and was on his return to Florida. In the course of our conversation he suggested some modification of the boundaries which Mr. Trist had proposed to the Mexican commissioners, & which had been rejected by them. His suggestion was that the Rio Grande should be the line to near the Southern boundary of New Mexico, and that the Mexican settlements on the River and near it, on both sides, should be left to Mexico. He was in favour of acquiring the whole of Upper California. I told him that the acquisition of Upper California would be a *sine qua non* with me, in any Treaty that might be made. He said he was glad to hear it. I had a full conversation with him on Mexican affairs.

At 2 O'Clock P. M. I opened my office for the reception of company. Quite a number came in, all of whom but three were seeking office, and one of the three was begging money. This was the first day I had received company generally since I was taken sick, more than three weeks ago. I concluded that if no persons had called in that time who had

more important business than those who had called to-day, that the public had lost nothing by my absence from the office.

TUESDAY, *19th October, 1847.*— The Cabinet met to-day at the usual hour, all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury, who was absent from the City. Nothing of much importance was considered to-day. I transacted business with public officers, and at 2 O'Clock took a ride in my carriage with Mrs. Polk, who had sufficiently recovered to take some exercise.

WEDNESDAY, *20th October, 1847.*— At an early hour this morning information was received by Telegraph from Petersburg that the Steamer Fashion had arrived at New Orleans from Vera Cruz, bringing dates [despatches] from the City of Mexico [bearing date] as late as the 18th of September. This intelligence is that our army was in peaceable possession of the City of Mexico; that Santa Anna had resigned the Presidency; & that Pẽna y Pẽna [1] who had succeeded him, had convened the Mexican Congress to meet at Queratero [2] on the 5th Instant. A state of great confusion prevailed in Mexico. The names of many officers who were killed and

[1] In 1847 Peña y Peña, as president of the supreme court, took charge of the executive branch of the government, retaining it until the congress elected a provisional president. In 1848 he again assumed charge of the executive department. He died in 1850.

[2] The capital of the province of the same name, situated 150 miles northwest of the city of Mexico.

wounded in the late engagements before the City of Mexico are given, some of them, indeed I may say all of them, very valuable officers. Among the wounded are Maj'r Gen'l Pillow severely, and Brigadier Gen'l Shields. I waited with much anxiety for the arrival of the Southern mail in the afternoon, and was much disappointed that no official despatches were received from Gen'l Scott. Letters were received from the army and navy at Vera Cruz.

THURSDAY, *21st October, 1847.*— I was occupied in my office as usual to-day; saw several public officers on business, and saw company at 2 O'Clock P. M. Nothing of much interest occurred. By the Southern Mail this evening despatches were received from Mr. Trist from Mexico, of as late date as the 28th of Sept., giving an account of his negotiations with the Mexican Commissioners which had resulted in a failure to come to any agreement with them. Mr. Trist had exceeded his instructions, and had suggested terms to the Mexican commissioners which I could not have approved if they had agreed to them. I can never approve a Treaty or submit one to the Senate, which would dismember the State of Texas, and Mr. Trist's suggestion, if agreed to, would have done [this] by depriving that State of the country between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. Mr. Trist in other respects had in his conferences departed from his instructions and the simple duty with which he was charged, which was to submit and inforce the ultimatum of his Government. He had no right to depart from his instructions, and I disapprove his

conduct in doing so. He proposed, it is true, if they agreed to his suggestions, to submit it to his Government before he would enter into a Treaty, but in this he has committed himself and embarrassed future negotiations. His course is much to be regretted.

No official despatches were received from the army, but many details were contained in the New Orleans papers.

FRIDAY, *22nd October, 1847*.— I was in my office at the usual hour this morning. I had many calls by public officers through the day. Many other persons also called, and among them was Senator Benton, who returned to the City from the West last evening. I had a long & pleasant conversation with him about the War and upon other topics. He finally introduced the case of Lieut. Col. Fremont, who is under arrest at the instance Of Gen'l Kearney. Mr. Benton made a long statement of events which had occurred in California in which he thought Col. Fremont had been badly treated by his superior officers. He said that he had written me a letter some time ago, stating that events had occurred in California which the Government ought to know, and he insisted that in his approaching trial before a Court Martial all the events & facts to which he had alluded should be investigated and exposed. This he said could not be done under the present charges against Col. Fremont, and that Col. Fremont would on monday next apply in writing to the Secretary of War, asking that other charges, some of them

having been published at the instance of officers of the army, should be preferred against him, so as to make the investigation a full and complete one. He said if this was not done there would be four other Court Martials, in order to bring out the whole of the facts; one against Gen'l Kearney, one against Capt. Emmory,[1] one against Capt. Turner,[2] and one against Capt. Cook.[3] He said if a full investigation could not be had on his (Col. F.'s) trial, he would file charges against these officers, but that he did not wish to do so if the facts could come out incidentally on his own trial. Mr. Benton became excited & exhibited much deep feeling on the subject. He spoke of the bad treatment of Col. Fremont, and said that his (Col. B.'s) deepest concern in this life was to see justice done to Col. Fremont in this matter.[4] I was careful to say as little as possible, but listened attentively to all Mr. Benton said. I finally said to him that I would act justly in the matter; that I regretted the whole [affair] but had had no agency in producing the difficulty. He said he knew I would act justly. He left in a good humour towards me, as far as he expressed himself in relation to any action of mine in the matter.

I immediately sent for the Secretary of War, and

[1] William Helmsley Emory. He went with Kearny to California in 1846 and became a participant in the Fremont controversy.

[2] Henry S. Turner, Captain in the 1st Dragoons.

[3] Philip St. George Cooke, Captain in the 1st Dragoons.

[4] Benton's account of the Fremont controversy is given in *Thirty Years' View,* II, 715–719.

communicated to him the substance of Col. Benton's conversation. Mr. Buchanan came in whilst I was relating the conversation.

I transacted business as usual in my office to-day.

After night Hon. Rob't Owen of Indiana called.

I received by this evening's mail a letter from Maj'r Gen'l Pillow, dated at the City of Mexico on the 8th, and another on the 28th of September, but no official despatches were received from Gen'l Scott.

No official despatch has been received from Gen'l Scott of later date than the 4th of June last. I directed the Secretary of War to address him a letter requiring him to forward duplicates of any despatches he may have sent, & which may have miscarried.

SATURDAY, *23rd October, 1847.*—The Cabinet met at the usual hour to-day, all the members present except the Post Master Gen'l, who is detained at his house by indisposition.

The official despatches which had been received at the Department of State from Mr. Trist as late as the 28th ult., giving an account of his negotiations with the Mexican commissioners, were read by Mr. Buchanan. Mr. Trist has managed the negotiation very bunglingly and with no ability. He has done more. He has departed from his instruction so far as to invite proposals from the Mexican commissioners to be submitted to his Government for its decision upon them, which [can] never be accepted by the United States. These proposals, if made and ac-

cepted, would require the U. S. to surrender to Mexico the country between the Nueces and the Rio Grande, now a part of the state of Texas, which he had ought to have known could never be acceded to. He departed from his instructions also in intimating to the Mexican commissioners that the U. S. might not insist upon the whole of California as indemnity, but might surrender its Demands for a part of it. I expressed in strong & decided terms my disapprobation of his conduct. The Cabinet concurred with me in my opinions. I directed Mr. Buchanan to prepare a despatch expressing in strong terms my disapprobation, and to repeat his order of the 6th Instant for his immediate recal[1]. This despatch, with that to Gen'l Scott, which I directed the Secretary of War to prepare on yesterday, I directed to be forwarded by a special messenger. It is very important that the official despatches from Gen'l Scott should be received before the meeting of Congress, and equally important that Mr. Trist should not enter into terms of a treaty which I could not approve. Mr. Trist had a plain duty to perform & that was to submit the ultimatum of his Government, if he could not obtain better terms, and there he ought to have stopped. He has chosen upon his own responsibility to go further, and has, I apprehend, greatly embarrassed any further negotiation with Mexico. Mexico will hereafter claim terms equally as favourable as those he has suggested, & these terms I can never approve, & if a Treaty were signed & ratified by Mexico, I would not submit it to the Senate. I am much embarrassed by Mr. Trist's course.

I thought he had more sagacity and more common sense than to make the propositions he has made.

Some other subjects of minor importance were considered.

The Hon. Mr. Payne,[1] a member of the last Congress, called to-day. The Cabinet adjourned at near 4 O'Clock P. M.

In the evening I attended to some of the business on my table.

SUNDAY, *24th October, 1847.*— This was a damp, uncomfortable day; neither Mrs. Polk nor myself felt sufficiently recovered from our recent attacks of fever to attend church. We remained quietly at home during the day.

MONDAY, *25th October, 1847.*— I transacted business with the Secretaries of War & the Navy, and with some other public officers this forenoon. I occupied some time in revising the rough draft of my views on Mexican affairs, which I had prepared some days ago. It was prepared with a view to make it a part of my Message at the opening of the next session of Congress.

A special messenger left this morning as bearer of despatches to Gen'l Scott and Mr. Trist. The despatches which he bore were those which I directed to be prepared in the Cabinet meeting on the 23rd Instant (see this diary of that day).

At 2 O'Clock P. M. I opened my office for the re-

[1] William Winter Payne, 1807–1847, Representative from Alabama 1841–1847.

ception of company. Five or six persons came in as soon as the door was [opened], and among them was John Randolph Benton, the son of Senator Benton. I received him pleasantly and kindly. In a manner somewhat excited he said to me that he wanted an appointment of Lieutenant in the army, and asked me if he could get it. I told him in a mild tone that I could not promise to appoint him, that there were embarrassments in the way, which I commenced explaining to him. He interrupted me & in a manner still more excited than at first, he said he wished to know distinctly whether he was to be appointed or not. I told him that in the first place I knew of no vacancies, & that if there were, as a general rule I gave the preference to privates who were in the ranks in Mexico (some of whom had been wounded and otherwise distinguished themselves, and all of whom had suffered great privation) when they were equally well qualified, over citizens who had remained at home, and had never been in the service. I told him that I observed this as a general rule, but that there might be cases of exception to the rule. He rose to his feet, & was impertinent and still excited. As he was young, and on his father's account, I still spoke in a mild & kind tone, & told him to be patient, & that I would talk to his father & the Secretary of War on the subject. He said that his father would not urge his appointment, & that the Secretary of War had told him this morning that his application would be rejected. I told him I had seen the Secretary to-day, & that he had mentioned his case to me, but had not told me that

he had so informed him. He left my office in quite a passion, & very rudely, swearing profanely as he went [out] of the door. In a loud and boisterous tone he used the exclamation as he passed out of the door "By God" he would do something, but I lost the remaining words which he uttered. As soon as he was gone one of the gentlemen, Mr. Cable[?] of Massachusetts, asked me in his astonishment, if such occurrences were common in my office. I told him it was the first of the kind, I believed, which had occurred since I had been President. I enquired of those present, some of whom sat nearer the door than I did, what his last exclamation was, as I had not heard the latter part of it distinctly. Mr. Cable[?] said he thought it was "By God I will have vengeance," or something to that effect. Mr. Arthur [1] of Baltimore, who was present, said he smelt liquor on his breath & thought he was drunk. All present expressed their amazement at his conduct. Col. Walker was present when he first came in, but left the office before he used the violent expression as he went out of the office. He thought he was drunk also. He gave evidence of his ill manners and impertinence, & I have no doubt is in all respects worthless.

I note this incident, 1st, because of its marked character, & 2nd, because I may hereafter incur the hostility of his family because his wishes have not been gratified. His brother-in-law, Jones, is also an applicant to me for office. I promoted Lieut. Col.

[1] Timothy Shay Arthur, 1809–1855, editor of the *Athenæum;* in 1842 he founded *Arthur's Home Magazine.*

Fremont, another brother-in-law. He is now under arrest, & to-day Col. Benton has addressed a letter to the Secretary of War making requests or demands in reference to his trial, some of which cannot be granted. I have always been upon good terms with Col. Benton, but he is a man of violent passions and I should not be surprised if he became my enemy because all his wishes in reference to his family and their appointments to offices are not appointed to office [gratified?], and especially if I do not grant his wishes in reference to Col. Fremont's trial. I am resolved that Col. Fremont shall be tried as all other officers are tried, against whom charges are preferred. I will grant him no favours or privileges which I would not grant to any other officer, even though I should incur his displeasure & that of his friends by refusing to do so.

TUESDAY, *26th October, 1847.*—The Cabinet met at the usual hour to-day, all the members present. The principal matter considered to-day was a letter addressed by Senator Benton & his son-in-law, Mr. Jones, in which, as counsel for Col. Fremont, they request that additional charges, based upon anonymous newspaper publications, may be preferred against that officer, and that the place of trial may be changed from Fortress Monroe to Washington. They state also that his arrest was a surprise, as some of his witnesses are in [the] army and navy in California. After full consideration an answer was agreed upon and the Secretary of War was directed to prepare it. As the questions involved in the ap-

plication are some of them important, and as Senator Benton manifests much excitement on the subject, it was resolved that the Cabinet would meet to-morrow to consider the answer to be prepared by the Secretary of War. I know of no reason why this case should produce more interest or excitement than the trial of any other officer charged with a military offense, & yet it is manifest that Senator Benton is resolved to make it do so. I think he is pursuing a mistaken policy so far as Col. Fremont is concerned, but that is an affair of which he must judge. I will do my duty in the case, without favour or affection. In doing so I am sensible that it will be very difficult to avoid giving offense to Senator Benton. Should such be the result, I shall have the consciousness of having done my duty to the public & justice to Col. Fremont, and more than this I cannot do to secure the friendship [of Col. Benton], or his support of my administration, or that of any one else.

Some other business of minor importance was attended to.

I disposed of some business on my table in the course of the day.

WEDNESDAY, *27th October, 1847.*—A special meeting of the Cabinet was held at 11 O'Clock this morning, all the members present, to consider the reply of the Secretary of War to the letter of Senator Benton & his son-in-law, Mr. Jones, in relation to Lieut. Col. Fremont's case (see this diary of yesterday). The Secretary of War read the letter which he had prepared. It was carefully considered, and

after undergoing some modifications was agreed to unanimously. No other subject was considered by the Cabinet.

Mr. John Appleton of Maine, chief clerk in the Navy Department, presented to me to-day a Journal of my tour in June & July last to the Northern States. Mr. Appleton accompanied me on that tour as one of my suite, and prepared the Journal from the notes which he had taken. It will be interesting for future reference and I will preserve it. I was engaged to-day in revising the draft which I had prepared some days ago of my views of our relations with Mexico, designed to constitute a part of my next annual message.

I did not open my office for the reception of company generally to-day. I, however, admitted several persons who called.

I disposed of business on my table as usual, to-day.

THURSDAY, *28th October, 1847.*— Finding that I was constantly subject to be interrupted by calls if I remained in my office, I retired to another room to-day, and was engaged in preparing my next annual message. The Mexican question, the war, &C., is the great subject of interest, & I occupied the principal part of the day on that subject. At 2 O'Clock I went to my office & saw company. Several persons called, but nothing of much interest occurred. Among those who called were several office seekers as usual. The Secretary of War submitted to me to-day the answer of Senator Benton & his son-in-law, Mr. Jones, as the counsel of Lieut. Col. Fre-

mont, to the Secretary's letter of yesterday, declining to ask a postponment of his trial, but insisting that the place of trial should be changed to Washington. I concluded to change the place & ordered the trial to be had at Washington.

FRIDAY, *29th October, 1847.*— I was occupied the principal part of to-day in the preperation of my message. I left my office, for the reasons assigned in this diary on yesterday. I returned to the office at 2 O'Clock P. M. & saw company. Several persons called as usual. I transacted some business on my table, but nothing worthy of notice occurred during the day.

SATURDAY, *30th October, 1847.*— The Cabinet met at the usual hour to-day, all the members present. After transacting some business of minor importance, the Mexican war and the policy proper to be pursued was fully discussed. The Cabinet were unanimously in favour of prosecuting it with increased energy. A question which had been considered and decided several weeks ago was again considered to-day. It was the proper construction of the act of the 13th of May, 1846, authorizing the President to accept the services of 50,000 Volunteers. In May, 1846, I accepted the services of about 23,000 Volunteers for 12 months. Since that time I have accepted the services of about 27,000 Volunteers to serve during the war. The 12 months men were discharged at the expiration of their term, & the question of construction was, whether the

authority of the act had been exhausted, or whether it authorized me to keep the whole number of 50,000 in the field. It was decided that the former construction was the proper one, though some doubts were expressed on the subject. All thought it was safest not to exercise a doubtful power, by calling out more volunteers, and that it would be better to call on Congress to legislate on the subject.

Nothing of interest occurred to-day.

SUNDAY, *31st October, 1847.*— Mrs. Polk and myself attended the First Presbyterian church to-day. It was the first sabbath I had attended church since I was taken ill on saturday, the 25th of September, ultimo.

MONDAY, *1st November, 1847.*— I spent most of to-day in a private room, in order to avoid the constant calls which are made daily when I am in my office. I was engaged in revising the draft of that part of my annual message which I had prepared on Mexican affairs, and particularly in relation to the war. At 2 O'Clock P. M. I went to my office and saw company, having directed my porter to inform all who called that I would see them at that hour. A number of persons called, some to pay their respects, but most of them seeking office.

After night Mr. Buchanan called, & complained that persons employed in the Customs House at Philadelphia were personally abusive of him, and that if it was not checked his friends would apply

to me, and that he would do so, to remove Col. Page, the collector. He stated that he did not object that they should be the friends of Mr. Dallas, but he thought that I should not permit a member of my Cabinet to be personally abused by persons holding offices under my administration. I told him I had never heard of it before, & that it was certainly wrong. He said he had no right to object if I should be the friend of Mr. Dallas, but he thought I should protect a member of my Cabinet from personal abuses by persons in the employment of the Government. He alluded, in speaking of Mr. Dallas, to the rivalry between Mr. D. and himself for the next Presidency. I told Mr. Buchanan, in reference to that matter I must stand still and take no part between Democratic friends who might be aspirants for the Presidency, at least at present. Mr. Buchanan has of late had his mind very much fixed upon being a candidate for the Presidency, which, I fear, may embarrass my administration. I told him I would see Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, on the subject, to which he assented, and that I had no objection to write to Col. Page disapproving the personal abuse of him of which he complained, but plainly intimated that [I] would take no part in any contest between Mr. Dallas and himself. When the Democratic National Convention shall nominate a candidate for the Presidency I will support the nominee, whoever he may be. Until that time I shall take no part between the Democratic aspirants.

TUESDAY, *2nd November, 1847.*— I am fifty-two years old to-day, this being my birthday. I have now passed through two-thirds of my Presidential term, & most heartily wish that the remaining third was over, for I am sincerely desirous to have the enjoyment of retirement in private life.

The Cabinet met at the usual hour, all the members present. I had some conversation with them about the preperation of their Reports, preparatory to the meeting of Congress.

Nothing of much importance was considered to-day.

I spent the balance of the day in disposing of the business on my table and in preparing paragraphs of my next annual message. After the Cabinet adjourned [I] told Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, whom I had requested to remain, of the complaint of Mr. Buchanan against the Custom-house officers at Philadelphia for their abuse [of] him personally (see this diary of yesterday). I informed Mr. Walker that I should take no part between Mr. Dallas and Mr. Buchanan, but that I thought it wrong that Mr. Buchanan should be personally abused by persons employed in the custom-house. Mr. Walker agreed to write a general letter to Col. Page on the subject.

WEDNESDAY, *3rd November, 1847.*— I spent most of to-day in my private chamber, preparing paragraphs for my next annual message. I saw Mr. Buchanan in my office, and after transacting public business, informed him that I had seen Mr. Walker,

the Secretary of the Treasury, in relation to the personal abuse of which he had complained to me as having been heaped upon him by officers of the custom house at Philadelphia, & that Mr. Walker had said to me that he would write to Col. Page, the collector, on the subject. (See this diary of yesterday & the day before).

Senator Douglass of Illinois called to see me to-day. He is on his way with his wife [1] to visit her relations in N. Carolina. I opened my office at 2 O'Clock P. M. & saw company generally. Nothing worthy of note transpired.

THURSDAY, *4th November, 1847.*— I was occupied to-day in collecting the documents & preparing paragraphs for my message. I desire to have the paper in a state of forwardness before the members of Congress begin to arrive, for after that time I should have but little time to prepare. I saw and transacted business with public officers in the course of the day, disposed of some business on my table, and at 2 O'Clock P. M. opened my office for the reception of company. A number of persons called, but none of them had any business of more importance than to seek office.

After night Senator Douglass of Illinois called. I had a long conversation with him upon public affairs. He agreed with me in my full policy, except

[1] In 1847 Douglas married Martha Martin, daughter of Col. Robert Martin of North Carolina. She died January 19, 1853, and in 1856 Senator Douglas was married to Miss Adele Cutts, daughter of James Madison Cutts of Washington.

in relation to River & Harbour improvements. He said, however, that he felt no great interest on the subject, and should oppose my views on that subject only by a silent vote.

FRIDAY, *5th November, 1847.*— I was engaged to-day in further examination & preparation of the matter to be embraced in my next annual message. In the course of the day the Hon. Mr. Clingman,[1] a Representative in the next Congress, called and paid his respects. The Hon. Mr. Davis of Indiana, late Speaker of the Ho. of Repts., also called. He applied to me to appoint him charge d'affairs to Naples, or commissioner to Naples, in place of Mr. Everett deceased. I told him there were embarrassments in the way of gratifying his wishes, & did not make any promises.

About 3 O'Clock P. M. The members of the Court martial now sitting in this City on the trial of Lieut. Col. Fremont, accompanied by the Secretary of War, called and paid their respects. It was a visit of ceremony and they remained but a few minutes. They were all in full uniform.

I did not open my office to see company generally to-day. I disposed of some business on my table.

SATURDAY, *6th November, 1847.*— The Cabinet met at the usual hour to-day, all the members present. The Secretary of War & the Secretary of the Navy submitted the estimates of appropriations

[1] Thomas Lanier Clingman of North Carolina.

which had been prepared by the several Heads of Bureaus in their Departments for deficiencies in the present year & for the next fiscal year. Those of the Secretary of the Navy exceeded but little those ordinarily required in a period of peace. Those of the Secretary of War greatly exceeded the amount which I had anticipated. In the aggregate they required nearly eighteen millions for deficiencies for the present fiscal year, and upwards of forty one millions for the next fiscal year, making an aggregate of near sixty millions. I expressed my astonishment at the amount & told him these must certainly be some mistake. He said he had not himself revised the amounts estimated by the several Heads of Bureaus in his Department. I requested him to do so, and if possible, if consistent with the efficiency of the service, to reduce them. He said he would do so, and report to me on monday next.

The Secretary of the Treasury presented certain modifications, which he recommended, of the rates of duties levied as a military contribution on goods entered in the ports of Mexico, in our military occupation. The cabinet were unanimous in recommending the modifications proposed. I was disinclined to them, because I disliked the seeming vacillation which it would imply, but yielded my own impressions & told the secretary of the Treasury to prepare the order directing the modifications proposed & I would sanction it.

Some other business of minor importance was transacted.

After night Gen'l Mariott,[1] the collector of Baltimore, called and requested me to appoint his son, who is a private soldier in the army in Mexico, to a Lieutenancy. I could not promise to do so, but told him I would consider his application when a vacancy occurred.

SUNDAY, *7th November, 1847.*— I was suffering from the effects of a severe cold to-day & did not attend church. Mrs. Polk & my nephew, Marshall T. Polk, who had come up on a visit from his school in Alexandria, attended the first Presbyterian church. Mrs. Polk attended the afternoon service at the same church, it being communion day.

MONDAY, *8th November, 1847.*— I was in my office at the usual hour this morning. I transacted some of the current business which had accumulated on my table, and saw several public officers on business. In the course of the day Senator Dix of New York called. He informed me that he had brought his family to the City that he might Select quarters and be settled before the meeting of Congress. I had a conversation with him about the Mexican war & other topics of public interest. He did not introduce the subject of the divisions and defeat of the Democracy of New York at the late election. If he had done so, I would have given him my opinion plainly, that Mr. John Van Buren, Cambreling,[2] Preston

[1] William H. Marriott.

[2] Churchill C. Cambreleng, 1786–1862, Representative from New York 1821–1839, minister to Russia 1840–1841. He be-

King, Rathbun, and those who acted with them in bolting from the regular nominations of the party and who attempted to agitate the slavery question, were wholly inexcusable, and were responsible for the defeat of the party. Senator Dix belongs to the same section of the party that the disorganizers referred to do. As he did not introduce the subject, I did not. His conversation was in a friendly tone towards the administration. Among other things he recommended Mr. Niles[1] of Vermont for the Mission to Sardinia.

The Hon. Mr. Cunningham[2] of Ohio, who was a member of the last Congress, called and paid his respects. At 2 O'Clock I received company generally. A number of persons called.

I devoted some time to-night to the preperation of my annual message.

TUESDAY, *9th November, 1847.*—The Cabinet met at the usual hour to-day, all the members present. I had a conversation with the Secretary of War about the estimates for the War Department for deficiencies of the present and appropriations for the next fiscal year. As prepared by the several bureaus in his Department they amounted to between fifty nine and sixty millions of Dollars. I told him that

longed to the Van Buren-Wright faction of the New York Democracy.

[1] Nathaniel Niles, appointed *chargé d'affaires* to Sardinia, December 29, 1847.

[2] Francis A. Cunningham, Representative from Ohio 1845–1847.

they were certainly extravagant, and that they must be cut down & reduced wherever it could be done without danger of prejudice to the service, and that he must revise them with that view. This led to the discussion of the proper policy to be pursued in the further prosecution of the War with Mexico. This was an important question & one which I supposed had been settled unanimously in Cabinet some weeks ago. Mr. Buchanan spoke to-day in an unsettled tone, and said I must take one of two courses in my next Message, *viz.,* to designate the part of the mexican territory which we intended to hold as indemnity, or to occupy all Mexico by a largely increased force & subdue the country & promise protection to the inhabitants. He said he would express no opinion between these two plans, but after the despatches which were expected from the army were received, he would do so. I remarked that I thought our policy had been settled upon some time since, but, as the subject was now brought up as one that was still open, I would read what I had written on the subject, & I did so. My views as thus reduced to writing were in substance that we would continue the prosecution of the war with an increased force, hold all the country we had conquered or might conquer, and levy contributions upon the enemy to support the war, until a just peace was obtained; that we must have indemnity in territory, and that as a part indemnity the Californias & New Mexico should under no circumstances be restored to Mexico, but that they should henceforward be considered a part of the U. S., & permanent territorial Governments be es-

tablished over them; and that if Mexico protracted the war, additional territory must be required as further indemnity. Mr. Buchanan seems to have changed his views upon the subject. Until recently he had expressed his opinion against acquiring any other territory than the Californias & New Mexico. He did not positively express a distinct opinion today; but it was pretty clearly to be inferred from what he did say that he was now for more territi[o]ry; and that he would favour the policy of acquiring, in addition to the Californias & New Mexico, the Province of Tamaulipas and the country East of the Sierra madre mountains, and withdrawing our troops to that line. The Secretary of War expressed his dissent to this policy and approved the views I had reduced to writing and read. I did not propound a distinct question to the Cabinet on the subject. The Secretary of the Treasury said that it would prostrate the administration & be condemned by the country if we withdrew the army from the City of Mexico & the heart of the country which we now occupied, with out making a satisfactory peace. The subject was discussed at considerable length. My opinions were unchanged. Mr. Buchanan's opinions have evidently undergone a change in the course of a few weeks, or rather he seems to be now in an unsettled state of mind. Since he has considered himself as a candidate for the Presidency it is probable he looks at the subject with different considerations in view from those which he entertained before that time. His change of opinion will not alter my views. I

am fixed in my course and I think all the Cabinet except Mr. Buchanan still concur with me, & he may yet do so.

Gen'l Armstrong, U. S. consul at Liverpool, called after night & sat two or three hours with me.

WEDNESDAY, *10th November, 1847.*—The Secretary of War called this morning & I had a further conversation with him on the subject of the estimates for the support of the army, in which I expressed to him my apprehensions that if at the meeting of Congress he presented a request for an appropriation of sixty millions, the amt. which he had mentioned on yesterday, the country would be alarmed, public credit might be shaken, and we might not be able to negotiate a loan. This apprehension was increased by the failures for vast amounts which had recently taken place in England. The financial embarrassment, almost unpallelled [unparalleled], which now existed in England, might reach the U. S., & whether similar failures occurred here or not, such would be the state of the money-market that it would be difficult to negotiate a loan, particularly if the amt. was large. I told him a sufficient sum must be asked, but that I thought the amt. estimated for was unnecessarily large, and could be and should be reduced. He said he thought as I did, and would endeavour to effect a reduction. He suggested that I should see and converse with the Heads of Bureau who had prepared the estimates. I told him I had no objection to do so. He said he would request them to call and see me. In the course of an hour after he retired

Gen'l Tomson, the Paymaster Gen'l, and Gen'l Gibson, the commissary Gen'l, called at different hours, and I held seperate conversations with each. The result of which was that they were satisfied that some reductions could be safely made. The commissary Gen'l, for example, had estimated the prices of the next fiscal year at near double what it was estimated at for the present year. The reason for this was the price which had been recently paid for the ration in Mexico. I thought this an improper data, & gave him my reasons for this opinion. I told him that I wished money enough appropriated, but no more. He said he would examine the subject further.

Gen'l Armstrong, U. S. consul at Liverpool, called to-day & took leave of me. He expects to sail for Liverpool in a few days.

I saw company as usual at 2 O'Clock P. M. A number of persons called. I transacted business in my office as usual to-day.

THURSDAY, *11th November, 1847.*— Several persons called on business this morning. Gen'l Jesup, the Quarter master Gen'l, called, as he said, at the request of the Secretary of War, to confer with me on the subject of the estimates for the service of the Quarter master's Department. I had a full conversation with him on the subject. I told him, as I had done the commissary Gen'l on yesterday, that the appropriations asked for should be ample, but not extravagant or more than would probably be needed. He submitted to me his estimates, and I found that he had reduced them near seven millions

below the sum he had first proposed. I consider Gen'l Jesup a worthy man, but a visionary one and unfit for the important Bureau which he fills, but I must use the officers of the army which have been furnished me by law. I think it probable that the estimates may now be brought down to a reasonable amount.

I transacted business in my office as usual to-day. At 2 O'Clock P. M. I saw company. Several persons called. After night the Secretary of the Treasury, who had been invited by me to do so, called. I submitted to him the full draft of my message on the subject of the Mexican war, a part of which I had read to the Cabinet on the 9th Instant (see this diary of that day). He agreed to it, suggesting some modifications, not important, which were made.

FRIDAY, *12th November, 1847.*— I was occupied to-day in disposing of the current business on my table, and revising the paragraphs of my message which I had prepared.

At 2 O'Clock P. M. I saw company. After night the Secretary of the Navy and the Post master Gen'l called, as I had invited them to do. I read to them the draft of my message on Mexican affairs. One or two unimport[ant] modifications were suggested by them and were made; they concurred with me in the general views which it contained.

SATURDAY, *13th November, 1847.*— At an early hour this morning I learned that official despatches from the army in Mexico had been received at the

war Department by last evening's mail. Before breakfast I addressed a note to the Secretary of War, enquiring if such despatches had been received and expressing my surprise, if the fact was so, that they had not been communicated to me last night. Immediately after breakfast he called & brought voluminous despatches with him. He had not received my note. I expressed my surprise that they had not been sent to me last night as he knew I had been long anxiously waiting to receive them. He said he had not himself seen them until 9 O'Clock P. M. last night, having been prevented from doing so by company. They were the official accounts of the battles near Mexico. They were very voluminous, but in the course of the day I read them.

The Cabinet met at the usual hour; all the members present. I enquired of the Secretary of War if the estimates of appropriations for the next fiscal year, had [and] for deficiencies for the present year had been completed and delivered to the Secretary of the Treasury. He said they had been made out, and as soon as they were copied would be delivered to the Secretary of the Treasury. He said the amt. had been reduced several millions since the first estimates were prepared.

The Secretary of the Treasury expressed great anxiety on the subject. He said it was very important that the amt. should not be so large as to alarm the country & thereby shake public credit. He said that large amounts of specie had recently been exported to England & that within a few days past a small amount of 6 per cent Treasury notes had been

paid for duties, and expressed serious fears that a new loan could not be negotiated, and especially if the amount of appropriations asked was very large. He proposed and earnestly advocated the policy of laying an export duty on gold and silver exported from Mexico through the ports in our military occupation. This would not only increase the amt. of contributions levied on the enemy, but would, as he believed, enable the Treasury to exchange a large amt. of Treasury notes with Mexican citizens for specie to be used by our army. He went so far as to say that unless this measure was adopted he should feel it to be his duty to Report to me officially his opinion that a new 6 per cent loan could not be negotiated at par. Mr. Buchanan had doubts upon the subject. Mr. Marcy approved it. Mr. Buchanan intimated that he would prefer to have some time to consider of the subject. My opinion was favourable to the levy of such an export duty on gold and silver. It was suggested that the decision of the question should be postponed until the next meeting of the Cabinet. Mr. Walker thought early action important. I then ordered a special meeting of the Cabinet to take place at 11 o'clock A. M. on monday next, with a view to afford time to Mr. Buchanan further to consider the subject.

SUNDAY, *14th November, 1847.*— I attended the First Presbyterian church to-day accompanied by Mrs. Polk & Mr. Buchanan, the Secretary of State, the latter happening to be in my office when church hour arrived.

MONDAY, *15th November, 1847.*— In pursuance of my summons of saturday, the 13th Instant (see this Diary of that day) a special meeting of the Cabinet was held at 11 O'Clock this day; all the members present. The subject for consideration was the proposition to impose an export duty on gold and silver exported from Mexico through the ports in our military occupation. Mr. Buchanan gave his opinion against levying such a duty, and gave his opinion at some length against it. Mr. Walker was in favour of levying the duty & assigned his reasons for his opinion. I then took the opinion seperately of Messrs. Marcy, Mason, Johnson, and Clifford, each of whom was in favour of levying a duty, and each assigned his reasons for his opinion. I then decided that an order should be issued to our military and naval commanders directing export duty to be levied. I directed also that an order should [be] issued directing all the internal revenues, and [as] well as the import and export duties collected under the Mexican laws, to be also seized and appropriated to the use of our own army and navy; and directed the Secretary of the Treasury to prepare an order for my signature accordingly. Some other subjects were casually considered and the Cabinet adjourned a few minutes before 2 O'Clock P. M. It was understood that no meeting of the Cabinet would be held on to-morrow, that being the regular day of meeting. At 2 O'Clock I saw company. Gen'l Armstrong, U. S. consul at Liverpool, & a number of other persons called. I spent the remainder of the day in preparing my message.

TUESDAY, *16th November, 1847.*— The Cabinet, having held a special meeting on yesterday, did not assemble to-day.

Senator Dix called this morning on business.

I spent the greater part of to-day in examining & revising the paragraphs of my message which I had prepared. I disposed of the business on my table in the course of the day.

I did not open my office for the reception of company to-day.

Gen'l Armstrong, U. S. consul to Liverpool, called in the forenoon and again after night. He will leave to-morrow morning & sail from N. York for Liverpool on the next day.

The Hon. Mr. McCrate, a member of the last Congress from the State of Maine, called after night and remained an hour with me.

WEDNESDAY, *17th November, 1847.*— Nothing of much interest occurred to-day. I was closely engaged in my office in attending to public business which presses upon me in anticipation of the meeting of Congress. I saw several public officers on business, and devoted a part of the day to the preperation of my message. I saw company at 2 O'Clock P. M. A number of persons called, but none of them had any business of more importance than a desire to be appointed to office.

THURSDAY, *18th November, 1847.*— I was occupied in my office as usual to-day. I saw several

of my Secretaries and other public officers on business. Mr. Kellogg, an artist of distinction, who painted my portrait at Nashville when I was Governor of Tennessee in 1840, called. I had not seen him since that time. He has spent the last six or seven years in different parts of Europe, but chiefly in Italy, pursuing his profession, and has attained a high reputation.

I saw company at 2 O'Clock P. M. A number of persons called.

Nothing worthy of being noted occurred to-day.

I had a conversation with [Mr.] Buchanan in regard to a paragraph for my message, to the effect that, failing to obtain a peace, we should continue to occupy Mexico with our troops & encourage & protect the friends of peace in Mexico to establish & maintain a Republican Government able & willing to make peace. We agreed in opinion & I requested him to prepare such a paragraph.

FRIDAY, *19th November, 1847.*—I gave directions to my porter to admit no company to-day except officers of Government on official business, whom I see at all hours when they call. The Secretary of War was the only member of the Cabinet who called. I had sent for him on business. I disposed of the current business on my table, and devoted the greater part of the day to the revision of the passages of my message which I had previously prepared. Mr. Buchanan sent to me the paragraph which I had requested him to prepare for my message on yester-

day. On examining it I prepared one of my own. I was not, however, well satisfied either with his paragraph or my own.

SATURDAY, *20th November, 1847.*— The Cabinet met at the usual hour to-day; all the members present. I read to them the draft of my message to Congress which I had prepared, and invited any suggestion of any modification of it which any member of the Cabinet might think proper to make. One or two immaterial modifications were suggested and made. The paragraph in relation to the Mexican war which I had requested Mr. Buchanan to prepare on the 18th Inst., and on receiving his draft on yesterday I had prepared a paragraph of my own, constituted the principal topics of discussion. The Cabinet all agreed that there should be a paragraph to the effect that the citizens of Mexico in favour of peace should be protected by our army in establishing a Government able and willing to make a just peace, but, if we failed to obtain a peace by this means, the question was what I should state would be our policy. In Mr. Buchanan's draft he stated in that event that " we must fulfil that destiny which Providence may have in store for both countries." I thought this would be too indefinite & that it would be avoiding my constitutional responsibility. I preferred to state in substance that we should, in that event, take the measure of our indemnity into our own hands, and dictate our own terms to Mexico. Both my draft and Mr. Buchanan's were read and

discussed at considerable length. Mr. Walker preferred Mr. Buchanan's draft. Mr. Clifford was not entirely satisfied with it or with mine. The other members of the Cabinet expressed no distinct opinion, but my impression was they were inclined to favour Mr. Buchanan's draft. No final decision was made. After the Cabinet retired I prepared a third draft of the paragraph, and after night sent for Mr. Clifford and consulted with him on the subject. I made some further modifications, which Mr. C. approved. This paragraph constituted a small but very important part of my message. All the balance of the draft of the message on the subject of Mexican affairs and other subjects were approved by the Cabinet.

Before the Cabinet adjourned some minor subjects of business were disposed of.

SUNDAY, *21st November, 1847.*— I attended the first Presbyterian church to-day accompanied by Mrs. Polk.

MONDAY, *22nd November, 1847.*— This morning I placed the draft of my message in the hands of W. C. Whitthorn, who was formerly a law student in my office in Tennessee and is now a Clerk in the General Post office, for the purpose of having it copied. Mr. Whitthorn occupied the room adjoining my office and was entirely private, no one but myself being permitted to enter it. He is a worthy young man, and I charged him to keep profoundly

secret the contents of the paper and not even to let it be known that he had copied it, and I have confidence that he will be faithful.

I revised the paragraph which was discussed in Cabinet on saturday. Judge Mason was present a part of the time. He preferred my draft to Mr. Buchanan's. As I had modified it Judge M. approved it. He made some suggestions of verbal modifications, which I made. Mr. Clifford called and I read it to him. He was well pleased with it as modified. Mr. Buchanan called and I read it to him, stating to him that I was not satisfied with his paragraph, for the reasons stated in this diary on saturday. He preferred his own draft, but did not urge it. I will preserve all the drafts of this paragraph for future reference.

I received a letter marked Private, late this evening, from Senator Benton, stating that he would decline to serve as chairman of the committee on military affairs at the next Session of the Senate, because of his opinion [1] of the conduct of Gov. Marcy, the Secretary of War, in relation to the trial of Lt. Col. Fremont, now pending in this City. He stated that he gave me this information to avoid misapprehension as to the motive of his course. It is [a] singular communication, and I will preserve it. I think it probable that Col. Benton intends to break with

[1] In his *Thirty Years' View,* II, 715–719, Benton charges that Marcy changed Kearny's original charges against Fremont, and inserted new and preposterous ones. For this reason Benton declined to have any further intercourse with Marcy.

the administration, and will make a quarrel with the Secretary of War the ostensible ground for doing so. I am satisfied that he has no just cause of complaint against the Secretary of War on account of his conduct in the Fremont trial.

I saw company at 2 O'Clock P. M. A number of persons called, but none of them on business of any importance.

TUESDAY, *23rd November, 1847.*— The Cabinet met at the usual hour to-day. The Secretary of the Treasury read that part of his annual Report to Congress which relates to the tariff. It is a long and elaborate paper, & though in the main sound in its doctrines, I thought some parts of it speculative, and perhaps too highly wrought. I suppose he will revise it. His Report is by law required to be made to Congress, and not to the President.

I read to the Cabinet the revised draft of that part of my message which had been discussed at the Cabinet meeting on saturday last (see this diary of that day). Mr. Buchanan still preferred his own draft, and so did Mr. Walker, the latter avowing as a reason that he was for taking the whole of Mexico, if necessary, and he thought the construction placed on Mr. B.'s draft by a large majority of the people would be that it looked to that object. I replied that I was not prepared to go to that extent; and furthermore that I did not desire that anything I said in the message should be so obscure as to give rise to doubt or discussions as to what my true meaning was; that

I had in my last message declared that I did not contemplate the conquest of Mexico, and that in another part of this paper I had said the same thing. The other members of the Cabinet did not participate much in the discussion. I know that Mr. Mason, Mr. Clifford, & Mr. Johnson concur with me. I determined to retain my own draft.

After the Cabinet adjourned I requested Gov. Marcy to remain. I told him I felt it to be my duty to show him the letter marked "private," which I had received from Col. Benton on yesterday. Though it was marked "private" it related to the official conduct of a member of my Cabinet, whom I thought it was proper for me to apprise of it. If the Secretary of War is charged by a Senator with improper conduct (and that is implied in Col. Benton's letter) it is proper that he should know it. Gov. Marcy disavowed all knowledge of having done anything to which Col. Benton could except. That he has done nothing but his duty in the Fremont trial, I am satisfied. I told Gov. Marcy that I would stand by him, if any improper attack was made upon him. I showed him Col. Benton's letter confidentially, as I would have felt bound to do to any other member of my Cabinet under like circumstances.

The parlour was open for the reception of Company this evening. It is the first reception evening I have had since I [was] taken ill on the 27th of September last. Shortly after that time Mrs. Polk was also taken ill, & our drawing rooms were discontinued from that time until this evening. A number of persons, ladies and gentlemen, called.

WEDNESDAY, *24th November, 1847.*— This was an inclement day. The rain fell slowly during most of the day. I was engaged as usual in my office. I opened my office to receive company at 2 O'Clock P. M. But few persons called.

After night Mr. Whitthorne, who commenced copying the draft I had prepared of my message on monday last, having finished, I compared the original and the copy with him.

THURSDAY, *25th November, 1847.*— This day having been set apart as a day of Thanksgiving by the Corporate authorities of Washington [1] and several of the States, I ordered all the public offices in this City to be closed for the day, to enable the public officers to enjoy it as such.

I attended the first Presbyterian church in company with Mrs. Polk & Miss Armstrong of Tenn. & Miss Johnson of Arkansas, who had come over from Miss English's school in Georgetown to spend the day. We heard an excellent sermon from the Rev. Mr. Smith of Connecticut, a clergyman of 82 years of age.

The Secretary of the Navy called in the after part of the day and read to me his annual Report.

Commodore Stockton of the Navy & a few other persons called to-day. I was engaged in my office as usual.

FRIDAY, *26th November, 1847.*— The Post master General called this morning and read to me the draft

[1] The practice of issuing Presidential Thanksgiving proclamations was instituted by President Lincoln in 1863.

which he had prepared of his annual report. It is an elaborate paper, and presents the Post office Department in a gratifying condition.

Several members of Congress called to-day, *viz.*, Mr. Stanton of Tennessee; Senators Foot[1] & Davis of Mississippi; Cass of Michigan & Dickinson of New York. The presence of so many members at so early a period indicates the unusual interest which is felt in the approaching Session of Congress. The Secretary of War spent several hours to-day in the room adjoining my office, in examining my message, & particularly that part of it relating to the Mexican War. He suggested some verbal amendments (in pencil) but none of them changing the sentiment & views contained in it. At 2 O'Clock I saw company. A number of persons called, most of them seeking office. At a time when I am so much pressed with important public duties, I loath an office-seeker when he enters my office, and have no patience to hear their stories.

The parlour was open for the reception of company this evening. A number of persons, ladies and gentlemen, called.

SATURDAY, *27th November, 1847.*— The Cabinet met at the usual hour to-day, all the members except the Sec[r]etaries of War and the Navy present. They were detained at their offices by their official engagements. I read to the members present some additional paragraphs of my message which I had

[1] Henry Stuart Foote, 1800–1880, Senator from Mississippi 1847–1852, Governor 1852–1854.

prepared. There being nothing important to be considered to-day and all the members of the Cabinet being much engaged in their respective Departments, preparatory to the meeting of Congress, they retired after having remained about an hour.

I was occupied chiefly during the balance of the day in revising my message, & in comparing the copy which had been prepared by Mr. Whitthorne with the original.

SUNDAY, *28th November, 1847.*— I was under the necessity of devoting a part of to-day to my public duties, and did not attend church. Mrs. Polk accompanied by Mrs. Walker's little girl attended the first Presbyterian church. The Secretary of the Navy & the Post master Gen'l called in the course of the day.

In the evening Daniel Graham, esqr., called & brought with him William Bass, the son of John M. Bass, esqr., of Nashville, & the Grandson of the late Felix Grundy. The boy stated that in consequence of a difficulty in which he had become involved at the Catholic college at Emmetsburg, in Maryland, where his father had sent him a few weeks ago, he had left the institution, & having no other friends near he had come to Washington. His story was a reasonable one, & knowing all his family, I invited him to remain with me until it was determined what it was best for him to do. He agreed to do so. He had nothing with him except the clothes on his person. I felt a sympathy for him, and knowing his father and mother and all his family, I will take care of him

until his father can be written to. Mr. Graham promised to write to him.

After night the Secretary of War called, & spent several hours with me in examining my message.

MONDAY, *29th November, 1847.*— Many members of Congress called this morning. Among them were Senator Cass & his colleague [1] from Michigan, Mr. McClellan [2] of Ho. Repts. of Michigan, Senator B[r]eese of Illinois; Senator Turney of Tennessee, & the following members of the Ho. Repts: Thomas,[3] Chase, Jones, & Hill of Tennessee, Fries of Ohio, McLane of Maryland, &C. I was closely occupied in my office during the day; saw company for a few minutes at 2 O'Clock, but no one called but office seekers, & these I despatched without much ceremony. The Secretary of the Navy left on a short visit to New York last evening. The Secretary of State & the Secretary of War called in the course of the day. The latter spent an hour with me on business after night.

TUESDAY, *30th November, 1847.*— The Cabinet met at the usual hour to-day; all the members present except the Secretary of the Navy, who left the City last evening on a short visit to New York.

I read to the Cabinet a revised copy of my message

[1] Alpheus Felch, elected to the Senate in 1847.

[2] Robert McClelland, Representative from Michigan 1843–1849, Secretary of the Interior during Pierce's administration.

[3] James Houston Thomas, a former law partner of Polk; Representative from Tennessee 1847–1851, and 1859–1861.

embracing all the topics to be embraced in it. Some statistical details relating to the finances had not been furnished by the Secretary of the Treasury, [and] are yet to be inserted. Several verbal modifications were suggested, but none of them involving the principles of the paper. A few of these were made, but none of the modifications were material. After night Senator Cass, who called at my request, read the whole paper. He approved of all the views which it contained.

I received company in the parlour this evening. A number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

WEDNESDAY, *1st December, 1847.*— Mr. W. C. Whitthorne commenced to-day preparing a copy of my message to be sent to Congress, from the revised copy which he had once prepared.

Several members of Congress and other persons called.

I was engaged as usual in my office and transacted much official business.

Young Wm. J. Bass, the son of Mr. John M. Bass of Nashville, Tennessee, who came to me on sunday last (see this diary of that day) having left the college at Emmetsburg, Maryland, left this evening on his return to the college, to see if he could reconcile his difficulty with the faculty. He took with him letters which I procured to be written by Hon. Rob't M. McLane of Baltimore, Daniel Graham, Esqr., and J. Knox Walker, my Private Secretary, to the President of the college. I advised him, if the authorities of the college refused to restore him, to

return to Washington and remain with me until his father's wishes should be known. I let him have $20 to bear his expenses.

THURSDAY, *2nd December, 1847.*—This was a damp and uncomfortable day. A few members of Congress called in the course of the day. I submitted the draft of my message confidentially to the Hon. Mr. Rhett of S. Carolina. He examined it alone in the room adjoining my office. He approved it generally, but suggested two or three modifications, one of which I adopted, it not changing the sentiment, but rather the language in which it was expressed. Mr. Rhett at first doubted the propriety of establishing territorial Governments over New Mexico and the Californias at this time. He agreed that we should never restore them to Mexico, and that we must ultimately hold them, and that it was a question of time as to the establishment of Territorial Governments over them. He thought it might be as well to wait another year to see if we could obtain a Treaty of peace, and that if we failed he would then establish Territorial Governments over them. I did not alter this paragraph, but changed the phraseology in which it was expressed. Mr. Rhett thought I had better omit saying anything about establishing territorial Governments over any other territories than the Provinces named. Mr. Rhett thought I had better not insert the paragraph on the subject of the slave-trade. After night I submitted confidentially to Senator Douglass of Ill. that part of my message relating to the Mexican War. He read some other

passages also. He approved the message. Mr. Hampton C. Williams & Mr. W. C. Whitthorne, two confidential clerks, were engaged to-day in making fair copies of the message, as far it had been prepared, for the two Houses of Congress. I prepared one or two additional paragraphs of the paper to-day. The financial Statement in part was furnished to me by the Secretary of the Treasury to-day, and I put it into form as far as the data recd. enabled me to do.

I consulted the Secretary of State and the Atto. Gen'l about one or two passages in the paper about which I had doubts, but made no material change in them.

FRIDAY, *3rd December, 1847.*— Many members of Congress called to-day, and I was much occupied in my office. The two clerk[s], Mr. Williams & Mr. Whitthorne, were engaged in making two fair copies of my message, to be transmitted to the two Houses of Congress. After night I submitted to the inspection of Senator Turney of Tennessee, and to Mr. Ritchie, Editor of the *Union,* that part of my message relating to Mexico & the Mexican war. It was the first time Mr. Ritchie had seen any part of it, or knew what it would contain. The truth is that the old gentleman's passion to put everything he learns into his newspaper [is so great] that I did not think it prudent to entrust its contents to him at an earlier period. He and Senator Turney happened at my office together by accident, and I submitted the message to them at the same time. They both

approved it. I have the utmost confidence in Mr. Ritchie's honour & sound principles, but his weakness is his passion to put everything he knows into his newspaper. This passion has become constitutional with him and I do not, therefore, censure him for it. In Mr. Turney's prudence and discretion, I know I can confide.

The Secretary of the Navy returned from the short visit he had made to New York to-day. I was glad to see him as his presence was proper immediately before the meeting of Congress.

SATURDAY, *4th December, 1847.*— Many members of Congress called before the hour of the meeting of the Cabinet to-day. All the members of the Cabinet were present at the usual hour. I submitted to them some modifications of my message, which I had made since it was read to them on a former day. The most material of which consisted in a modification of a paragraph in relation to Mexico. As I had originally prepared it I had declared that if Mexico continued to protract the war & involved us in largely increased expenditures, that in addition to New Mexico & the Californias, it would become a grave question whether Territorial Governments should not be established over other of the Mexican provinces in addition to these. The modification of this paragraph which I suggested was that if Mexico continued the contest, &c, then what further provision it would become necessary [to make] and what final disposition it would be proper to make of them, must depend on the future progress of the war and

the course which Mexico may think proper hereafter to pursue. My object in suggesting the modification was that I might not be embarrassed in the future negotiations with Mexico. The Secretaries of State and the Treasury preferred the paragraph as it originally stood. The other four members of the Cabinet preferred the modification proposed, and it was made.

After night I submitted that part of my message which related to Mexico to Hon. Mr. Stanton of Tennessee & Hon. Rob't M. McLane of Baltimore, both members of the Ho. Repts. Messrs. Chase, Hill, Jones, and Stanton of the Tennessee delegation in Congress, dined with me to-day. I was much engaged after night in preparing the financial part of my message. I received the statistical statements of the Secretary of the Treasury, some of them late this evening.

Mr. Leal, the charge d'affaires of Brazil, called to-day and delivered to me an official letter from the Emperor of Brazil, announcing the birth of a princess.

SUNDAY, *5th December, 1847.*— I was under the necessity to-day of remaining in my office to superintend the copying and comparing of my message. Mr. Whitthorne and Mr. H. C. Williams were copying. Daniel Graham, Esqr., & my Private Secretary were engaged most of the day in assisting me to compare the different copies of the message, and in correcting clerical & verbal errors. Hon. Lynn Boyd called and I showed him that part of my mes-

sage relating to Mexico. He approved it. After night Senator Dix called at my request. I informed him of the contents of the message & of the views which I had presented on the subject of the Mexican War. He approved them.

Wm. J. Bass, son of Jno. M. Bass, returned from Emmetsburg college this evening & reported that the faculty of the college had refused to receive him back again.

MONDAY, *6th December, 1847.*— Congress met to-day. Before the hour of meeting of the two Houses, as well as afterwards, many members called. The Hon. Mr. Winthrop[1] of Massachusetts was elected Speaker on the 3rd trial, by a majority of one vote.

The Judges of the Supreme Court of the U. S., attended by the Atto. Gen'l, Clerk, & Marshall, called in a body. I received them in the parlour below Stairs.

It being uncertain whether the Ho. Repts. would be organized to-day so as to be ready to receive my message on to-morrow until a late hour, I did not give out a copy of my message to be printed until about 6 O'Clock P. M. At that hour I entrusted it confidentially to Mr. Heiss of the *Union* office, with a view to have it printed & in readiness for delivering to members of Congress as soon as it was communicated to the two Houses of Congress. I sat up in my office until 6 O'Clock in the morning of the 7th

[1] Robert Charles Winthrop, 1809–1894, Representative from Massachusetts 1840–1850, Speaker of the House 1847–1849.

Dec., superintending personally the reading & correcting the proof sheets of my message. Judge Mason, the Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Whitthorne, & my Private Secretary aided me. Mr. Dickens, the Secretary of the Senate, & Mr. French, the Clerk of the Ho. Repts., called & read the copies intended for the two [Houses] so as to become familiar with the handwriting, and thereby be enabled to read it to their respective Houses with the more ease.

TUESDAY, *7th December, 1847*.— Many members of Congress called this morning. The Cabinet assembled at the usual hour, all the members present except the Atto. Gen'l. The Secretary of the Treasury read a paragraph which he had prepared for his annual Report, and said he wished my opinion and that of the Cabinet, whether it should be inserted or not. It professed to relate to the finances, but was in reality a recommendation to Congress in relation to the Mexican War. It spoke, to be sure, of military contributions to be collected in Mexico, but its main object manifestly was to express his own views in regard to the future occupation of the whole of Mexico. The Secretary of War first expressed his opinion against its being inserted; the Secretary of the Navy also stated his objections to it. The Secretary of State suggested that it might be construed to be in conflict to some extent with my message. I was engaged most of the time while the discussion was going on in arranging the Documents which were to accompany my message. I finally said to Mr. Walker that by law he made his Report to Con-

gress and not to the President, but, though this was so, the country would hold the President responsible for it. I told him I had in my message very fully considered the Mexican war & our future policy, that every part of that message had been very fully discussed by the Cabinet, and that I thought if he took up the subject in a finance Report it would place me in a very embarrassing condition; that I would be charged with holding one policy in the message and causing my Secretary of the Treasury to hold another in his Report, or, if not another, to go further than I had deemed it prudent to go at this time, and that I had done this in order to avoid my proper responsibility. Mr. Walker said that he had merely submitted the paper for consideration, and that he would not insert it in his Report. The truth is it was wholly out of place in a financial Report.

A few minutes before 1 O'Clock P. M. a joint committee of the two Houses of Congress waited upon me and informed me that the two Houses of Congress had organized & were ready to receive any communication I might have to make. I informed them that I would make a communication in writing to the two Houses this day. Immediately after the committee retired my Private Secretary took the two copies of the message [1] with the accompanying documents & proceeded to the Capitol & delivered them to the two Houses. The Ho. Repts. this day rejected Mr. French, the old Clerk (a Democrat) & elected Thos. J. Campbell (a Whig) by one vote.

[1] Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents,* IV, 532–564.

At 2 O'Clock P. M. the Secretary of State presented Gen'l Herron, as Envoy Extraordinary & Minister Plenipotentiary from the Republic of New Granada. I received him in the parlour. He delivered to me his credentials, & presented his Secretary of Legation. He made a speech in Spanish. I received him and made some remarks to him in English. After this formality was over I held a conversation with him. He speaks English tolerably well.

This being reception evening a large number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called. Among them were the Vice President of the U. S. and many members of Congress.

WEDNESDAY, *8th December, 1847.*— I saw company until 12 O'Clock this morning. Many members of Congress and others called. I learn from the Democratic gentlemen that my message was approved by the Democratic party. I have not heard of any expression of opinion from the Whig gentlemen. Several members of Congress called on business in the course of the afternoon. I was much occupied with business in my office. I franked, too, some of my messages. Nothing worthy of particular notice occurred to-day.

Wm. J. Bass (son of Jno. M. Bass) of Nashville left this afternoon for Nashville. I furnished him $45. to bear his expenses.

THURSDAY, *9th December, 1847.*— Quite a large number of members of Congress called this morning. Several other persons called also. I closed my office

at 12 O'Clock & was occupied with business in my office during the balance of the day. I devoted a part of the day to the preperation of a message to the Ho. Repts. assigning my reasons for having withheld my approval from a Harbour Bill, which was presented to me for my approval on the last day of the last session of Congress. I retained the Bill, not having had time to assign my reasons for not signing it at that time.

About 4 O'Clock P. M. I learned that Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, had been taken suddenly ill & had fallen down in the Treasury building. He was attended by his physician to his own house. I appointed McClintock Young, his chief Clerk, to perform the duties of Secretary of the Treasury *ad interim*.

I had a Cabinet Dinner to-day. All the members of the Cabinet attended except Mr. Walker. Their families were also present. Senators Cass, Felch, Foote, Davis of Mississippi, Sevier, Breese, Fairfield,[1] Bradbury,[2] Judge Catron of the Supreme Court of the U. S., Mrs. Madison & her niece, Miss Payne, were also of the dinner party.

This morning Mrs. Walker, the wife of my Private Secretary, gave birth to a son. The fact was announced by the chamber maid to Mrs. Polk shortly after I rose & was dressing this morning, as having just occurred.

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

[2] James Ware Bradbury, 1802–1901, Senator from Maine 1847–1853.

FRIDAY, *10th December, 1847.*— Congress having adjourned over on yesterday until Monday next, a large number of members of both Houses called to-day. Until to-day not many of the Whig gentlemen had called. The whole day was devoted to receiving company, and I was not enabled to attend to any business. In the afternoon I visited Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, and found him in bed, but better than I expected to have found him. His attack on yesterday probably proceeded from over exertion & consequent exhaustion.

This being reception evening a number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called. Among them was Mr. Winthrop & Mr. Campbell, the Whig Speaker & Clerk of the Ho. Repts.

Among the Senators who called this morning was Mr. Calhoun of S. C.

SATURDAY, *11th December, 1847.*— Several members of Congress called this morning. The Cabinet met at the usual hour, all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury, who is confined at his house by severe indisposition, brought on undoubtedly by severe labour and mental exertion. The subject of the Mexican war and our future action in reference to it were considered, but no action was taken. I informed the Cabinet that I had received information that Gen'l Scott and Mr. Trist had, before the City of Mexico was taken, entered into an agreement to pay to Santa Anna a million of Dollars as secret money if he would agree to make a Treaty of peace. I expressed in the strongest terms

my condemnation of such conduct. Mr. Mason and Mr. Marcy said they had seen a statement to the same effect in a New Orleans paper. Mr. Buchanan expressed his indignation at such conduct in strong [terms], and said if it was true, he would advise that Gen'l Scott should be immediately recalled. I fully concurred with him in opinion. It was suggested that Gen'l Shields and Gen'l Quitman were expected here in a few days, and that it would be prudent to delay action until we could obtain authentic information from them. After the Cabinet retired I read to Mr. Buchanan a Private letter which I had received from Gen'l Pillow giving me the information. Being a Private letter I did not read it to the Cabinet, but may yet do so, & will do so before action is had on the subject of Gen'l Scott's recal[l], unless the information received from Gen'l Shields & Gen'l Quitman shall render it unnecessary.

SUNDAY, *12th December, 1847.*— This was a wet & uncomfortable day, and Mrs. Polk and myself declined attending church. After night the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Navy, & the Hon. Mr. Stanton of Tennessee, called and spent an hour in my office. I informed Mr. Stanton of my intention to send in a message assigning my reasons for retaining the Harbour Bill at the close of the last Session of Congress, and read to him a few of the sheets of the rough draft of the message.

MONDAY, *13th December, 1847.*— I saw members of Congress and others until 12 O'Clock to-day. After that hour I was engaged in discharging official

duties. I occupied most of the day in finishing my veto message on the Harbour Bill, which was presented to me on the afternoon of the last day of the last Session of Congress and which I did not sign. In the evening I put it into the hands of Mr. Whitthorne & my Private Secretary, J. Knox Walker, to be copied. Though I had collected all the material & made voluminous notes, and indeed prepared a rough draft of it during the summer, I found it a matter of great labour to complete it. Since the meeting of Congress my time has been so constantly taken up by members that I have had but little time to devote to it.

TUESDAY, *14th December, 1847.*— Several members of Congress called [before] the meeting of the Cabinet this morning. The Cabinet assembled at the usual hour, all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury, who is confined at his house by sickness. I read to the Cabinet my veto message on the Harbour Bill of the last session, which I propose to send to the Ho. Repts. on to-morrow. All concurred that I should send in such a message. Mr. Mason, Mr. Johnson, & Mr. Clifford concurred with me in the views presented. Mr. Buchanan expressed the opinion that it was an able paper, &, entertaining my opinions, he would send in the message. He said he had been committed in speeches & votes, when he was a member of Congress, on the subject, but was satisfied of the dangers and excesses of the system, and that if he were now a member of Congress, he would not, during the Mex-

ican war, when we needed our revenues, vote a single dollar for improvements, and that if he were President he would put his veto [on] any Bill of the kind. The Secretary of War acquiesced in the propriety of sending in the message, but expressed no distinct opinion upon the general doctrines which it contained. No other subject was considered in Cabinet to-day. After the Cabinet adjourned I wrote some additional paragraphs at the close of the message, and had Mr. Whitthorne & my Private Secretary engaged copying [it]. After night Mr. Thomas of Ten., Mr. Thompson of Penn., & Mr. McLane of Maryland called at my request, and I read the Message to them. This I did that some members of the Ho. Repts. might be advised in advance of what it contained. Mr. Mason called while I was reading it to them. At 9½ O'Clock P. M. I went from my office to the parlour, this being reception evening. I found an unusually large crowd of persons, ladies & gentlemen, & among them many members of Congress, assembled. When the company retired I returned to my office, and at my request Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Mason, and Mr. Clifford met me at the office. I was engaged with them until 1 O'Clock A. M. in revising certain paragraphs of my message. I desired to send it in on to-morrow, that being the 10th Legislative day since the Harbour Bill was presented to me, on the last day of the last session of Congress.

WEDNESDAY, *15th December, 1847.*— I saw no company to-day. I was engaged in revising my Veto

Message on the Harbour Bill. Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Mason, & Mr. Gillet, the Solicitor of the Treasury, aided me in comparing the extracts which it contained & seeing that they had been correctly copied. At 1 O'Clock P. M. I finished and at that hour my Private Secretary took the message [1] with the Harbour Bill to the Ho. Repts. After night several members of Congress called. My message, I learn, was under debate in the House at its adjournment. It had been violently assailed by the Whig party. The debate will probably be resumed on to-morrow. I retired at a late hour much fatigued.

THURSDAY, *16th December, 1847.*— Many members of Congress and others called this morning. Since the meeting of Congress the members have pressed me very much for offices for their constituents. Indeed the rage for office is the besetting evil of the times, and does more to weaken the democratic party than all other causes combined. Every President must be greatly weakened because he cannot gratify the craving desire of his professed political friends for office. This it is impossible to do, unless he could put 10 persons into one office, and even then he could not satisfy all the applicants. I had but a short time during the day to attend to my official duties. I gave a Diplomatic Dinner to-day at which the Representatives of all Foreign Governments accredited at this Court, with their wives, were present. They numbered 35 persons. Mr. Buchanan, Sec. of State, was also of the party.

[1] *H. Journal,* 30 Cong. 1 Sess. 82–98.

FRIDAY, *17th December, 1847.*— I was perfectly overrun with visitors this morning. Among them were members of Congress seeking office for their constituents, persons seeking offices for themselves, and persons begging money. It is enough to exhaust the patience and destroy the good temper of any man on earth, to bear the daily boring which I have to endure. I keep, however, in a good humour as far as it is possible to do so.

I saw Mr. Sevier, the Senator from Arkansas, and held a long conversation with him on public affairs. He is a sound Democrat and a reliable man. I saw Mr. Stanton of Tennessee, who voted for the Harbour Bill, upon which I sent in my veto on the 15th Inst. He differed with me in opinion on the subject, but said he would not, in the present condition of the Treasury and pending the war with Mexico, vote for any similar appropriations. He said he might make a speech, and avow his difference of opinion upon the Constitutional questions, but would declare that at present he deemed it expedient to vote for such appropriations.

This being reception evening many persons, ladies & gentlemen, called and were received in the parlour.

SATURDAY, *18th December, 1847.*— I saw members of Congress and others until the hour of the meeting of the Cabinet to-day. The Cabinet met at the usual hour to-day, all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury, who is still confined at his house by indisposition. I brought be-

fore the Cabinet the future policy in conducting the Mexican War, and particularly the question whether we should promise protection to the peace party in Mexico, if they would form a Government & make a Treaty of peace with the U. S. After much discussion the Cabinet were unanimous in the opinion that such a promise or assurance should be given, and that if such a Government was formed & such a Treaty made, it should contain a stipulation that a sufficient portion of our army should remain in Mexico for a year after peace was concluded to afford the desired protection, and to enable any new Government which may be formed to execute the Treaty. These opinions were expressed, but no definite action was had on the subject.

Col. Andrews of the Voltigeurs and Lieut. Col. T. P. Moore of the 3rd Dragoons recently arrived in this City from Mexico and confirm a statement of a letter writer in a St. Louis paper that it had been at one time contemplated by Gen'l Scott & Mr. Trist to pay a million of Dollars to Santa Anna, in consideration that he would make peace. They do not give this information on their own knowledge, but from what they heard in camp in Mexico. I felt it to be my duty to read, in Cabinet confidence, a letter, a part of which alluded to the subject, dated Oct. 28th, 1847, which I had received from Maj'r Gen'l Pillow, which went to confirm the statement of the newspaper writer. The whole Cabinet & myself condemned the proceedings unqualifiedly, and resolved to have the matter investigated, but before any decisive step was taken in the matter it was

deemed prudent to wait until Maj'r Gen'l Quitman & Brig. Gen'l Shields, who were expected in a few days, should arrive in Washington. From them it was supposed accurate information could be obtained. If any such proceeding took place it was wholly unauthorized & is deeply to be regretted. It was suggested that I should write to Gen'l Pillow on the subject and that Mr. Buchanan should write to Mr. Trist, expressing the disapprobation of the Government & requiring an explanation. After the Cabinet adjourned I disposed of much business on my table.

SUNDAY, *19th December, 1847.*— Mrs. Polk and myself attended the first Presbyterian church to-day. I was much fatigued with my long and close confinement & constant labour, and rested during the day. After night I prepared the draft of a letter to Maj'r Gen'l Pillow on the subject considered in Cabinet on yesterday (see this diary of yesterday) but did not send it off as I desired to revise it.

MONDAY, *20th December, 1847.*—A large number of persons, members of Congress and others, called this morning. I closed my doors at 12 O'Clock. About 1 O'Clock Mr. Buchanan & Mr. Marcy called at my request. Mr. Mason & Mr. Clifford happened also to come in. The subject of the proposed negotiation between Gen'l Scott & Mr. Trist on the one part and Gen'l Santa Anna on the other, was considered. I read the draft of my letter prepared last night to Gen'l Pillow. Mr. Bu-

chanan read one to Mr. Trist on the same subject. Some modifications were suggested and made in both, but not materially affecting their substance. It was thought proper that The Secretary of War should not write to Gen'l Scott on the subject until Gen'l Quitman and Gen'l Shields, who were expected in a few days, should arrive in Washington, as it was supposed that more accurate information could be obtained from them on the subject than had yet been received. I fear Gen'l Pillow has involved himself in the matter, so far as giving his assent to the proposals of Gen'l Scott and Mr. Trist is concerned. It seems that he assented with reluctance in the first instance, but that he afterwards protested against it, and also against the armistice agreed to by Gen'l Scott at the City of Mexico. Neither Gen'l Scott, Mr. Trist, or any one else had the slightest authority to make such a proposition as is imputed to them. This subject has given me great pain, but it must be investigated, and the censure fall where it is due, whatever may be the consequences to the officers concerned.

TUESDAY, *21st December, 1847.*— Several members of Congress called this morning. The Cabinet met at the usual hour, all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury. Mr. Buchanan read to the Cabinet a copy of the letter which he had addressed to Mr. Trist condemning in strong terms the reported negotiations or correspondence between Gen'l Scott and Mr. Trist on the one part and Gen'l Santa Anna on the other part. He read also

the copy of a private letter to Mr. Trist on the same subject, which he said he had addressed to him. The subject of the Mexican War and the policy proper to be pursued in its further prosecution was considered, but nothing definitely decided.

This being reception evening an unusually large & fashionable crowd attended. Among them were many members of Congress & many ladies. Among the ladies were Mrs. Gentry & Mrs. Barrow of Tennessee.

WEDNESDAY, *22nd December, 1847.*— I saw company as usual until 12 O'Clock to-day. I devoted the balance of the day in disposing of the business on my table. In the course of the day and after night several Senators & Representatives called on business. Nothing worthy of special remark occurred to-day.

THURSDAY, *23rd December, 1847.*— I received company as usual this morning. Several members of Congress & many other persons called. I disposed of business on my table. After the company had retired I sent for Mr. Buchanan. He called, and I informed him that I learned that an anonymous letter purporting to have been written in this City had appeared in the N. York *Herald,*[1] but which I had not read, to the effect that by my agency the Tennessee State convention, which is to meet at Nashville on the 8th of January next, would nominate

[1] New York *Herald,* December 21, 1847, letter signed "Tony Lumpkin."

Gen'l Cass for the Presidency, and that my object was to produce confusion among the Democratic aspirants, with a view ultimately to obtain the nomination myself. I told him that the whole story was false, that I had written to no one in Tennessee on the subject, and that I thought it proper to say to him that the story was false. He asked me if I had written to Gen'l Cass in the last recess of Congress, requesting him to be chairman of the military committee of the Senate. I promptly replied that I had not written to him on that or any other subject. He said he had read the letter in the *Herald,* and such was the statement made by the writer. I told him it was false. He then said that it was generally understood among the members of Congress that I was favourable to Gen'l Cass's nomination, at which he could not complain. I replied with some emphasis that I had never given the slightest indication for any one of the Democratic party as my successor, and repeated two or three times that he gave me [the] first intimation to that effect that I had ever heard. I told him frankly that I had not [taken] and should not take any part in [the] selection by the Democratic party of a candidate to succeed me; that when the Democratic national convention should make a nomination, I would be for the nominee, be him [he] whom he might. I told him that the Democratic party must make their own nomination of a candidate, without any interference or agency of mine. I told him further that my own administration was to last fourteen months, and that I could take no part among the Democratic aspirants to succeed me, with-

out arraying against me all the friends of other aspirants than the one I might prefer; & that in this way all my measures connected with the war and other subjects would be voted down, and that I myself would become of no consideration & could have no influence in carrying out my measures. I repeated to him that I had & would preserve a strict neutrality in the selection of a candidate of the Democratic party as my successor; that for myself my resolution was unchanged, and that I should retire voluntarily at the close of my term of office. Mr. Buchanan no doubt considers himself a candidate for the nomination, and is nervous and exhibits a degree of weakness on the subject that is almost incredible. My object in holding the conversation with him today was, first, to tell him that the letter published in the *Herald* was false, and secondly, that I should act a neutral part and have no agency in selecting the candidate of the Democracy to succeed me. He seemed to be in a gloomy mood, &, judging from his manner, left me dis[s]atisfied. If this be so, I shall regret it, but shall not change my determination. While I am President I cannot become the partisan of Mr. Buchanan or any one else. After a regular nomination is made, I shall support the nominee. I regret to be under the impression that for some weeks past Mr. B. seems to have been so much absorbed with the idea of being President that I cannot rely, as formerly, upon his advice given in Cabinet upon public subjects. My impression is that all his opinions are formed and controlled by the consideration of the means best calculated to enable him to suc-

ceed in getting the nomination as my successor. He seems to have lost sight of the success of my administration & to be acting alone with a view to his own personal advancement. I feel embarrassed by his position as a member of my Cabinet, but am resolved not to sacrifice the great measures of my own administration to gratify him or anyone else, & I gave him so distinctly to understand to-day.

I had a Dinner party of 35 or 38 persons to-day, ladies and gentlemen. Among my guests were the Vice President of the U. S. & his family, the Speaker of the Ho. Repts., the Secretary of the Senate, & clk. of the Ho. Repts. The balance of the company was composed of Senators & Representatives in Congress & their families.

Both Houses of Congress adjourned over to-day until Monday next.

FRIDAY, *24th December, 1847.*— I received company as usual this morning. Many members of Congress & others called. At 12 O'Clock I closed my doors, but as neither House of Congress was in Session to-day, several members called after that hour and I received them.

I received company in the parlour this evening. A large number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, members of Congress & others, called. About 9 O'Clock P. M. it was announced to me that Senator Fairfield of Maine had died to-night suddenly. He was an old and intimate friend, & as soon as the company dispersed I sent a servant to his boarding House to ascertain certainly if the fact was so. The

servant returned & reported that he died at 7½ O'Clock this evening. The Secretary of the Navy left to-night on a short visit to his residence in Virginia.

SATURDAY, *25th December, 1847.*— This being Christmas day three or four members of Congress were all who called. The snow fell during most of the day, and the weather being very inclement I remained in my office and despatched a mass of business which had accumulated on my table. Senator Fairfield, I learned, submitted to a surgical operation for dropsy in the knees on yesterday afternoon and died in three or four hours after it was performed. It was performed by Dr. Magruder, and I learn that a post mortem examination of the body is to take place. After night I learned that the post mortem examination of the body had taken place, but I was not informed what the Report of the physicians was. His death was very sudden and therefore the more melancholy. I deeply deplore it as he was one of my best personal & political friends.

SUNDAY, *26th December, 1847.*— Mrs. Polk & myself attended the First Presbyterian church to-day. My nephew, Marshall T. Polk, jr., who is spending the christmas Holidays with us, accompanied us to church.

MONDAY, *27th December, 1847.*— Immediately after breakfast this morning Daniel Saffrons, from Gallatin, Tennessee, called. He had informed me

at my drawing room on friday evening last that he desired to see me alone this morning. The object of his visit was to reconcile the former differences which had for some years past seperated Senator Bell of Tennessee & myself and had prevented all personal intercourse between us. He said that he came with no authority to do so, but in the course of his conversation it was quite clear that Mr. Bell knew he was coming for the purpose of opening the way for the renewal of our social intercourse. He said that Mr. Bell had expressed to him his intention of supporting my policy upon the Mexican War & the tariff; That Mr. Bell had expressed himself as retaining no feelings of asperity towards me. He said he had told Mr. Bell it was his duty to call on me, and that he should do so on the 1st of January, and had further expressed to him the opinion that if he did so, he had no doubt I would invite him to Dinner. He said that Mr. Bell had replied that he hoped if he did call and I should invite him to Dinner, that I would not put him in among an exclusive democratic party, but would have some other Whigs present. I told Mr. Saffrons that my Dinner parties were never of a partisan character. Mr. Saffrons said that Mr. Bell had said that he could say to me; and here [he] immediately caught himself and said he was not authorized to say anything by Mr. Bell, but he knew that Mr. Bell's feelings were not unkind, & that he would call if he thought he would be kindly received. He said that something was said, too, about the ladies & a doubt how Mrs. Polk would receive Mrs. Bell if she called. He said he had held

a conversation with Mr. & Mrs. Bell on the subject on last evening, & I have no doubt he came upon a special mission on the subject. I said to Mr. Saffrons that if Mr. Bell chose to call on me I would certainly receive him courteously & kindly; that it was true Mr. Bell & myself had for some years been on different sides of politics, and were perhaps regarded as rivals for popular favour in Tennessee, but that I retained no asperity of feeling towards him, &, indeed, that I had not an unkind feeling towards him personally; that probably both of us had upon some occasions gone too far, but that I was willing that all this should be forgotten. I told him that my future residence would be at Nashville, and that when I retired fourteen months hence, I should never again aspire to fill any office; and that I desired in my retirement to live on terms of social intercourse with all my neighbours, of whom Mr. Bell would be one. In fine, I said to him that if Mr. Bell chose to call I would receive him courteously, and would suffer our past relations to be forgotten. Mr. Saffrons seemed to be highly gratified. I told him that as to the ladies I had no doubt Mrs. Polk would receive Mrs. Bell kindly, if she called on her.

I was occupied during most of the day in disposing of the business on my table. Col. Harney of the 2nd Regt. of Dragoons called in the morning, and again after night, when I had a conversation of an hours length with him in relation to events in the army and in reference to the manner of conducting the War. About 9 O'Clock P. M., and after Col. Harney had left, Maj'r Gen'l Quitman and Brig-

adier Gen'l Shields of the army, who arrived in Washington to-night, called. They were accompanied by the Hon. Mr. Thompson of the Ho. Repts. from Pennsylvania. Shortly after they came in Senator Foote of Mississippi called. I was glad to see the two Generals & held an interesting conversation with them in reference to the military operations in which they had borne so prominent a part. They accompanied me from my office to the parlour & paid their respects to Mrs. Polk. Both of them expressed their entire approval of my policy in the future conduct of the War, as laid down in my annual message.

TUESDAY, *28th December, 1847.*— The Cabinet met at the usual hour this morning; all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury, who is still confined to his house by indisposition, and the Secretary of the Navy, who is absent on a visit to his residence in Virginia. Shortly after the Cabinet met Brigadier Gen'l Shields of the army called. I invited him into my office where the Cabinet were. He remained an hour or more, and conversed freely about our military operations in Mexico, and our future policy in conducting the war. Some minor subjects were considered and disposed of by the Cabinet, but nothing worthy of special notice occurred. After the Cabinet retired I found Gen'l Shields in my Private Secretary's office in conversation with him. Among other things Gen'l Shields voluntarily spoke of Gen'l Pillow, and accorded to him high merit as an officer. He said that certain letters from

the army which had been published in the U. States, had done injustice to other officers, & had done Gen'l Pillow an injury in the estimation of the army; but, he added, no one doubts his bravery & gallantry, and that he was a good officer. I told him that he had been very much abused by some of the opponents of the administration, and that I had heard last evening that Col. Haskell [1] of the Ho. Repts. was exerting what influence he had to have him rejected as a Maj'r Gen'l by the Senate. Gen'l Shields at once said he ought to be confirmed, that it would be doing him great injustice to reject him, and that he would freely express this opinion to Senators. He spoke of the story in the newspapers of the alleged council of war held at Puebla, and the proposition to bribe Santa Anna. He said that he had not seen the newspaper publication. I repeated to him, as well as I could remember, its substance. He said it was not true that any consultation had been held about a proposition to bribe. He said there was a confidential conference at Gen'l Scott's Head Quarters, not about bribing, but whether it would be proper, if it was a[s]certained that a satisfactory Treaty could be obtained, to pay a part of the consideration for a cession of Territory in advance of the ratification of such a Treaty. He repeated that the idea of bribery was not suggested or considered, but the question was that stated by him, & whether, if deemed proper, there was any legal authority to apply any

[1] William F. Haskell, Representative from Tennessee, 1847–1849.

part of the public money in that way. He did not mention the names of the officers present at this council, but said Mr. Trist was not present. He said he made no such speech as I informed him was attributed to him in the newspapers. I told him that Mr. Trist was furnished with written instructions, & that he had none other & that by them he had no authority to use a dollar of the public money until after a Treaty was concluded and ratified on the part of Mexico, and that if such Treaty, when so ratified, stipulated for the payment of a consideration for a cession of Territory, then, & not till then, was Mr. Trist authorized to make such payment. He said Mr. Trist had never exhibited to him his instructions. I told him that I had said to Mr. Trist before he left that he could, if he deemed it necessary, show his written instructions confidentially to himself & Gen'l Pillow, & to such other of the Gen'l officers as he might think proper, with a view to cou[n]sel with them on the subject of his mission. I expressed to him my disap[p]robation of Mr. Trist's conduct in intimating to the Mexican commissioners that if they would submit a proposition to make the Nueces the boundary, he would transmit it to his Government for consideration. I did not proceed to detail to him the many other objections which I had to his conduct since he has been in Mexico. They are numerous. I informed him that he had been recalled.

I received company in the parlour this evening. Many persons, ladies & gentlemen, were present.

WEDNESDAY, *29th December, 1847.*— My office was open as usual this morning. Many persons called. The press by members of Congress and others for small offices, chiefly in the army, for their constituents and friends, is very great. Mr. Daniel Saffrons of Tennessee called and had another conversation with me in relation to my future social intercourse with Senator Bell of Tennessee (see this diary of Monday, 27th Instant). He said he had, since he saw me, held another conversation with Mr. Bell, and that Mr. B. had told him he intended to support my war-measures, that the tariff of 1846 was working well enough, & that he did not intend to vote to disturb it. In reference to the War, he said Mr. Bell had declared his determination to vote for any amt. of money or men the administration might want. He said Mr. Bell had informed him he would call on me and, forgetting the past, renew our personal intercourse, but that he would delay doing so for some time, as he thought it best not to attract attention by doing so too soon. I repeated to Mr. Saffrons that when Mr. Bell thought proper to call on me I would treat him courteously, & was prepared to meet him half way in renewing our personal intercourse. Mr. Saffrons visit to me on monday and today, I cannot doubt, was at Mr. Bell's instance. I was engaged through the day in disposing of the business on my table. After night Senator Turney of Tenn. called and informed me that Senator Bell of Ten. had sought a conversation with him this morning, in which he had expressed a desire to be on terms of social intercourse with me. Mr. Turney

informed me he told him he had no doubt I would be willing to be so with him. It was understood, as Mr. T. said, between them that he was to carry this information to me. Mr. T. gave me a detailed account of what Mr. Bell said to him, which was in effect that he bore no malice and had no asperities to indulge, and wished to be on friendly terms with me. He told Mr. Turney that he should act with the Whig party, and that he apprehended that Mr. Saffrons, who had, as he informed Mr. T., held a conversation with me on the subject, might not fully understand his position on the war question. He intimated, as Mr. T. said, that he would not go as far on that subject as Mr. Saffrons had understood him to go. He made this explanation, as Mr. T. said, for the purpose, as he avowed, of having no misunderstanding between himself and me as to his course in the Senate. Mr. T. said he asked him to explain to Mr. Saffrons what his position and opinions were, and that he, Mr. T., declined to do this, but told him he had better make the explanation to Mr. Saffrons himself. I told Mr. T. that he could say to Mr. Bell that if he called I was willing to let bye-gones by bye-gones, & to receive and treat him kindly; that I had no other feelings towards him personally; and that as we would probably reside near together after my term was out I desired to be on good terms with him, and with all my neighbours. Mr. Cave Johnson, the P. M. Gen'l, was present during this conversation between Mr. Turney & myself.

THURSDAY, *30th December, 1847.*— I received company as usual this morning. At 12 O'Clock I closed my office. Mr. Buchanan sent over to me despatches which he had received by last night's mail from Mr. Trist. He had received his letter of recal[l], and is manifestly displeased at it. The Secretary of War called and handed to me despatches which he had received by last night's mail from Gen'l Scott. Among them were charges preferred by Gen'l Scott against Maj'r Gen'l Pillow, Brevet Maj'r Gen'l Worth, & Brevet Col. Duncan [1] of the U. S. army. He left the despatches with me & I read them carefully. I deplore the unfortunate collisions which have arisen between the Gen'l officers in Mexico, as they must prove highly prejudicial to the public service. They have been produced, as I have every reason to believe, more by the vanity and tyrannical temper of Gen'l Scott, & his want of prudence and common sense, than from any other cause. I read his despatches with sincere regret. The officers whom he arraigns upon charges, and for whose trial he demands a Court martial, have each of them been presented in Gen'l Scott's own official Reports as having acted a gallant and praiseworthy part in all the late battles in Mexico. The whole difficulty has grown out of letters written from the army and published in the newspapers of the U. S., in which Gen'l S. is not made the exclusive hero of the War. Without expressing any opinion upon the merits or truth of these letters, there seems to have been no

[1] James Duncan, thrice brevetted for distinguished and gallant service during the Mexican War.

necessity to make so serious an affair of them as to break up the harmony and efficiency of the army while in the enemy's country. The whole matter is most unfortunate. Mr. Trist, from all I can learn, has lent himself to Gen'l Scott and is his mere tool, and seems to be employed in ministering to his malignant passions, in persecuting Gen'l Pillow and others who are supposed to be friendly to me. I am much troubled upon the subject, but will reflect further upon it before I decide upon my course.

I had a dinner party to-day consisting of the Judges of the Supreme Court of the U. S., the Judges of the District of Columbia & their families (such of them as are in Washington) & of Several Senators & Representatives, making in all 35 or 36 persons. A few minutes before the party were about to go to the table, I received a note in the parlour from Senator Davis of Mississippi (who was, as the servant informed me, in my office) desiring to see me, & informing me that he had received to-day an important letter from Mexico which he desired to submit to me. I could not leave the company in the parlour, but sent my Private Secretary to request Senator Davis to call on to-morrow morning. The Dinner party was a very pleasant one.

Mr. Seaton, Mayor of Washington, & Senator Douglass of Illinois called this morning & informed [me] that they were a committee to invite me to attend a complimentary Dinner to be given in this City on to-morrow to Maj'r Gen'l Quitman & Brigadier Gen'l Shields. I informed [them] that it would give me personal pleasure to attend the Din-

ner, as [it] would a similar dinner to any other of our distinguished officers who might return from the army in Mexico, but at first blush I had some doubt of the official propriety of doing so, and I asked them their opinions upon the subject, and whether any of my predecessors had ever attended similar entertainments. Mr. Seaton said the only instance he remembered was a dinner given by the National Institute, at which Mr. J. Q. Adams presided, when he was President of the U. S., and a public dinner [1] at which Gen'l Jackson was present when he was President of the U. S., and at which he gave his celebrated toast "Our Federal Union; it must be preserved." I remarked that the first of these occasions was a meeting of a literary & scientific society of which the President of the U. S. was a member; & that the latter was on the occasion of Mr. Jefferson's birth day, which was celebrated by a public [dinner]. I remarked that I was myself present on the latter occasion, and heard Gen'l Jackson deliver his celebrated toast, but it struck me that the present was not a similar occasion to that. After a free conversation both Mr. Seaton and Mr. Douglass concurred with me that there was no precedent or usage of my predecessors which would make it consistent with official propriety for me to attend the dinner, & I finally told them I would not do so. They concurred with me in the correctness of my decision, but suggested that I might write a letter & send a toast to the Dinner party.

[1] The Jefferson birthday dinner, April 13, 1830.

FRIDAY, *31st December, 1847.*— I sent for Senator Douglass of Illinois this morning, & told him that upon further reflection I was of opinion that instead of sending a written answer & a toast to the public dinner to be given to-day to Gen'ls Quitman and Shields, I had better authorize him to express to the company the personal gratification it would have afforded me to be present, but that the proprieties of my station & the usage always observed by my predecessors must prevent me from doing so. He concurred with me in the propriety of this course & agreed to make my apology to the company (see this Diary of yesterday). This morning Senator Davis of Mississippi, who called about my Dinner hour on yesterday and could not see me (see this diary of yesterday) called in company with Senator Cass of Michigan. Mr. Davis read me a short passage from a letter which he had received on yesterday from Gen'l Twiggs of the army in Mexico, expressing the opinion that if a commissioner with power to treat was now in Mexico a Treaty might be concluded. This lead to a conversation of some length in relation to the state of affairs in Mexico. Both Mr. Davis and Gen'l Cass deplored the collisions which had arisen between the General officers of our army in Mexico, both condemned in strong terms the published general order of Gen'l Scott, which was the immediate precursor, if not the cause, of the arrest of Gen'ls Pillow & Worth and Col. Duncan; and both expressed the opinion in strong and decided terms that Gen'l Scott should be immediately recalled from the command of the army in Mexico.

They expressed the opinion, also, that it would be ruinous & disastrous to the harmony & efficiency of the army to try the three officers, Pillow, Worth, & Duncan, in the camp in Mexico. Mr. Davis advised that Gen'l Scott should be recalled & that Gen'l Taylor should be put in command. I remarked to Mr. Davis that Gen'l Taylor was now in the U. S. on a leave of absence from the army for six months, and that it would be with reluctance that I would order him back to the field before his leave of absence had expired. Gen'l Cass expressed the opinion that Maj'r Gen'l Wm. O. Butler, who was next in rank, would be competent to take the command. This point was not further pressed. They were both of opinion, whoever might succeed to the command, that Gen'l Scott should be immediately recalled. They concurred also that the officers, Pillow, Worth, and Du[n]can, should be ordered home & be tried in the U. S. They thought, too, that power should be conferred upon some person to conclude a peace in Mexico. Mr. Davis said that if commissioners should be appointed by Mexico to come to the U. S., the Government which appointed them would probably be overthrown before they could come here, execute their mission, and return, and that as likely as not they might be shot as traitors to their country when they did return; and that the only hope of peace was to have a person in Mexico authorized to avail himself of any favourable opportunity which might arise to make it and have it ratified at once. Mr. Davis & Gen'l Cass retired. My office was crowded with members of Congress

(neither House was in Session to-day) and others, until after 2 O'Clock P. M. About that hour Senator Cass called again & said to me that if Gen'l Scott was recalled he would not advise that Gen'l Taylor should succeed him in command, but thought that Gen'l Butler, who was now second in command with Gen'l Scott's column of the army, should take the command. I sent for the Secretary of War, and informed him that I had carefully considered Gen'l Scott's despatches which he had left with me on yesterday. I informed him, also, of the conversation I had held with Senators Davis & Cass. I told him my impression was that Gen'l Scott and the officers, Pillow, Worth, & Duncan, should be ordered to the U. S., and that the trials should be had at Fortress monroe or at New Orleans or some point to be designated, and that Gen'l Butler should be put in command of the army. He did not give any express assent to my views, but expressed doubts & suggested some objections to them. He saw the embarrassments of a trial in the army, and also of having it in the U. S. He did not enter fully into the subject, but said he would see me to-morrow morning on the subject. I held a conversation with Senator Turney on the subject, who advised that Gen'l Scott should be immediately recalled & Gen'l Butler put in command of the army. A most embarrassing state of things exists in the army, all produced by Gen'l Scott's bad temper, dictatorial spirit, & extreme jealousy lest any other Gen'l Officer should acquire more fame in the army than himself. The arrests which have taken place have grown out of no official mis-

conduct of the officers arrested, in the line of their duty, but out of letters written in the army & published in the newspapers of the U. S., in which Gen'l Scott was not made the sole hero of the battles which have been fought.

This was reception evening, but a wet night, & very dark [and] but few persons attended.

SATURDAY, *1st January, 1848.*— The Secretary of War called this morning and held a further conversation with me in relation to the difficulties which have grown up among the Gen'l officers of the army in Mexico. He said he had reflected on the subject since his conversation with me on yesterday. He now thought that we would be obliged to supersede Gen'l Scott in the command, & devolve the command on Gen'l Butler. He thought that if Pillow, Worth, & Duncan were ordered to the U. S. for trial, we might have to order almost half the other officers of the army home with them as witnesses. His opinion, therefore, was that the trials must take place in Mexico. I told him that among the papers left with me by him on yesterday was one from Gen'l Worth, preferring grave charges against Gen'l Scott, and appealing to the President to take the proper orders in the case, and I asked him what was to be done with it. Before we concluded the conversation, I was notified by a servant that company had begun to assemble in the parlour below stairs. I told him I was obliged to go below stairs to receive the company, and requested him to call again this afternoon. The President's mansion was, according to custom,

thrown open for the reception of visitors to-day. All the Halls & apartments on the first floor were filled. The Representatives of Foreign Governments, many members of Congress, officers of the army & navy, and a great crowd of citizens were present. I shook hands with many thousands of persons. Among others whom I received was Senator Webster of Massachusetts. I note this fact especially, because during the last session of Congress Mr. Webster did not call on me. I suppose he was ashamed to do so for the reason that shortly before the meeting of the last Session of Congress he had made a Speech on the subject of the Mexican War, and on other topics, in which he spoke of my impeachment, because of my course in reference to the War. I accosted him, when he approached me, formally but courteously. Col. Haskell, a Whig member of Congress from Tennessee, also approached & shook hands with me. I mention this because it is the first time he has called. About 3 O'Clock P. M. the company dispersed. I was considerably wearied, having been constantly on my feet shaking hands for near four hours.

After night the Post Master Gen'l & the Atto. Gen'l called, having been requested to do so by me. I consulted them freely upon the subject of the difficulties of the army in Mexico, stated the substance of the despatches which had been received; the arrest of Gen'ls Pillow & Worth & Col. Duncan; & the charges preferred by Gen'l Worth against Gen'l Scott. I stated, also, the consultations I had held with the Secretary of War and with Senators Davis of Miss. & Cass of Michigan (see this diary of yes-

terday) & after full consideration of the whole subject, they were of opinion that it was indespensible for the good of the service that Gen'l Scott should be superseded in the command of the army & that Gen'l Butler should be placed in command. They were further of opinion that under all the circumstances Pillow, Worth, & Duncan Should have the charges preferred against them at Vera Cruz, instead of in the camp of the main army, and instead of being brought to the U. S. By withdrawing the trial from the camp of the main army, they were of opinion that the excitement and embarrassment to the public service which would likely be produced by it, would be avoided whilst Vera Cruz would be a more convenient place for the parties & witnesses to attend than any point in the U. S. They were of opinion, also, that the officers composing the Court martial should as far as practicable be taken from the U. S., of officers who had taken no part in the excitement of the camp. They were of opinion, also, that Gen'l Butler should be invested with power to make a Treaty. I will consult the balance of my cabinet on monday & decide upon my course.

SUNDAY, *2nd January, 1848.*— I attended Divine worship in company with Mrs. Polk, my Private Secretary, Col. Walker, & my nephew, Marshall T. Polk, Jr., at the Hall of the Ho. Repts. to-day. The service was performed by the Rev. Mr. Slicer, Chaplain to the senate. He preached the funeral sermon on the occasion of the late death of Senator Fairfield of the State of Maine. On returning from

this service I saw Mr. Buchanan at my office & had a short conversation with him on the subject of the difficulties among our Gen'l officers in Mexico, and in relation to the terms of peace to which we ought now to agree. He retired with the understanding that he would call again at 7 O'Clock this evening, and in the mean time I agreed to visit Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, whose health is too feeble to enable him to visit me, and confer with him on the subject. I accordingly visited Mr. Walker at his house at 5 O'Clock P. M., and had a full conversation with him on the subject. He concurred with the other members of the Cabinet and with myself that Gen'l Scott should be superseded in the command of the army by Maj'r Gen'l Butler. He concurred, also, in the opinion that the Court martial for the trial of Gen'ls Pillow & Worth & Col. Duncan should convene at Vera Cruz, and be composed as far as practicable of officers taken from the U. S. who had not participated in the strifes of the army. He agreed, also, that a Court of enquiry should be organized at Vera Cruz to investigate the charges preferred by Gen'l Worth against Gen'l Scott. Mr. Walker at first had some doubt whether Gen'l Taylor or Gen'l Butler should succeed Gen'l Scott in command of the army, but finally concluded that, as Gen'l Butler was now with the army & Gen'l Taylor was in the U. S. on leave of absence at his own request, it would be best to devolve the command on Gen'l Butler. I read to Mr. Walker despatches from Gen'l Scott & Mr. Trist of the 27th of November, both stating that the Mexican Government at

Queretaro had appointed commissioners to treat for peace, & expressed to him that we should have a commissioner in Mexico authorized to meet them. After fully considering the subject he came to the conclusion, in which he concurred with me, that Gen'l Butler should be invested with the power to conclude a Treaty if suitable terms were proposed by Mexico. I had suggested Brig. Gen'l Shields as the commissioner, but the objection to his selection which seemed to have weight was, that the officers of the army who were his Seniors in rank might take offence that he had been preferred to them. The terms of a Treaty to which we could now agree were considered, but no definite result arrived at. I informed Mr. Walker that I would convene the Cabinet at 1 O'Clock on to-morrow to consider & decide these grave questions, & requested him to attend if his health would permit. I returned to my office and at 7 O'Clock P. M. Mr. Buchanan called. I had a full conversation with him on the subject. He agreed that Gen'l Scott should be recalled, that Gen'l Butler should be placed in command, & that the military trials should take place at Vera Cruz, as had been suggested. He was not decided as to the propriety of investing Gen'l Butler with power to conclude a Treaty. I conversed with [him] as to the terms to which we should agree. He at first declared that we should secure Tamaulipas & all the country East of the Sierra mountains. I expressed a doubt as to the policy or practicability of obtaining a country containing so large a number of

the mexican population; & reminded Mr. Buchanan that his original opinion had been against acquiring any territory South of New Mexico. This he admitted & added that he had been opposed to the campaign of our army to Vera Cruz & the City of Mexico. I told [him] that campaign was my own measure & that I remembered his opposition to it. He said, however, that this campaign had been carried out against his opinion, that we had spent much money & shed much blood since Mr. Trist's instructions were given to him in April last, & that he would not now be willing to agree to the terms then proposed. I replied that I would not be willing to agree to those terms after all that had occurred since that time. I suggested that we might accede to a cession of New Mexico, the Two Californias, & the passage across the Istmus of Tehauntepec, paying for them a much less sum than Mr. Trist had been authorized to offer, & that we should in addition secure the port of Tampico. I told him I would be glad to acquire all the country he suggested, but that I apprehended that would not be practicable after the terms which Mr. Trist had already offered. The conversation ended, & I invited him to attend a special meeting of the Cabinet to consider the subject further, at 1 O'Clock to-morrow.

Immediate action upon these important subjects is necessary, and this is the reason why I held these conversations with Mr. Walker and Mr. Buchanan on this day. They are very important & weigh heavily on my mind.

MONDAY, *3rd January, 1848.*— Saw company until 12 O'Clock to-day. Many persons, members of Congress and others, called. I convened a special meeting of the Cabinet at 1 O'Clock P. M. to-day; all the members attended except the Secretary of the Navy, who is absent from the City on a visit to Virginia. The Subject submitted for consideration was the unfortunate collision among the General officers of the army in Mexico, & the steps proper to be taken. These difficulties have been already stated (see this Diary for the last three or four days) from which it appears that Gen'l Scott has arrested Gen'ls Pillow & Worth and Col. Duncan, & that Gen'l Worth has preferred charges aganst Gen'l Scott. After a full discussion the Cabinet were unanimous that Gen'l Scott should be superseded in the command of the army. Upon the question whether the command should devolve upon Maj'r Gen'l Butler, who is next in rank now with the army; or whether Gen'l Taylor, who is now in the U. S. on leave of absence for six months, shall have the option of proceeding to the City of Mexico & taking command, there was division of opinion and some discussion. Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Walker, Mr. Marcy, & Mr. Johnson, though each of them expressed themselves with some hesitancy and doubt, were in favour of sending Gen'l (Taylor to take command, if he was willing to go. Mr. Clifford expressed his opinion strongly against it, and was in favour of placing Gen'l Butler in command. My opinion was that Gen'l Butler should take command, and I so expressed [myself], but remarked that I would post-

pone a final decision until to-morrow. After full discussion it was decided that the charges preferred by Gen'l Scott against Gen'l Worth were not such as to require a Court martial for his trial, & it was unanimously decided that Gen'l Worth should be released from arrest and that a Court of Enquiry should be instituted to examine and report upon the cases of Gen'l Scott's charges against Gen'l Worth & Gen'l Worth's charges against Gen'l Scott. It was also finally agreed that a court martial must be appointed to try the charges preferred against Gen'l Pillow & Col. Duncan. Under the law, it is my duty to appoint these Courts. In consideration of the fact that almost every officer in Mexico has taken sides, or had his feelings excited, in the quarrel between the General officers, it was decided, first, that it would be difficult to procure an unbiased Court composed of the officers of the army in Mexico, & therefore it was determined that the Court should be composed of officers now in the United States, who had not been involved in the feuds or quarrels in the camp, and from Gen'l Taylor's column of the army. The place of trial was also discussed. I suggested Vera Cruz, as that point would remove the trial from the immediate presence of the army, for if it took place in the presence of the army there was danger of producing great excitement & perhaps disorganization. To have the trial in the U. S. would be to withdraw many officers from Mexico as witnesses whose services could not, without great injury to the service, be dispensed with. The names of the officers proper to compose the Court was the subject of

conversation. I requested the Secretary of War to prepare & submit to me the names of officers to compose the Court, whom he would deem proper. This whole difficulty among the Gen'l officers of the army might have been avoided but for the folly, the vanity, and tyranny of Gen'l Scott, but the difficulty has arisen and it is my duty to take the legal steps to have it settled. Information has been received from Mr. Trist that the Government of Mexico at Queretero have appointed Commissioners to re-open negotiations for peace, but that, his letter of recall having reached him, he possessed no power to meet them. Information received through other channels leads to the opinion that possibly peace might be concluded if a person vested with Diplomatic powers were now in Mexico. The question of conferring such powers was considered. There seemed to be an acquiescence in its propriety by the Cabinet; but there was a difference of opinion whether such powers should be conferred upon a commissioner appointed for that purpose, or upon Gen'l Butler, who would be Gen'l in chief of the army. Mr. Buchanan thought a Civilian should be appointed. I thought it would be best to clothe Gen'l Butler with the authority. No decision was had on the question, but it was agreed to adjourn it over for further consideration. The terms of a Treaty of peace to which we could now agree were not considered. The Secretary of the Treasury was present in the Cabinet meeting to-day, after having been confined to his house for several weeks by indisposition.

TUESDAY, *4th January, 1848.*— Saw company as usual this morning. The Cabinet met at the usual hour; all the members present except the Secretary of the navy, who is still absent in Virginia. The subject of the difficulties among the officers of the army in Mexico was reconsidered at the instance of the secretary of War, who suggested that if Gen'l Butler was put in command & Gen'l Scott recalled that then Gen'l Butler might appoint the Court martial for their trial. After a further discussion the decision of yesterday was adhered to by the unanimous [vote] of the Cabinet, the secretary of War seeming to yield the suggestion he had made. The Castle of Perote was mentioned as the place of trial, instead of Vera Cruz, but that point was not decided. The P. M. Gen'l was called to the Capitol early after the Cabinet met, on official business. The Secretary of War was not prepared to submit the names of officers enough to compose a full Court martial. The names of some of them were submitted and approved. I requested him to see me again on the subject this evening. I informed the Cabinet that I had fully considered the proposition to place Gen'l Taylor in command of the army upon Gen'l Scott's recal[l], and that my judgment was still against it. The Secretary of the Treasury assigned some reasons in favour of his selection, & so did the Secretary of War. I finally decided positively against it, & assigned my reasons at some length. I cannot repeat them here. They were, in brief, 1st, that Gen'l Taylor was now at home, on leave of absence at his

own request, & that I was unwilling either to require him or to invite him to return, if he chose to do so, before his leave of absence was out; 2nd, because Gen'l Taylor was originally superseded in the chief command by Gen'l Scott only because he would not co-operate with the Government, and had no sympathies with it in conducting the War. I stated to the Cabinet that they all remembered the trouble he had given and our dissatisfaction with him at the time we were reluctantly compelled to send Scott to supersede him; 3rd, that I had applied to Congress a year ago to grant authority to appoint a Lieut. Gen'l who could command both Scott & Taylor, and that I had done this upon the express ground that it was deemed important that the Gen'l in chief command should harmonize in his opinions & views with the Government at home; 4th, Congress had refused to grant this power, & I was still compelled to employ the officers whom the law had furnished me; that now Scott in his turn had acted badly, and we were compelled to recal[l] him; 5th, because Gen'l Butler, who is now with the army, is altogether competent for the command; was a man of more mind and more information than either Scott or Taylor; that he [a]greed with me in his General opinions, & that I could rely on him to carry out my views and plans in good faith. When I had assigned my views the dissenting members of the Cabinet were silent, and did not express their assent to my views. I, however, made my decision on this point absolute. The Secretary of War read a letter which he had received, dated at Vera Cruz on the 16th ult., stating

that the Brittish courier had just arrived at that place from the City of Mexico without bringing down any letters, a most unusual thing; and that the writer (Col. Wilson) had learned confidentially from the Courier that negotiations had been renewed by Mr. Trist with the mexican commissioners recently appointed. This information is most surprising. Mr. Trist has acknowledged the receipt of his letter of recal[l], and he possesses no diplomatic powers. He is acting, no doubt, upon Gen'l Scott's advice. He has become the perfect tool of Scott. He is, [in] this measure, defying the authority of his Government. His conduct in the former negotiations has been disapproved. He is, no doubt, offended because it has been disapproved, & because of his recal[l]. He seems to have entered into all Scott's hatred of the administration, and to be lending himself to all Scott's evil purposes. He may, I fear, greatly embarrass the Government.

I had a large dinner party of 40 persons, ladies & gentlemen, to-day. Gen'l Quitman, his wife & daughter; Gen'l Shields; Col. Harney [and] Col. Andrews, all of the army, and the rest composed of Democratic members of the Ho. Repts. and the wives of several of them, constituted the party. It is the first large dinner party I have had where all present were democrats. After the company dispersed Gen'l Shields retired with me to my office, and I had a long conversation with him about the dissention in the army and military operations in Mexico, & obtained some valuable information from him. He approved the course I proposed to take in relation

to the trial of the cases of Gen'ls Scott, Pillow, & Worth, & Col. Dun[c]an. He recommended the castle of Perote as the place of trial. I consulted him as to the members of the Court &, in consultation with him, made out a list of the names of the officers to compose the Court, which he approved. He retired near 12 O'Clock at night.

This morning about 10 O'Clock, the Hon. John Bell of Nashville, Tennessee, recently elected to the Senate of the U. S., called. I received him courteously. He appeared at first somewhat embarrassing [embarrassed], but by my manner and conversation I soon put him at ease. I had not spoken to him since the contest between us for speaker of the Ho. Repts. in 1834 & 1835. In June, 1834, he was elected over me, when Mr. Stevenson [1] resigned, & in Dec., 1835, I was elected over him, and again in 1837. About the same period Judge White [2] was brought out for the President [Presidency], and ever since that time Mr. Bell and myself had belonged, & still belong, to different political parties. The contests between us in Tennessee had been violent and even been bitter for years. He had now called

[1] Andrew Stevenson of Virginia, 1784–1857, Speaker of the House of Representatives 1827–1834, minister to England 1836–1841.

[2] Hugh Lawson White, 1773–1840, Senator from Tennessee 1825–1840. In the internal dissensions of the Democratic party in Tennessee following Jackson's election to the Presidency Polk adhered to the fortunes of Jackson and to the candidacy of Van Buren for the Presidential succession while Bell threw his influence with the White faction. White received 26 Whig electoral votes for President in 1836.

on me, and I knew in advance that he was desirous to be on terms of social & personal intercourse with me (see my conversations with Mr. Daniel Saffrons and Senator Turney, noted in this journal some days ago) and I, therefore, shortly after he came in, said to him that I was glad to see him, and that so far as I was concerned I was willing to let bye-gones be bye-gones, to let the past be forgotten, and to renew with him our personal intercourse. He said that was his desire, that we were to live neighbours when we retired from public life, and that he desired to be on terms of friendship. I expressed similar desires on my part. He enquired for Mrs. Polk and I for Mrs. Bell. My whole interview with him was of an agreeable character. He remained half an hour or more, and conversed freely about the Mexican war and other subjects. Before he left I told him Mrs. Polk would be glad to see Mrs. Bell. He intimated that there had been some difficulty on that point, but that Mrs. Bell would call soon. I suppose the difficulty consisted in the pride which ladies sometimes feel, which makes them reluctant to yield to each other, and the fact that the established etiquette of the Presidential office required the first call from Mrs. Bell. He left apparently well pleased with his interview with me.

WEDNESDAY, *5th January, 1848.*— Saw company as usual this morning. Many persons called. The Secretary of War called, & we agreed upon the Court martial to be ordered for the trial of the charges preferred by Gen'l Scott against Gen'l Pillow & Col.

Duncan; & upon the Court of Enquiry to be organized to examine & Report upon the charges preferred by Gen'l Worth against Gen'l Scott; & that the same Court should inquire into Gen'l Scott's complaint against Gen'l Worth. It was agreed also that the castle at Perote should be the place of these trials. The Secretary of State called & informed me confidentially that he had been shown a letter from Mr. Trist to his wife, which contained a post-script in cipher which he had requested her to show to Mr. Buchanan in confidence, the substance of which was, that on the day he wrote (4th Decr.) at 12 O'Clock, he would open negotiations with the Mexican commissioners, and would offer to agree to a Treaty with them upon the ultimatum which he was authorized to propose in April last, taking the parallel of 32° from the Rio Grande as the boundary, & that he would offer to pay them $15,000,000 in addition to the $3,000,000 appropriated by Congress at the last cession for this cession of territory. His conduct astonishes both the Secretary of State and myself. He has acknowledged the receipt of his letter of recal[l] & has no power to treat. I fear he may greatly embarrass the Government.

The Clerk of the Ho. Repts. presented to me today at 1½ O'Clock P. M. a Resolution of the House calling for information respecting the return of Santa Anna & Paredes to Mexico, & calling for Mr. Slidell's instructions.

THURSDAY, *6th January, 1848.*— I saw company as usual this morning. The Secretary of War called

about 2 O'Clock & brought with him despatches from the army in Mexico, of date the 10th Decr., but they contained no important information & no mention of Mr. Trist or the negotiations with the Mexican commissioners (see this diary of yesterday and the preceding day). They contained some additional and frivolous charges by Gen'l Scott against Gen'l Pillow, which prove his vindictiveness & his malice. Brig. Gen'l Pierce, we learned from the N. Orleans papers, had arrived in that City on his way home with the intention of resigning. The Secretary of War suggested that he should delay the orders for Gen'l Scott's recal[l] & for the Courts martial in Mexico, until Gen'l Pierce's arrival in this City & he could converse with him. The Secretary of State called, and I consulted him in regard to the answer to the Resolution [1] of the Ho. Repts. presented to me on yesterday, calling for information respecting the return of Santa Anna & Paredes to Mexico, and calling for Mr. Slidell's instructions. He was of opinion that I could not and ought not to communicate Mr. Slidell's instructions; & that to do so would be greatly to the prejudice of the public interests. He thought also that I ought not, for the same reason, to communicate anything relating to Commander Slidell's [Slidell] McKenzie's visit to Havanna, in July, 1846. I concurred with him in opinion & told him I had been examining the subject, and found that Gen'l Washington had, in 1796, refused [2] to answer a Resolution of the Ho. of

[1] *H. Journal,* 30 Cong. 1 Sess. 193.

[2] Jay's treaty with England, ratified October 28, 1795, necessi-

Repts. calling for the instructions to the minister to England who had negotiated a Treaty with Great Brittain. I was engaged most of the day in disposing of the business on my table; & after night I prepared a draft of a message to the Ho. Repts. in answer to their resolution relating to Santa Anna, &c. I retired at my usual hour, considerably wearied with my day's labour.

FRIDAY, *7th January, 1848.*— Saw company as usual this morning. I examined, in the course of the day, the last despatches received from the army with care. I examined, also, several private letters received by Col. Walker and myself; and in view of the additional information which they impart in relation to the feuds & strifes in the army, I am inclined to the opinion that instead of a General Court martial as heretofore resolved on, it would be better to have a Court of Enquiry in the first instance, and that the conduct of Gen'l Scott, Gen'l Pillow, Gen'l Worth, Col. Duncan, and of such other officers as are involved in the unfortunate difficulties which exist in the army, should be examined into and reported

tated an appropriation of money for carrying its provisions into effect. The party in the House which was opposed to the treaty, dissatisfied with the President's course in connection with it, secured the passage of a resolution calling on Washington for the instructions given to Jay and for the correspondence and documents relating to the treaty. Washington submitted the question of compliance with the resolution to his cabinet, which advised unanimously against his doing so. For his message to the House on the subject, March 30, 1796, see Ford, *Writings of George Washington,* XIII, 177.

upon by the Court, so as to enable me to determine which of them, if any, should be put on trial before a General Court Martial. This is at present my opinion, but I will consult my Cabinet on the subject on to-morrow. I was engaged as usual in disposing [of] the business on my table to-day.

This being reception evening many persons, ladies & gentlemen, called. The Secretary of the Navy returned from his visit to Virginia to-day.

SATURDAY, *8th January, 1848.*— I saw company to-day until the hour of meeting of the Cabinet. The Cabinet assembled at the usual hour; all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury. I called the attention of the Cabinet to a Resolution of the House of Representatives presented to me on the 5th, Instant, calling for information in relation to the return of Santa Anna and Paredes to Mexico; and calling for the instructions to Mr. Slidell as minister Plenipotentiary to Mexico. I called the attention of the Cabinet to the manifest injury to the public interests which would be produced by communicating the instructions to Mr. Slidell, and I referred to a message of President Washington to the Ho. Repts. in 1796, declining to comply with a like call. The subject was fully discussed, and the Cabinet were unanimously of opinion that it was my duty to refuse a compliance with the request of the House, so far as the instructions to Mr. Slidell were concerned. Mr. Buchanan gave his opinion to this effect first, and then, on being severally called, each member of the Cabinet present

gave his opinion. I fully concurred with the Cabinet. All were agreed that the order issued by the Secretary of the Navy to the Commander of our squadron in the Gulf of Mexico on the 13th of May, 1846, the day on which Congress declared war, not to obstruct the passage of Santa Anna into Mexico should he attempt to return, should be communicated. All concurred, also, that all the correspondence which had taken place in relation to the return of Gen'l Paredes into Mexico, should be communicated. Another question of some importance arose as to the propriety of sending to the House a communication [1] made by Alexander Slidell McKenzie of the U. S. Navy, made in July, 1846, to the Department of State. This communication is of a highly confidential character, and was made under the following circumstances, *viz.,* some time after the war was recognized by Congress on the 13th of May, 1846, it was deemed important to send a confidential agent to Havanna, where Santa Anna then was, to ascertain whether any Mexican privateers had been commissioned to cruise against American commerce. This agent was Commander McKenzie. He was secondly authorized, if practicable, to ascertain in a prudent way what Santa Anna's views were in regard to peace with the U. S., and whether, if restored to Mexico, there was a reasonable probability that he would make peace. If he ascertained that his views were favourable to peace, as it was believed they were, he was then authorized to in-

[1] Printed in Reeves, *American Diplomacy under Tyler and Polk,* 299–308.

form him that the U. S. desired peace, and to inform him also of the order which had been issued to Com. Conner not to obstruct his passage to Mexico if he desired [to go there]. Our object was, in permitting him to return, as I afterwards fully explained it in my annual message of the 8th of December, 1846. Mr. McKenzie visited Havanna without any written instructions. He had an interview with Santa Anna, and reported to him the order which had been issued to Com. Conner on the 13th of May, 1846, and, as appears from his confidential despatch to the Secretary of State, exceeded his authority, by having reduced to writing and read to Santa Anna what purported to be a Message from me to him. In this he wholly exceeded his authority. I sent him no message. Mr. McKenzie, it seems, reduced to writing his recollection of a conversation I held with him in reference to the objects of his visit to Havanna, and this he called a Message from me to Santa Anna. It is fortunate, however, that what he puts into my mouth could do me no injury, if it was genuine & was published; but it would exhibit me in a ridiculous attitude. Mr. McKenzie, in his despatch, states Santa Anna's reply, and details a long conversation which he held with him, in which Santa Anna avowed himself to be warmly in favour of peace. This conversation with Santa Anna, he states, was understood by the former to be of a highly confidential character. After Mr. McKenzie's despatch was read, Mr. Buchanan expressed his opinion strongly that I could not communicate it in answer to the call. He said there was nothing in

it which could injure the administration, but it would be a want of good faith on the part of the Government, & that if it was made public the judgment of the world would condemn [us], & that no Government would ever again trust us. The other members of the Cabinet were clear and decided that I ought not and could not, without impairing the national honour and character, communicate Mr. McKenzie's despatch to Congress. After these points were decided I read to the Cabinet a rough draft of a message which I had prepared in answer to the Resolution of the House, in which I had reserved or left open the points discussed and decided to-day. One or two immaterial modifications were suggested.

This subject being disposed of I called the attention of the Cabinet to the difficulties among the High officers of our army in Mexico, and stated that my impression was, on examining the despatches received since the subject was considered at the last Cabinet meeting, that the better course was to organize in the first instance a Court of Enquiry to ascertain the whole facts, & then determine whether it was proper or necessary to organize a General Court martial for the trial of any of the officers. Mr. Buchanan thought that there ought to be a Court martial, especially in Gen'l Pillow's case, now. The subject was discussed, & there being some division of opinion on the subject & in relation to the powers and duties of a Court of Enquiry, I requested the Atto. Gen'l & the Secretary of the Navy to examine the subject & call on me to-night. The opinion, as far as it was expressed, of a majority [of the Cabinet was in favor]

of the suggestion of a Court of Enquiry instead of a Court Martial. This suggestion was not decidedly opposed by any member of the Cabinet except Mr. Buchanan: he opposed it chiefly on the ground that Gen'l Pillow was understood to be my personal friend, and on account of the delicacy of my relations to him, he thought it would be better to order a Court Martial for the trial of his case at once. I thought it was but just to place Gen'l Pillow on precisely [the] same footing as the other officers involved in the difficulties which had arisen in Mexico, & to have a Court of enquiry in all their cases in the first instance. The Secretary of War next introduced the question of Gen'l Scott's successor in command of the army, and went on to discuss, as if it were an open question, of tendering the command to Gen'l Taylor. I replied with some emphasis that I had distinctly decided that question at the last Cabinet meeting & that, too, upon full consideration (see this diary of the 4th Instant) and that if I was not then understood I would be now. I then repeated and enlarged upon my reasons, as given at the last cabinet meeting; and told him that my decision was that Gen'l Butler should succeed Gen'l Scott in command. I repeated that the Cabinet had been unanimous in the opinion that Gen'l Scott should be supersed[ed] in the command, that the Atto. Gen'l at the last meeting had concurred with me that Gen'l Butler & not Gen'l Taylor should succeed him; that the other members of the Cabinet had inclined to the opinion that Gen'l Taylor should succeed him; that I had decided against their opinion and now repeated that decision,

& directed that the command should be devolved on Gen'l Butler. I said to the Secretary of War that I would take the whole responsibility of this decision. He responded that of course the Cabinet would support me in whatever decision I made in the matter.

After night Mr. Clifford [and] Judge Mason called, as I had requested them to do. Judge Mason called first & I had read to him the despatches received from Mexico by the last arrival. Mr. Cave Johnson came in with Mr. Clifford. Mr. Clifford had examined the law in relation to Courts of Enquiry. Part of the charges preferred against Gen'l Pillow were read, and also parts of Gen'l Scott's official reports of the battles in which that officer had participated, which seemed to be inconsistent with them. The subject was fully considered, when Judge Mason, Mr. Clifford, and Mr. Johnson all expressed the opinion that the proper course was the one which I proposed, to institute a Court of Enquiry in the first instance.

SUNDAY, *9th January, 1848.*— Before church hour this morning the Secretary of War called; when I informed him of the law regulating courts of enquiry in cases of alleged military offenses, as furnished to me by the attorney Gen'l (see this diary of yesterday). He acquiesced in the propriety of having a Court of enquiry instead of a Court Martial in the cases of Gen'l Pillow, Gen'l Scott, and Lieut. Col. Du[n.]can, & agreed, also, that while the investigation by the Court of Enquiry was going on, Gen'l

Pillow & Col. Duncan should be released from arrest. I requested him to prepare, at his earliest convenience, the necessary orders & despatches to carry out this decision and the decision made on other points on yesterday. I attended the first Presbyterian church to-day, accompanied by Mrs. Polk. Mr. Ballentine, the new pastor, preached.

MONDAY, *10th January, 1848.*— Saw company as usual until 12 O'Clock to-day. Many members of Congress and others called. I revised my message in answer to the Resolution of the Ho. Repts. calling for information in relation to [the] return of Santa Anna & Gen'l Paredes to Mexico, & calling for the instructions to Mr. Slidell as minister to Mexico. Mr. Buchanan called in the afternoon & I read it to him & he approved it. I disposed of much business on my table, & transacted business with several of the public officers who called on business.

I sent for the Hon. George S. Houston of Alabama & read to him my message in answer to the Resolution of the House of the 4th Inst.

TUESDAY, *11th January, 1848.*— Several persons called before the hour of the meeting of the Cabinet this morning. The Cabinet assembled at the usual hour; all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury & the Atto. Gen'l. The former is in feeble health, & the latter was probably attending the Supreme Court. I read to the Cabinet my message in answer to the Resolution of the House in relation to the return of Santa Anna to Mexico, the instruc-

tions to Mr. Slidell, &c. It was approved by the Cabinet, but as the documents to accompanied [accompany it] were not copied it was not sent in today. The Secretary of War read the despatches which he had prepared to Gen'l Scott & Gen'l Butler, superceding the former in [the] command of the army in Mexico & placing the latter in command; & also the order releasing Gen'l Worth, Gen'l Pillow, & Col. Dun[c]an from arrest, and directing a Court of Enquiry in their cases as well as that of Gen'l Scott upon the charges preferred by Gen'l Worth against him. The Secretary of War proposed that the Court should be composed of Brev't Brig. Gen'l Tomson, Brig. Gen'l Cushing, & Col. Butler [1] of the 3rd Dragoons. I told him that I was satisfied with that Court, or any other which he might select. Mr. Buchanan expressed some objection[s] to Gen'l Cushing, but I was of opinion that they had no weight. The Secretary of War suggested that Col. Crane [2] might be substituted in place of Col. Butler. I told him to do as he pleased in that respect. Nothing else of importance transpired in the Cabinet meeting. After night I placed my message in answer to the Resolution of the House in the hands of Mr. Whitthorne to be copied. Senator Turney called about dark, & I sent a message by him to Mr. Thomas & Mr. Chase of Tennessee, requesting them to call. They did so, and I read my message to them. Mrs.

[1] Edward G. W. Butler, Colonel of the 3rd Dragoons March, 1847–July, 1848. He was the son of Captain Edward B. Butler of the noted Butler family of soldiers.

[2] Ichabod B. Crane of New York, Colonel of the 1st Artillery.

Polk, accompanied by Mr. Buchanan & Col. Walker, attended a marriage at the House of Mr. Bodisco, the Russian minister, to-night.

This being reception evening many persons, mostly gentlemen, called. It was a very cold night & but few ladies were present.

WEDNESDAY, *12th January, 1848.*— I was quite busy this morning. Many members of Congress called, and a variety of official duties claimed my attention. I corrected and revised my message[1] in answer to the Resolution of the Ho. Repts. of the 4th Inst., & at 2 O'Clock P. M. sent it, with Reports from the Secretaries of State, War, & Navy, to the House. The secretary of War called & read his despatches to Gen'l Scott, Gen'l Butler, & the order for a Court of inquiry in the cases of Gen'l Scott, Pillow, and Col. Duncan. In constituting the Court of Enquiry the Secretary had doubts whether Col Crane, who is now a member of the Court martial on the trial of Col. Fremont, could be released in time to attend as a member of the Court of Enquiry in Mexico. The Secretary had on yesterday at first proposed that the Court of Enquiry should consist of Gen'l Tomson, Gen'l Cushing, and Col. Butler of the 3rd Dragoons. He had afterwards concluded to substitute Col. Crane in place of Col. Butler. To-day he thought it best to retain Col. Butler as he had originally proposed. After night Senator Rusk of

[1] Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents,* IV, 565. The accompanying documents are printed in *H. Exec. Doc.* 25, 30 Cong. 1 Sess. VIII.

Texas called and held a long conversation with me about the Mexican War, and gave me many facts within his knowledge of the Mexican character & feelings, and his views of our future policy. He seemed to have two objects in view, 1st., that I should not commit myself, further than I had done in my messages, against acquiring the whole of Mexico; and 2nd, to induce me to consent to be a candidate for re-election, expressing the opinion that I was the strongest man of my party & that they could not unite on any other. I told him that my views upon the first point were distinctly stated in my messages, that I had not changed them, and [that I] left them to explain themselves; and upon the second point I told him that I could not consent to be a candidate for re-election, and that the democratic party must unite on some other candidate, as I hoped & believed they could & would do.

I gave a sitting in the dining room to-day for my Daguerrotype likeness. It was taken by Mr. Plumbe.

THURSDAY, *13th January, 1848.*— I saw company as usual this morning until 12 O'Clock, when I closed my office. At 2 O'Clock Maj'r Gen'l Quitman called an[d] held a conversation of an hour with me, in relation to the War and the operations of the army in Mexico. I informed him of the orders I had given for a Court of Enquiry in the case of the officers in Mexico who had preferred charges against each other, *viz.,* Gen'ls Scott, Worth, Pillow, & Col.

Duncan. He approved the course I had taken. I gave a sitting for a Daguarytype likeness in the dining room to-day. I had been requested to do so by Mr. Niles, the charge d'affaires to Sardinia. I transacted business with public officers & disposed of much business on my table. Mr. Conrad F. Jackson of Penn., a bearer of despatches to the army in Mexico, left Washington to-night. He bore the despatches superseding Gen'l Scott and placing Gen'l Butler in command of the army; and also the order directing the Court of Enquiry in the cases of Gen'ls Scott, Pillow, & Col. Dun[c]an. I learn that my message sent to the Ho. Repts. on yesterday, in answer to their Resolution of the 4th Inst., in which message I declined to communicate the instructions to Mr. Slidell as Minister to Mexico, which the House had requested, gave rise to excited discussion, the Federal members denying my right to with-hold the information called for.

FRIDAY, *14th January, 1848.*— My office was crowded with visitors this morning. The Senate did not sit to-day, and many members of Congress were of the number who called. Their chief business was to apply for office for their friends. The applications for office are daily and unceasing. I transacted business with the Secretaries of State, War, & Navy, who called in the course of the day. I was occupied by company most of the day, but yet had time to dispose of much business on my table.

This was reception evening. An unusually large

number of persons called. The large circular parlour was crowded with ladies & gentlemen, and many persons were in the adjoining parlour.

SATURDAY, *15th January, 1848.*— I saw several persons who called this morning. The Cabinet met at the usual hour; all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury, who is still confined to his house by indisposition. I brought before the Cabinet the future operations of the army in Mexico, and the terms of peace to which we ought now to accede. I had stated that from present indications Congress would probably either refuse to increase the army, as I had recommended, or postpone it to a late period of the Session, and that we ought to decide upon our future operations with a view to the forces now in the field; when the messenger from the State Department brought to Mr. Buchanan his mail containing a very long despatch from Mr. Trist. It was dated on the 6th of Decr. last, and is the most extraordinary document I have ever heard from a Diplomatic Representative. Though he had in a previous despatch acknowledged the receipt of his letter of recall from the Secretary of State, he announces that he had re-opened negotiations with the Mexican authorities & had resolved to conclude a Treaty with them. His despatch is arrogant, impudent, and very insulting to his Government, and even personally offensive to the President. He admits he is acting without authority and in violation of the positive order recalling him. It is manifest to me that he has become the tool of Gen'l Scott and his

menial instrument, and that the paper was written at Scott's instance and dictation. I have never in my life felt so indignant, and the whole Cabinet expressed themselves as I felt. I told Mr. Buchanan that the paper was so insulting and contemptably base, that it require[d] no lengthy answer, but that it did require a short, but stern and decided rebuke, and directed him to prepare such a reply. I directed the Secretary of War to write at once to Maj'r Gen'l Butler, directing him, if Mr. Trist was still with the Head Quarters of the army, to order him off, and to inform the authorities of Mexico that he had no authority to treat. If there was any legal provision for his punishment he ought to be severely handled. He has acted worse than any man in the public employ whom I have ever known. His despatch proves that he is destitute of honour or principle, and that he has proved himself to be a very base man. I was deceived in him. I had but little personal knowledge of him, but could not have believed [it] possible that any man would have acted so basely as he would have [has] done. It was communicated to me last night that Col. Butler of the 3rd Dragoons, who had been named as one of the Court of enquiry in the cases of Gen'ls Scott, Pillow, and Worth & Col. Dun[c]an, was the intimate friend of Trist, and as Trist was to be the main witness, as we learned, against Gen'l Pillow, I told the Secretary of War that I thought he had better substitute some other officer on the Court in place of Col. Butler. My reason was that I would have no confidence that Trist would testify to the truth in Pillow's case; and that

Col. Butler, from his former knowledge of him and without any knowledge of his recent base conduct, might give undue weight to his testimony, and might not, on that account, be an impartial member of the Court. I told him if he could find some other officer who could be spared from other duties, I thought it would be but fair to substitute him in Butler's place. He concurred with me in this opinion.

After night the Secretary of War called & read to me the letter which he had prepared to Gen'l Butler, in relation to Trist's presence with the army.

SUNDAY, *16th January, 1848.*— I did not attend church to-day. Mrs. Polk, accompanied by Mrs. Walker, attended the First Presbyterian church. Events connected with the Mexican War absolutely required my attention. At different periods of the day I saw the Secretaries of State, War, and the Navy, the Post master Gen'l, & the Atto. Gen'l. After night Gen'l Tomson of the army called. He will leave for Mexico on to-morrow. After he retired Brig. Gen'l Pierce of the army, who reached this City last night, having left the City of Mexico on the 9th of Decr., 1847, called and remained with me an hour.

MONDAY, *17th January, 1848.*— This was a busy day with me. Many persons called and I disposed of much business on my table. The Secretary of State called in the morning and again after night, to consult me about the propriety of sending the instructions to Mr. Slidell, U. S. minister to Mexico (which

I had refused to communicate to the House) to the Senate in Executive Session, if that body should call for them. He was of opinion that I should do so, and said, if I concurred, some Democratic Senator could make the call. Brig. Gen'l Pierce took a family dinner with me to-day. Several members of Congress called after night, who remained until my usual hour to retire. About 7 O'Clock P. M. the Hon. Charles J. Ingersoll called. It was the first time he had done so during the Session. He had taken offense because I did not re-nominate him after he was rejected as minister to France, on the night of the 3rd of March last. He wrote me a foolish and angry letter after he returned home, which I answered. The circumstances are fully recorded in this diary during the past year. About the commencement of the present session of Congress he sent his card to Mrs. Polk and myself. Mr. John Sullivan, who is his particular friend, has held several conversations with me, the object of which was to restore the former relations which existed between Mr. Ingersoll and myself. I had signified to him that if Mr. Ingersoll called I would treat him courteously; as I did, when he called this evening. I consider that he acted a very weak and foolish part when he wrote his letter last spring, but he is a democratic member of Congress supporting the principles of my administration, and I was willing to overlook his past follies. As soon as he entered my office and I had received him and asked him to be seated, he alluded to the conversations which Mr. Sullivan had held with me; and immediately proceeded to a review of the causes of complaint

which he still thought he had because of my course when he was rejected by the Senate; and because of the failure of his son to get a commission in the army. I heard him through and then said to him that I thought he had no cause to complain of me; that I had certainly done what I regarded to be my duty, and that I was still not sensible of having at any time done him any injury, that if I had it was certainly not intended, and that I was willing to let it all pass. I remarked to him that I was glad to have seen in the daily papers the part he had taken in a debate in the House a few days ago in my support, when my message refusing to communicate the instructions to Mr. Slidell, U. S. Minister to Mexico, was assailed. He said he still thought he had been hardly dealt bye. He spoke well of Mr. Rush as a gentleman, but said he was unfit for the French Mission. He said that when I had appointed Mr. Rush and Mr. John Randolph Clay, both of Pennsylvania, to missions abroad, it was slamming the door in his face, as I could not well appoint another minister from Pennsylvania, and that this circumstance had excited him. He talked like a man who was so excited (not angry) that he had still the appearance of one labouring under some mental aberation. His heart had been set on a mission abroad, and he was doubtless most deeply mortified when the Senate rejected him, but he had not the slightest cause of complaint against me. The latter part of the conversation turned upon public subjects, and particularly upon the question before the House, upon my message refusing to communicate Mr. Slidell's instructions, in

which he was calm & rational. It was only in reference to his personal affairs that he seemed to be excited.

TUESDAY, *18th January, 1848.*— I saw a number of persons on business this morning. The Cabinet met at the usual hour. The Secretary of State read a despatch which he had received from Mr. Tod, our minister to Brazil. The Secretary of War presented several matters of minor importance relating to the operations of the army and the conducting [of] the war. Some other minor subjects were considered & disposed of; none of them of sufficient importance to require special notice.

This was reception evening. A number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called. The annual meeting of the American colonization Society was held in the Hall of the House of Representatives to-night; at which Mr. Clay of Ky. was present and made a speech.

WEDNESDAY, *19th January, 1848.*— An unusual number of persons called this morning; and I was exceedingly annoyed by their importunate applications for office. When I open my office all sorts of persons come in, and among my visitors this morning were three persons begging money. Having learned from several members of Congress that it was stated by some of the Whig members of the House that they would attempt to prove my inconsistency in refusing to communicate Mr. Slidell's instructions in answer to the Resolution of the Ho. Repts. of the 4th Inst.

by my votes and speeches on the question of the Panama Mission [1] in 1826, I took the opportunity, as soon as my doors were closed, to review my votes & speeches on that occasion. The result is that no such inconsistency can be established unless [it] be by taking isolated votes & sentences in my speeches & tearing them from the context. I feel secure against any attempt of the kind which may be made. I still hold every sentiment which I expressed in my speeches made on that occasion. In my late message I was careful not to adopt or endorse all the opinions of President Washington in his message in 1796, because I did not approve them. Had I adopted them a case of inconsistency might have been made out. As it is, no such thing can be done.

The Board of managers of the American colonization Society, accompanied by the Hon. Mr. Kaufman of Texas, called and paid their respects tonight. There were about twenty persons who called. Mrs. Polk & myself, having been previously notified that they would call, received them in the parlour. In the general conversation which occurred it was suggested that the U. S. should recognize the Independence of the Government of Liberia, and my opinion was asked. I gave the proposition no countenance, but avoided engaging in a discussion on the subject. There was a disposition, I thought, with two or three of the persons who engaged in the conversation, to draw me into a discussion, and to extract from me my reasons for not favouring the recognition of the Independence of the colony of

[1] Jenkins, *Polk,* Chap. IV.

free blacks at Liberia. I expressed my decided opposition, but thought any discussion on the subject would be unprofitable and might be unpleasant to my visitors, and for these reasons I desired to avoid it in my own parlour.

THURSDAY, *20th January, 1848.*— Saw company as usual this morning. Among others I saw several members of the Ho. Repts., and explained to them my course on the Panama mission question in 1826, which I understood had been referred to in debate in the House by Mr. Tompkins of Mississippi to prove that in refusing to communicate Mr. Slidell's instructions I had acted inconsistently with that course. When properly understood no case of inconsistency is made out. I yet entertain all the opinions which I expressed by my votes and in debate upon the Panama question in 1826. I have carefully read over my speeches on that occasion, and would now re-affirm all the doctrines which they contain. I had a large dinner party to-day, composed of Senators and Representatives & their wives; of the Mayor of Washington; his wife; Mr. Ritchie, his two daughters, &c, in all near 40 persons.

FRIDAY, *21st January, 1848.*— Many visitors called this morning, almost all of whom as is usual wanted some office, either for themselves or their friends. Much of my time continues to be taken up without profit to the public and much to my annoyance by importunities for office. Bills are pending before Congress to increase the army; for a

few assistant pursers in the Navy; and for two or three chargé d'affaires to Rome & South America; and in anticipation of their passing, my office is thronged daily by applicants seeking places. The passion for office is increasing rather than diminishing. I transacted business with the Secretary of State and the Secretary of War to-day, and disposed of much of the current business on my table.

At 1 O'Clock P. M., in pursuance of a previous arrangement made by the Secretary of State, I repaired to the parlour where I received Mr. Pageot, who had recently been promoted by the King of the French to the rank of Envoy Extraordinary & Minister Plenipotentiary to the U. States. On presenting his credentials Mr. Pageot made a short address to which I responded.

This being reception evening an unusually large number of persons, ladies and gentlemen, called.

SATURDAY, *22nd January, 1848.*— I saw a few persons before the hour of meeting of the Cabinet to-day. At the usual hour the Cabinet assembled, all the members present except the Secretary of State and the Secretary of War. The Secretary of War wrote me a note stating that he had been taken with a severe chill and was unable to attend. It was suggested by the Secretary of the Navy that it would be proper for the President and the Cabinet to attend the funeral ceremonies of Lieut. Col. Wm. M. Graham of the army, which was to take place from St. John's church at 12 O'Clock to-day. No subject was brought up for consideration in the Cabinet,

and at 12 O'Clock, accompanied by the Secretary of the Navy, the Post master Gen'l, and the atto. Gen'l., who took seats with me in my carriage, I repaired to St. John's church (Episcopal) and attended the funeral ceremonies of Col. Graham. The Rev. Mr. Price & the Rev. Mr. French officiated. These being over, a large procession of officers of the army, the militia of the D. C., and citizens moved from the church to the Congressional burying ground, where the body was deposited. Lieut. Col. Graham was promoted by me from the rank of Captain in the regular army to that of Lieut. Col in the 11th Infantry in the month of February last. He fell in the gallant discharge of his duty, at the head of his Regiment, on the 8th of September last in the battle of Morino del Rey [Molino Del Rey] near the gates of the City of Mexico. His friends had brought his body to this City for interment.

After night I saw Senator Allen & Messrs. McKay of N. C. and Ficklin of Ill., and had long conversations with them on public affairs.

SUNDAY, *23rd January, 1848.*— Mrs. Polk and myself attended the first Presbyterian church to-day.

After night Senators Cass and Sevier called at my request. I read to them the Instructions given to Mr. Slidell in Nov., 1845, and which I had refused to communicate to the Ho. Repts. in my message of the 12th Inst., in answer to their Resolution of the 4th Inst., and asked their opinion whether it would be proper to communicate them to the Senate confidentially, in their Executive Session. They were both

decidedly of opinion that I ought not to communicate them even confidentially to the Senate, for the reason that if so communicated they would become public and would go to Mexico, whereby the public interests would be greatly prejudiced. They both approved my refusal to send them to the House in answer to the call of that body. I informed them of Mr. Trist's most reprehensible conduct in Mexico, and of his refusal to return after his recal[l]. They advised that I should at once give an order to Gen'l Butler, now commanding the army in Mexico, to send him out of Mexico, and to inform the Mexican Government that he had been recalled. They concurred with me that his conduct was not only insubordinate but infamous, and that if there was any law to punish him he should be punished. They agreed also that if after his recal[l] he went on to negotiate a Treaty within his instructions given to him in April last, that it would present a question of great responsibility and embarrassment whether I should send it to the Senate for ratification or not. I inferred from what Mr. Sevier said that he thought I would be bound to do so. Mr. Cass said it would be time enough to decide that question, if such a Treaty was made, when it was presented to me for my consideration. I told them that after the blood which had been shed and the money which had been expended since the date of Trist's instructions in April last, that, if it was an open question, I would not now approve the terms of the treaty which I then authorized. In this they both concurred with me.

MONDAY, *24th January, 1848.*— I received company as usual this morning. As soon as I could get clear of them I sent for Mr. Buchanan & informed him of the interview I had last night with Senators Sevier & Cass. I expressed to him my opinion that a letter should be addressed to Gen'l Butler directing him to inform the Mexican Government that Mr. Trist had been recalled & had no power to treat, and that he should no longer remain with the Head Quarters of the army. I told him to delay to have some decisive action, after we had received information of his unauthorized proceedings subsequent to his recal[l], would have the appearance of acquiescence on our part of what he might do. At my request Mr. Buchanan went to see the Secretary of War on the subject, who is sick at his House. He returned and informed me that Mr. Marcy was too ill to-day to be seen. Mr. Buchanan thought such a letter to Gen'l Butler would be proper if I had made up my mind before-hand to reject the Treaty, if one should be made. I told him that was a question which I could not decide in advance and before I saw the Treaty, though I was very indignant at Mr. Trist's conduct, and my present inclination would be to reject it. Mr. Buchanan expressed the opinion that it ought to be rejected, but said he would keep himself open to consider further of the subject. I saw Judge Mason and had a full conversation with him on the subject, and requested him, as the Secretary of War was too ill to be seen to-day, to prepare the draft of a letter to Gen'l Butler, such as I had mentioned to Mr. Buchanan. He promised to do so, and to submit it to

me for further consideration. The Conduct of Mr. Trist and Gen'l Scott, who seem to have entered into a conspiracy to embarrass the Government, gives me great anxiety. They have both proved themselves to be wholly unworthy of the positions which they hold, and I most heartily wish they were both out of Mexico.

After night Senator Allen and the Democratic members of the Ohio delegation in Congress, accompanied by Gov. Bartley [1] & several other gentlemen from Ohio, called in a body and requested me to appoint Col. Morgan [2] of Ohio, of the 15th Regt. of Infantry, to be a Brigadier Gen'l in place of Gen'l Hopping deceased. I received them courteously, but made them no promise.

About 8 O'Clock P. M. The Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of the Navy, Mr. McKay of N. C., & Mr. Geo. S. Houston of Alabama, the two latter members of the committee of Ways and Means of the Ho. Repts., called. Their object was to hold a consultation with me in regard to the finances. The subject was fully discussed, and resulted in the conclusion that the Secretary of the Navy could reduce his estimates to the amt. of $1,500,000 without prejudice to the service, and that the Democratic members of the committee of Ways & Means should move an amendment to the loan bill reported by the Whig majority of that committee, which amendment

[1] Mordecai Bartley, 1783–1870, Representative from Ohio 1823–1831, elected Governor in 1844.

[2] George W. Morgan, Colonel of the 2nd Ohio Volunteers, appointed Colonel of the 15th Infantry in 1847.

should embody the measure recommended in my annual Message & in the annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury. This was deemed necessary because under the Bill reported by the Whig majority of that committee it was not probable that the loan could be negotiated. If the Whig majority of the House should reject the measure of the administration and adopt one of their own which would not be effective, they would then have to bear the responsibility of the failure.

TUESDAY, *25th January, 1848.*— I was much engaged and declined to see company this morning. The Cabinet met at the usual hour. The Secretary of War is confined to his house by sickness. The atto. Gen'l called and informed me that he would be engaged in the Supreme Court to-day & could not attend the Cabinet. The P. M. Gen'l remained but a short time, when he was called off on official business. The Secretaries of State, Treasury, & the Navy were all who were present at the discussions to-day. I brought up the subject of the letter to Gen'l Butler in relation to Mr. Trist's conduct. Judge Mason read the draft of the letter which I had requested him to prepare on yesterday. Mr. Buchanan expressed the opinion that such a letter would be proper provided I had made up my mind to reject any Treaty which Mr. Trist might make, but that if I intended to submit the t[r]eaty, if made, to the Senate, or if that was an unsettled question in my mind, the letter might embarrass me and ought not to be sent. I replied that the present inclination of my mind would

be to reject the Treaty, but that I was not now prepared to decide that question. Mr. Walker concurred with Mr. Buchanan. Mr. Mason spoke hesitatingly, but inclined to send the letter. The subject of the terms of a Treaty which we could now accept was discussed at much length. The point of embarrassment was, whether, if Mr. Trist had made a Treaty and secured our ultimatum authorized in his instructions in April last, and that Treaty was ratified by Mexico, I ought to reject it or not. I repeated that if I was unimbarrassed I would not now approve such a Treaty, but expressed doubt what I ought to do if a Treaty was made in conformity to the instructions given in April. Mr. Buchanan repeated his impression in favour of rejecting it, but saw embarrassments attending that course, and said he would not now commit himself on the subject. Some modifications were suggested in the draft of the letter to Gen'l Butler prepared by Judge Mason. The Cabinet adjourned without coming to a definitive decision on the subject of the letter. I accompanied Judge Mason to the house of Mr. Marcy & saw him in his chamber. He was confined to his bed but was better. The subject was explained to him. He was in favour of sending the letter to Gen'l Butler, with some modifications of it which he suggested. I requested Judge Mason to make another draft of it this evening. Gov. Marcy condemned the conduct of Mr. Trist and Gen'l Scott, but expressed the decided opinion that if a Treaty was made and ratified by Mexico upon the terms of our ultimatum in April last, that I ought not to reject it,

but should send it to the Senate for ratification. Judge Mason expressed the same opinion.

After night Senator Hannegan called to inquire of me about the rumours of peace which were circulating in the City. I informed him of the actual state of things, and of the conduct of Trist & of Gen'l Scott and the possibility that a Treaty may have been negotiated by Trist. He was very indignant at their conduct & spoke in strong terms of condemnation of them. I told him what the ultimatum authorized in April was. He thought it would be very embarrassing for me to reject a Treaty made on that ultimatum, though he would not now make such an one if it was an open question. This was a regular evening for receiving company, but as I am to have a general reception or levee to-morrow, my porter was directed to receive no company to-night.

WEDNESDAY, *26th January, 1848.*— I saw company as usual this morning, and was so much occupied by office-seekers that I almost lost my temper, and was very unceremonious & absolute in rejecting their applications. To one or two of them I was compelled to be almost rude in order to shake them off my hands. At 12 O'Clock I closed my doors. Judge Mason called and left with me a modified draft of the proposed letter to Gen'l Butler in relation to Mr. Trist, which he informed me he had submitted to Mr. Marcy, who approved it. After he left I sent for Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Walker & read it to them. Mr. Buchanan adhered to his opinion of yesterday that the letter ought not to be sent.

Mr. Walker was of the same opinion, for a different reason than that assigned by Mr. Buchanan. Mr. Buchanan thought that if I should conclude to send any Treaty which Mr. Trist might make to the Senate, the letter would embarrass me. Mr. Walker thought if I should reject such a Treaty the letter would embarrass me. After a long discussion we adjourned to Mr. Marcy's House (who is still confined to his room by sickness). After reaching Mr. Marcy's House, Mr. Mason was sent for, and four members of the Cabinet being present, the modified letter prepared by Mr. Mason was read and fully discussed (I will preserve the original draft of the letter). The result was that Mr. Buchanan & Mr. Walker advised against sending it, Mr. Marcy and Mr. Mason advised in favour of sending it. Mr. Walker was not strenuous in his opposition, & Mr. Buchanan said that as it was my judgment that it should be sent he thought I ought to send it, though with his opinions he could not advise it. I then informed them that if we remained silent after the knowledge we had of Mr. Trist's conduct the public would construe our silence into an acquiescence of whatever he might do. I said to them on seperating that I would return to my office & send for Mr. Johnson and Mr. Clifford, & after consulting with them would decide. I did so. They called at my office at 6 O'Clock P. M., as did Mr. Mason and Mr. Walker. The letter was again read and fully considered, when Mr. Clifford and Mr. Johnson both advised in favour of sending the letter. Mr. Walker

said that if I determined to send in to the Senate a Treaty made upon the ultimatum of Mr. Trist's instructions in April last, the letter could not embarrass me. I then decided to send the letter. Judge Mason took it to the Secretary of War to have it copied & signed by him. It was so copied and signed and Mr. W. C. Whitthorne, a special bearer of despatches to Gen'l Butler, will leave in the Southern Boat on tomorrow morning. Mr. Whitthorne had been engaged to bear other despatches to Gen'l Butler, and had been detained by me until I should determine upon the sending of the letter, which had been the subject of anxious discussion for several days past (see this diary). This evening I held a levee or general drawing room. The East room and all the parlours were opened & brilliantly illuminated. The Marine band occupied the outer Hall. Hundreds of persons, ladies & gentlemen, attended. The evening was wet, but not withstanding that the parlours, including the East room, were all occupied, though not so much crowded as I have seen them on similar occasions.

THURSDAY, *27th January, 1848.*— Many persons called this morning. I closed my doors at 12 O'Clock. I saw public officers on business, and spent nearly the whole day after that hour alone and transacted much business. Many matters of business of minor importance had accumulated on my table and I availed myself of the opportunity to dispose of them. I was occupied until after 11 O'Clock

P. M. before I had my table cleared. I have not for many weeks had the current business on my table so well up as I have to-night.

FRIDAY, *28th January, 1848.*— My office was open as usual for the reception of company this morning. Many persons, members of Congress and others, called. My doors were closed at the usual hour, and I was occupied during the day in transacting public business with officers of the Government, and in attending to several minor matters which claimed my attention. I sent for the Secretaries of the Treasury and the Navy and saw them on public business.

This being reception evening a few persons, ladies & gentlemen, called. The number present was not so large as is usual on the evenings when my doors are open for the reception of company.

SATURDAY, *29th January, 1848.*— Col. Richard M. Johnson of Ky. called this morning. He is in fine health, and expressed his unqualified approbation of the policy of my administration. The Cabinet met at the usual hour, all the members present. Mr. Buchanan presented some matters of no great importance connected with our relations with China, in view of the instructions which he had prepared for Mr. Davis, U. S. Minister to China. The Secretary of War presented certain correspondence with Gen'l Taylor, which he had caused to be copied in answer to a call of the Senate, and the scope of the call and the correspondence necessary to be sent to the Senate were the subject of conversation. The

Secretary of the Navy called attention to a recent proceeding had in Louisiana by the agent of the U. S. for the protection of timber on the public lands against the settler claiming to be entitled to the right of pre-emption. It appears that the U. S. District Judge for La. had decided that the pre-emption act of 1841 was suspended in consequence of the war with Mexico. The provision suspending the law was undoubtedly intended to apply exclusively to the distribution part of the act of 1841, in case the U. S. should be involved in a foreign War, and yet by its letter it is doubtful whether the clause does not also suspend the pre-emption right of settlers on the public lands. There was some division of opinion upon this point. Without deciding it, it was determined that the Secretary of the Navy should instruct the timber agent in Louisiana to abandon all similar prosecutions, and that Congress should be called on to pass an explanatory act. My attention was not called to the subject until yesterday, when Senator Downes and Mr. Harmanson [1] of La. called to see me on the subject. Many pre-emptions have been granted since the existing war with Mexico was commenced, which, if the decision of the Court in Louisiana be correct, will be void. This would produce great injury to settlers on the public lands, and, doubts having arisen, it is important that Congress should act promptly on the subject.

After night Senators Bagby of Al. & Turney of Tenn. called. They said they had come to urge me

[1] John H. Harmanson, 1803–1850, Representative from Louisiana 1845–1850.

not to commit myself irrevocably against serving a second term in the Presidential office if the party should find it to be necessary to re-nominate me, as they believed they would, for a second term. I told them that my decision had been long since made, and had been often declared, that I would voluntarily retire at the close of my present term, and that this decision I could not change. I assured them that I had no desire to continue beyond the present term, and that I looked forward to the period of my retirement with sincere pleasure. They said they had no doubt of that, but that the condition of the country was such, and the divisions among the Democratic party, as between the present aspirants for the nomination, that it might become indispensible to re-nominate me as the only means of restoring harmony, and of preserving harmony in the next election, and that it might become my duty to yield. They said all they wished me to do was to cease making the declaration, as I was in the habit of doing to all who conversed with me on the subject, that I would under no circumstances consent to be a candidate for re-election. They urged that when the Democratic National convention met at Baltimore they might be compelled to re-nominate me without consulting my wishes, & in that case it would be my solemn duty to yield to their wishes. They urged also the condition of the country being engaged in a Foreign war, and their conviction that I would be the strongest man of the party. I still adhered to my often expressed determination to retire at the close of my present term. A few days ago Senator Rusk of Texas called

and held a similar conversation with me. Many members of Congress have done the same thing during the present session. To all of them I have given the same answer, & repeated my sincere desire to retire & my fixed purpose to do so. I cannot be mistaken, from the evidences I have, in the fact that the growing opinion in Congress is that the Democratic party must insist upon running me a second time without consulting my individual wishes on the subject. I sincerely hope that the Democratic party may yet be able to unite & harmonize on some other candidate.

SUNDAY, *30th January, 1848.*— Mrs. Polk and myself attended the First Presbyterian church today. Mrs. Walker and her little girl accompanied us. The Rev. Mr. Ballentine, the new Pastor of the church, performed service last sabbath and to-day. He is not a great man, but, I would judge, is a pious man and of good education.

MONDAY, *31st January, 1848.*— Many persons called this morning, most of whom were seeking office. I continue to be greatly annoyed by office-seekers. I give them no encouragement, and yet they continue to importune me daily. I prepared and sent to the Senate two short messages in answer to Resolutions of that body requesting information connected with the Mexican War. I saw the Secretary of State and several other public officers on official business. I disposed of business on my table as usual.

TUESDAY, *1st February, 1848.*— Several persons called this morning. The Cabinet met at the usual hour, all the members present. My answer to the Resolution of the Senate calling for the correspondence between Trist & the Mexican commissioners after the battles of Contreras and Cherubusco, was considered. It was resolved to send to the Senate all the correspondence between the commissioners of the two Governments, and also an extract from a despatch of Trist of the 4th of September, 1847, and that I should state my disapproval of his invitation to the Mexican commissioners to submit a proposition to make the Nueces the boundary. There was not time to have the copies of the correspondence completed in time to send the message to the Senate to-day. I had a conversation with the Secretary of the Treasury in relation to the finances & the efforts of the Whig party in Congress to produce a panic in the country so as to affect the public credit, and thereby prevent a loan & embarrass the Treasury. The truth is that the Whig party and leading presses, having failed to defeat the Government in the prosecution of the war by the "aid & comfort," they have given to Mexico by their unpatriotic sentiments, are now insidiously attempting to produce a panic in the money market and thereby, if possible, to break down the Treasury, and thus compel the inglorious withdrawal of our army from Mexico. Means to counteract these assaults upon the Treasury were considered. Some other subjects of minor importance were considered. I gave a dinner party to-day. Near forty persons, chiefly members of Congress &

their families, were present. Among others of the party were Col. Richard M. Johnson of Ky., Mr. Andrew Ewing of Nashville, Tennessee, and Mr. Kellogg, a distinguished artist, who painted my portrait at Nashville in 1840, were present. Mr. Kellogg at the time alluded to (1840) painted the portrait of Gen'l Jackson, and has spent several years since that time in Italy.

WEDNESDAY, *2nd February, 1848.*— A number of members of Congress called this morning. At 11 O'Clock the Board of Managers of the Washington Monument Society called according to a previous arrangement, & I accompanied them to the open public ground south of the President's House, and selected the site for the "Washington Monument." The site selected lies on the Bank of the Potomac South of the canal & West of 15th Street, embracing about 30 acres of land. The members of the Board who called and accompanied me to the ground were Messrs. Bent,[1] Monroe,[2] Force,[3] Watterson,[4] & Gen'l Henderson. They had agreed among themselves upon the site selected, & I gave my assent.

I prepared & sent to the Senate a message[5] in answer to their call for the correspondence relating

[1] William Brent.

[2] Thomas Munroe.

[3] Peter Force, editor of Force's *Tracts.*

[4] George Watterston.

[5] Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents,* IV, 569. For the correspondence in question see *S. Ex. Doc.* 20, 30 Cong. 1 Sess. IV.

to the negotiation between the U. S. commissioner & the commissioners of Mexico, which took place after the battles of Contreras & Cherubusco in August & September last. I saw public officers on business & transacted business in my office as usual. After night Mr. Thomas of Tennessee of the Ho. Repts. and Senator Allen of Ohio called. With each of them I had a long conversation on public affairs, and with Senator Allen especially in reference to the Mexican War, and the unpardonable conduct of Mr. Trist and Gen'l Scott, which he condemned, as I did, in unqualified terms.

The Secretary of War sent to me this afternoon the proceedings of the General Court Martial in the case of Lieut. Col. J. C. Fremont. The record is very voluminous. The Court find him guilty of all the charges & sentence him to be dismissed the service. A majority of the Court recommend him to the Executive clemency.

THURSDAY, *3rd February, 1848.*— My office was filled with visitors, members of Congress and others, as usual to-day until 12 O'Clock M., when I closed my doors. I sent for the Secretary of the Treasury, to consult him in relation to a call made by Resolution of the Senate on the 1st Instant on the subject of contributions levied in the form of duties in the ports of Mexico on merchandise imported at such ports by American citizens. I sent also for the attorney General and consulted him on the same subject. I was preparing a message in reply to the Resolution, which involved a question of public law

which required examination. I was engaged in my office as usual to-day. Nothing of much interest occurred.

FRIDAY, *4th February, 1848.*— I spent the morning as usual in receiving company, hearing their applications for office, and transacting business with them. I closed my doors at 12 O'Clock. Shortly afterwards I was informed by my porter that the Hon. Henry Clay of Kentucky, who was the opposing candidate for the Presidency when I was chosen, had called to see me, and that he was in the parlour below stairs. I proceeded at once to the parlour and received him with all the politeness and courtesy of which I was master. I had a pleasant conversation with him. He apologized for not having called on me earlier. He had been in the City several weeks, but had been very much occupied by his friends. He said he intertained no feelings towards me of an unkind character. I at once replied that I entertained none such towards him, & that I was glad to see him, and added that there was no citizen of the U. S. whom I would be more gratified to see in my parlour than himself. Mrs. Polk, for whom he had also enquired, came into the parlour. Mr. Clay continued & intimated that differences in political opinion had seperated us, & although he had no feelings which would have prevented him from calling, he was not certain how I might feel, until he saw a common personal friend (Judge Catron) on yesterday, and after conversing with him he had determined to call very soon. I re-

peated that I was gratified that he had done so. He continued the pleasant conversation with Mrs. Polk and myself, and after remaining near half an hour he left. As he was leaving he remarked to Mrs. Polk in a very pleasant manner that he would visit her drawing room soon, that he had heard a general approbation expressed of her administration, but that he believed there was some difference of opinion about her husband's administration. She replied pleasantly that she was happy to hear from him that her administration was approved and added, if a political opponent of my husband is to succeed him I have always said I prefer you, Mr. Clay, and in that event I shall be most happy to surrender the White House to you. There was a hearty laugh, and he left in an excellent humour. I transacted business in my office as usual to-day. This being reception evening a large number of gentlemen, chiefly strangers, & a few ladies called.

SATURDAY, *5th February, 1848.*— Several members of Congress called before the hour of meeting of the Cabinet this morning. The Cabinet met at the usual hour, all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury, who, I learn, is unable to leave his house to-day in consequence of indisposition. His health is quite precarious & feeble. Mr. Buchanan, who had previously consulted me on the subject and to whom I had given full powers to conclude a commercial Treaty with the Minister of Peru, submitted the draft of a Treaty which he proposed to conclude with that Minister. It was ap-

proved by the Cabinet, and will probably be signed by the parties on Monday next. Several minor matters were considered & disposed of. Mr. Buchanan inquired what the finding & sentence of the General Court Martial in the case of Lieut. Col. J. C. Fremont was. I turned to the record & read the finding & the sentence. The Court find him guilty of all the charges & specifications preferred against him, and sentence him to be dismissed the service. A majority of the Court, including the President of the Court, recommend him to the Executive clemency. I informed the Cabinet that I would desire to have their advice as to my action on the case, but would not ask that it should be formally given to-day: but, if any of them were prepared with any suggestions or opinions, that I would be pleased to hear them. Mr. Buchanan remarked that though he did not doubt the correctness of the finding of the Court, he would dislike to see him dismissed the service altogether, under all the circumstances of the case, as far as he could understand them without having read the testimony. The other members of the Cabinet, except the Sec. of War, expressed similar opinions. The Secretary thought it would not do to disapprove the finding and sentence, but intimated that I might approve both, and then, if I thought it right, I might pardon him. A legal question arose & was discussed, whether I had the power to mitigate the sentence of dismissal from the service, and the punishment of suspension from rank and command for a specified term of time. This point was discussed, and was considered a doubtful question. The Cabinet, I

thought, inclined to this course, if I possessed the clear power to adopt it. No definite decision was made on the case. Indeed, I did not bring up the case for decision to-day, as I have not yet finished reading the record of proceedings, but have a general understanding of the principle points involved. Some other matters were considered and the Cabinet adjourned at 3½ O'Clock P. M.

SUNDAY, *6th February, 1848.*— Mrs. Polk and myself attended divine worship to-day in the Hall of the Ho. Repts. The Rev. Mr. Matthews[1] of New York preached. Judge Catron of the Supreme Court of the U. S., who has been confined to his chamber for some time by indisposition, was sufficiently recovered to take a family dinner with me to-day.

MONDAY, *7th February, 1848.*— Saw company as usual this morning. Many persons, members of Congress and others, called. I received letters from the City of Mexico last night dated as late as the 10th ult., but they contained no information in relation to the rumoured negotiations between Mr. Trist and the Mexican Government. I sent for the Secretary of War to enquire if any despatches had been received by him, and was informed by him that none had come to hand. Mr. Buchanan called while Mr. Marcy was with me. He had received

[1] Dr. Matthews, Ex-Chancellor of the University of New York. He delivered a series of discourses in the Hall of the House of Representatives on the connection between religion and learning.

no dispatches from Mr. Trist. He had, however, received a private letter dated at the City of Mexico, Jan'y 12th, '48, from Mr. Alexander Attocha. It was written in French and Mr. Buchanan read it to Mr. Marcy and myself. Attocha is a great scoundrel, and his letter contained the infamous suggestion that he should be furnished with money to bribe the Mexican Congress to induce them to ratify a Treaty of peace, though he does not state whether a Treaty had been signed by Mr. Trist or not. He states that he had been informed that Mr. Trist had said that he had such a fund, and says he had not employed the proper person to use [it]. If Mr. Trist even made such a statement, it was utterly false. He had no fund for any such purpose. No appropriation of the kind had been made, and no such idea ever entered my head. After Mr. Trist's late infamous conduct, I should, however, not be surprised to hear anything that is base of him. Attocha in his letter intimates that Gen'l Scott was in the scheme with Mr. Trist, and that he had been cheated by Santa Anna when he agreed to the armistice. Mr. Buchanan took the letter away with him. It is most strange that neither Gen'l Scott or Trist has written a line to the Government by the train that left Mexico on the 13th of January, and which brought these private letters. That they did not write was undoubtedly from design. Mr. Trist after the receipt of his recal[l] is acting in violation of his orders & in open defiance of the Government. That there is a conspiracy between Scott & himself to put the Government at defiance & make a Treaty of some sort, I

have as [but] little doubt. A few days more will, I trust, develope what they have been doing. I disposed of business on my table as usual. After night Senator Turney of Ten., Mr. Thomas of Ten., and Gen'l Houston of Al. called.

Tuesday, *8th February, 1848.*— Though this was Cabinet day I could not well avoid seeing members of Congress who called. All who did call were upon the important business of seeking office for their constituents, or the throng of persons who flock to Washington to get office instead of going to work and making a living by honest industry. I am obliged to be civil and patient with members of Congress & others when they call on this business. Much of my time is taken up in this way and I am sometimes exceedingly worried by it. They apply to me not only for offices that exist, but for those which are expected to be created. If a Bill is introduced into Congress proposing to create an office, it brings upon me a crowd of applicants with masses of papers recommending them. It is in vain that I repeat a dozen times in a day that no such offices exist by law. I am compelled to have my time taken up in listening to their importunities. A strong illustration of this is afforded at this session of Congress. Bills are before Congress to create a number of assistant pursers in the Navy; to increase the military force; to increase the number of Clerks; and to institute diplomatic relations with Rome & some of the South American States. The consequence is that a great crowd of persons have rushed to Wash-

ington, have enlisted members of Congress in their behalf, and whenever my doors are opened I am besieged by them, and can do no business unless I lock my doors and refuse admittance to any. A large proportion of those who thus trouble me are unworthy, & unfit for the places they seek, and many of them are mere loafers who are too lazy to work and wish to be supported by the public. If an officer is taken ill application is made for his office, *if he should die.* A case of this kind (one out of many which have occurred since I have been President) has occurred within a few days. The Marshall of this District is reported to be confined to his house by sickness, & I have had half a dozen applications for his place, *if he should die.* Four members of Congress waited on me this morning in behalf of one [of] these applicants. I am often disgusted with such scenes.

The Cabinet met at the usual hour. I submitted the draft of a message which I had prepared in answer to a Resolution of the Senate, calling for information upon the subject of duties levied & collected as military contributions on vessels & cargoes belonging to citizens of the U. S. in the ports of Mexico in our military occupation. It was approved. Some additional suggestions were made & paragraphs prepared by Mr. Buchanan & Judge Mason, which I took for consideration. No subject of importance was considered to-day. The Cabinet adjourned about the usual hour. All the members were present except the Secretary of the Treasury, who was detained by indisposition.

This was reception evening. An unusually large number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, attended. The parlours were very much crowded.

Hon. C. J. Ingersoll called to-night before the company assembled & had a conversation with me upon public affairs. Judge Mason was present.

WEDNESDAY, *9th February, 1848.*— I passed through my usual conflict with the office-seekers to-day (see this diary of yesterday). I had no offices to bestow, and yet I was compelled to have my time taken up by them. I was glad when the hour of 12 O'Clock arrived, and I closed my doors.

I disposed of business on my table but nothing important transpired. I finished my message in answer to the Resolution of the Senate, but had not time to have it copied to send in to-day (see yesterday's diary).

I had a dinner party of about 20 persons to-day, composed in part of members of Congress and in part of strangers in the City. Col. Burnett,[1] U. S. army, who had been wounded in Mexico, & his wife were of the party.

THURSDAY, *10th February, 1848.*— I saw company as usual until 12 O'Clock to-day. I sent my message,[2] which I finished on yesterday, to the Senate to-day. I sent also a message [3] to the Ho. Repts.

[1] Ward Benjamin Burnett, Captain of the 2nd New York Volunteers; he was severely wounded in the battle of Cherubusco, August 20, 1847.

[2] Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents,* IV, 570.

[3] *Ibid,* IV, 572.

in answer to a Resolution of that body. I disposed of business on my table, and was occupied several hours in reading the Record of proceedings of the General Court Martial in the case of Lieut. Col. Fremont. Nothing important occurred to-day. One incident occurred which I note in reference to what I recorded in this diary of the 8th Inst. After my office had been closed my porter announced to me that a member of Congress was without, who wished to see me on important business. I directed him to be shown in. He brought a man with him, and [the] important business was to seek an office for him. I had no office to bestow, but more than half an hour of my time was occupied in hearing his story. I am often annoyed in this way. I became impatient and perhaps a little petulant. The member and his man both left, as I thought, dissatisfied.

About dark Senator Cass called. He was concerned at the statements of a letter writer from Washington in the N. York *Herald,* signing himself Galvienses, said to be a man named Nugent, derogatory to him, Gen'l C., as chairman of the military committee of the Senate. This writer has for some time past been abusing and misrepresenting me as well as Gen'l C., & falsely stating that I was dissatisfied with Gen'l C. as chairman of the military committee. This letter writer is said to be a daily visitor at the State Department, and from this circumstance it is inferred that his course is not disapproved, but encouraged, by Mr. Buchanan. I expressed no opinion upon this point to Gen'l C. I am satisfied, however, that this writer is prompted from some source

to disparage me, probably from the fear that from the conflict between the aspirants to succeed me, the Democratic party might be unable to agree, and might ultimately fall back and require me to run. I am no candidate, but shall retire voluntarily at the end of my term, and those who entertain fear that I may be in their way may cease to be troubled on the subject. I cannot but suspect, however, that under the influence of such fears there is an object in some quarters to have me assailed by this hireling letter-writer and others. Should I obtain proof of this I will expose it. Gen'l Cass told me that Senators Hannegan and Atchison had to-day called him out of the Senate chamber & told him they had heard that I had expressed dissatisfaction with him as chairman of the military committee, & that I had said I relied upon Senator Houston of Texas to manage the military measures of the administration in the Senate. I told [him] it was false. He said he knew it was, & had told them so. I asked him from whom they had heard such an absurd story. He replied that he did not know, but that he had told them he knew it was false. I told him he could tell them it was false upon my authority. An allusion was made to his position and Mr. Buchanan's as candidates for the nomination for the Presidency. I took the occasion to say that I took no part in the selection of a candidate to succeed me, which my political frends might make, but that I would support the nominee of the Democratic national convention, whoever he might be. He said he had understood that to be my position, & that he was satisfied with it. The truth is

that Gen'l C. has given to my administration an honest and hearty support, and if he is the nominee I will support him with great pleasure. There is no other whom I would support with more pleasure.

FRIDAY, *11th February, 1848.*— I saw company as usual to-day until 12 O'Clock. Many persons called, & among them many office seekers. I devoted several hours in reading the proceeding of the court martial in Lieut. Col. Fremont's case. I disposed of business on my table as usual. Nothing of much interest transpired to-day.

This being reception evening a large number of persons, ladies and gentlemen, attended.

SATURDAY, *12th February, 1848.*— This morning Herschel V. Johnson,[1] the recently appointed Senator from Georgia in place of Senator Colquitt resigned, called. He reached Washington last evening. The Cabinet met at the usual hour; all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury, who is confined at his house by indisposition. The case of Lieut. Col. Fremont, who has been recently tried by a Court martial and sentenced " to be dismissed the service," was the subject of consideration to-day. A part of the proceedings were read. The Cabinet all advised that he should not be dismissed, but there was much difficulty in arriving at a satisfactory conclusion whether, in remitting the

[1] Herschel V. Johnson, 1812–1880, Senator from Georgia 1848–1849, Governor 1853–1857, Vice Presidential candidate of the Democratic party on the Douglas ticket in 1860.

sentence of the Court, I should approve or disapprove the finding of the Court. He had been found guilty of, 1st, mutiny, 2nd, disobedience of orders, & 3rd, of conduct prejudicial to the public service. I had doubts, & so had the Cabinet, whether the facts as proved amounted to the legal definition of mutiny. That he had been guilty of disobedience of orders all agreed. After much discussion a decision of the case was postponed, but as it was absolutely necessary to decide it soon, I requested the Cabinet to meet at my office at 8 O'Clock to-morrow night.

After night Gen'l Houston of Al. of the Ho. Repts. called and spent two hours with me in conversing about public affairs. He is an excellent man, a sound democrat, & a good personal & political friend of mine.

SUNDAY, *13th February, 1848.*— Mrs. Polk and myself attended the Rev. Dr. Laurie's church (Presbyterian) to-day.

In pursuance of the understanding on yesterday, a special meeting of the Cabinet took place at 8 O'Clock this evening; all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury, who is confined to his house by indisposition. The case of Lieut. Col. Fremont was resumed. The Atto. Gen'l read from many authorities which he had collected to show what acts constituted mutiny. The Secretary of War also read some authorities on the same subject. The Secretary of the [?] returned to his office and brought an authority which he had examined. Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Clifford were clear that the

facts proved in this case were not mutiny. The Secretary of War doubted whether some of the specifications upon which Lieut. Col. Fremont had been committed [convicted] amounted to "mutiny." Mr. Johnson and Mr. Mason inclined to the opinion that they did not amount to mutiny. All agreed that he had been guilty of disobedience of orders; and conduct to the prejudice of good order & military discipline. There were, however, mitigating circumstances in the case. Mr. Buchanan & Mr. Clifford advised that I should disapprove the sentence of dismissal from the service upon the ground that it was too severe. Mr. Marcy, Mr. Mason, & Mr. Johnson advised that I should approve the sentence & remit the penalty. Some sharp remarks were made, in the course of the discussion, between Mr. Buchanan & Mr. Marcy. In speaking of Gen'l Kearney, who preferred the charges, Mr. Buchanan used the word pusalimity [pusillanimity] as applied to him, if he believed he had the authority, he yielded it to Com. Stockton & did not enforce it. To this Mr. Marcy took exception and said that Gen'l Kearney had no forces to command obedience to his orders & had acted with great forbearance & propriety. After hearing the discussion I gave my opinion. It was that I was not satisfied that the proof in the case constituted "mutiny," that I thought the proof established disobedience of orders & conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline; & that I ought to approve the sentence, but that under all the circumstances of the case & in consideration of the recommendation of a ma-

jority of the Court, I ought to remit the penalty and restore Lieut. Col. Fremont to duty. At a late hour the Cabinet retired.

MONDAY, *14th February, 1848.*— An unusual number of persons, members of Congress & others, called. I closed my office at 12 O'Clock and devoted the greater part of the remainder of the day to a further examination of the record of the proceedings of the Court Martial in Lieut. Col. Fremont's case. The record embraces many hundred pages. I prepared my opinion & decision [in] the case, which I submitted to Mr. Mason & Mr. Clifford, who called at my request. I will submit it to the Cabinet on to-morrow. I disposed of some other business on my table to-day.

After night Senator Houston of Texas called & conversed an hour with me about public affairs.

TUESDAY, *15th February, 1848.*— I issued orders that I would see no company this morning, but several members of Congress called and I was constrained to see them or give them offense. I directed them to be shown in, and their business was to solicit office for some loafers who had come to the City from their districts. The Cabinet met at the usual hour; all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of War, both of whom were detained at their houses by indisposition. I read to the Cabinet the decision[1] I had made in Lieut. Col. Fremont's case. Some suggestions of a

[1] *S. Ex. Doc.* 33, 30 Cong. 1 Sess. V.

verbal character, but not affecting substance, were made by Mr. Buchanan, to which I assented. Some other subjects of minor importance were considered. After dinner I called at the House of the Secretary of War and found him confined to his chamber. I read to him the decision I had prepared in Lieut. Col. Fremont's case, and he approved it.

This was reception evening. A large number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called. After night the Hon. Charles J. Ingersoll called and, after adverting to several public subjects, introduced what I have no doubt was the object of his visit. He said he had been rejected by the Senate as minister to France at the close of the last Session of Congress by accident, that injustice had been done him, and he thought the injury could only be repaired by his nomination to the same office, and added that it was a point of honour with him. I told him Mr. Rush had been appointed, and I saw no reason why I should recal[l] him and that I could not do so without dishonouring him. He said Mr. Rush was poor and could not support himself at Paris on his salary, and he thought when his outfit was exhausted, as it would be at the end of his first year, he would be willing to return. I told him I could not recal[l] him or intimate to him that I wished him to return. He then said he would not have the place unless he returned voluntarily. He intimated that if the proposed mission to Rome was made a full mission it would be agreeable to him. I made him no promise. He spoke of his deep mortification at his rejection by the Senate as minister to France & of the indiscreet letter, as he

characterized it, which he had written to me on the subject last spring (see this diary of that period). To this I made no reply, except that I thought the Senate had done him a wrong by rejecting him. It struck me very strangely that after the correspondence which had taken place between us on the subject (which I have preserved) that he should ever have introduced the subject to me again.

WEDNESDAY, *16th February, 1848.*— An unusually large number of persons, members of Congress and others, called this morning, but, what is rarely the case, but few of them were seeking office. I copied my decision in the blank pages attached to the record of proceedings of the Court martial in the case of Lieut. Col. Fremont, & the Secretary of War being confined to his house by indisposition, I sent for the Secretary of the Navy and Lieut. Col. Cooper, ass't Adj't Gen'l & read it to them. I then sent for Mr. Campbell, the chief clerk of the War Dept., & delivered it to him with directions to deliver it to the Adj't Gen'l to have my decision carried into effect. The decision in this case has been a painful and a responsible duty. I have performed [it] with the best lights before me, and am satisfied with what I have done. My decision is appended to the record of proceedings of the Court martial and will speak for itself. The Chief Clerk of the War Department brought to me to-day a letter received from Maj'r Gen'l Pillow, dated at the City of Mexico on the 18th of January, in answer to a letter of the Secretary of War addressed to him in re-

lation to certain proceedings of Gen'l Scott & Mr. Trist at Puebla in July last, covering an attempt to use money, without any authority or sanction of the Government, to bribe the authorities in Mexico to procure a peace. This letter discloses some astounding facts in relation to that infamous transaction, and must lead to a further investigation. It is most remarkable that nothing on the subject has been received from Gen'l Scott. The letter of the Secretary of War to Gen'l Pillow was sent to him through Gen'l Scott.

I had an interesting Dinner party to-day. Near 40 persons, ladies & gentlemen, were present. The Chief guest was the Hon. Henry Clay of Ky., who was the opposing candidate for the Presidency when I was chosen in 1844. The dinner party was composed of about an equal number of each of the political parties. Without enumerating all who were present, the following may be named, *viz.,* Senators Berrien [1] & Johnson of Georgia; Senators Dayton [2] of N. Jersey & Cameron of Penn.; Hannegan, Indiana, Representatives Morehead, Ky., Dickson,[3] Ct., Murphy, N. Y., McLane, Del., Burt, S. C., Gayle, Al., Tallmadge, N. Y., Nichol,[4] N. Y., Williams, Maine, Brown,[5] Miss., Meade, Va., Marsh,

[1] John Macpherson Berrien, 1781–1856, Senator from Georgia 1824–1829, and 1840–1852.

[2] William Lewis Dayton, Senator from New Jersey 1842–1851.

[3] James Dixon, 1814–1873, Representative from Connecticut 1845–1849, Senator 1857–1869.

[4] Henry Nicoll, Representative from New York 1847–1849.

[5] Albert Gallatin Brown, 1813–1880, Representative from Mississippi 1839–1841, and 1848–1853, Senator 1853–1861.

Vt. There were also present Hon. George Evans of Maine, Hon. Daniel Jenifer of Md., Judge Catron of the Supreme Court, Judge Patton & Mr. McCandles of Penn., Mr. O. Sullivan [O'Sullivan,] of N. Y., Thompson, N. Jersey. There were also eight or ten ladies. The Party was an exceedingly pleasant [one], & I was much gratified to have it in my power to pay this mark of respect to Mr. Clay.

THURSDAY, *17th February, 1848.*— A large number of persons called this morning; among them many members of Congress. It was the same scene of office seeking which I have to endure every day. About 12 O'Clock Madame Iturbide, the widow of the former Emperor[1] of Mexico of that name called. I saw her in the parlour. She was accompanied by Miss White, the niece of the late Mrs. Gen'l Van Ness of this City. Madame Iturbide did not speak English, & Miss White interpreted for her. Her business was to see me on the subject of her pension from the Mexican Government, which had been granted to her on the death of her husband, and of which, in consequence of the existing war, she had been deprived. Her object was to have it reserved and paid to her out of the military contributions levied by our forces in Mexico. I gave her

[1] Augustin de Iturbide, 1783–1824; he made himself Emperor of Mexico in 1822 but was forced to give way before the movement for a republic in 1823. He was shot by order of the Mexican government in 1824 for disregarding an order not to return within the limits of the Republic. His family established itself in Philadelphia, where the ex-Empress died in 1861.

no distinct answer, but told her I would see the Secretary of State on the subject & requested her to call on him on to-morrow. I do not see how I can grant her request. Upon the death of her husband she left Mexico and has been residing for the last 20 years near Philadelphia, and has received her annual pension from Mexico during that period, until the breaking out of the present war, by which she has been deprived of it. She is an interesting person. One of her sons was a Major in the Mexican army, was recently taken prisoner, & [is] now in the U. S. on his parole of honour.

I transacted much business on my table to-day. I called on the Sec. of War at his house. He is still sick, but is much better, and will, I hope, be able to resume the duties of his office in a day or two. I saw the Secretary of State on business. After night the Hon. Arnold Plumer, formerly a member of Congress from Penn., called & spent an hour with me.

FRIDAY, *18th February, 1848.*— Saw company this morning as usual, and on the usual business, seeking office. The importunities for office have become so numerous and so unceasing that I at once form an unfavourable opinion of any man who enters my office & makes personal application to me. The members of Congress annoy me excessively with applications for their constituents and friends, many of whom are loafers and are wholly unworthy. About 2 O'Clock P. M. Mr. Buchanan called and brought with him a Telegraphic despatch which he

had just received, dated at Charleston, S. C., to-day. It was in cipher. The figures had been confused in the transmission and there was great difficulty in deciphering it. As well as it could be made out it was from Mr. Trist, though his name was not signed to it, announcing that he had arrived at Charleston from Mexico, with a Treaty which had been signed and ratified. It is not certain that this is the precise substance but it is the best that can be made of the cipher. I submitted the letter of Maj'r Gen'l Pillow, addressed to the Secretary of War, to the perusal of Mr. Buchanan to-day (see this diary of the 16th Inst.). I transacted much business on my table to-day. This being reception evening, many persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

SATURDAY, *19th February, 1848.*— Before the hour of meeting of the Cabinet this morning, Senator Ashley of Ar., and the Hon. Mr. Rockwell of the Ho. Repts. from Connecticut, called and informed me that they were a committee to invite me to attend the birth-night ball on the 22nd of February Instant. I informed them that it would give me pleasure to attend. It has been usual for the President to attend the Ball on this anniversary of the birth of Washington. The Cabinet met at the usual hour; all present except the Secretary of the Treasury & Secretary of War, who are indisposed. Nothing of much importance was considered to-day. After a short sitting I rode in my carriage, accompanied by Mr. Buchanan, to Mr. Walker's house and saw him on business. From Mr. Walker's we

rode to Mr. Marcy's house and saw him on business. I found them both convalescent and hope they will be able in a short time to attend their respective Departments, where they are much needed. After night a messenger arrived from Mexico bearing despatches from the army, and a Treaty of peace entered into on the 2nd Inst. by Mr. Trist with mexican plenipotentiaries appointed for that purpose. This messenger was Mr. Freanor, who has been with the army for some time in the capacity of a correspondent of the New Orleans *Delta,* over the signature of Mustang. About 9 O'Clock Mr. Buchanan called with the Treaty. He read it. Mr. Trist was recalled in October last, but chose to remain in Mexico and continue the negotiation. The terms of the Treaty are within his instructions which he took out in April last, upon the important question of boundary and limits. There are many provisions in it which will require more careful examination than a single reading will afford. Mr. Trist has acted very badly, as I have heretofore noted in this diary, but notwithstanding this, if on further examination the Treaty is one that can be accepted, it should not be rejected on account of his bad conduct. Mr. Buchanan left the Treaty with me. The same messenger (Mr. Freanor) who brought the Treaty was the bearer of despatches from Gen'l Scott. They are not important, except upon one point. One of his despatches is in answer to the letter of enquiry addressed to him in December, in relation to an alledged meeting of General officers at Puebla in July last, which had been published in certain newspapers

in the U. S. & which purported to give an account of an arrangement to pay money to Santa Anna to induce him to make a Treaty. Gen'l Scott's answer is evasive, and leaves the irresistible inference that such a transaction took place and that it will not bear the light. Whatever it was it was wholly unauthorized, and probably led to the fatal armistice in August which enabled the enemy to re-inforce himself, and cost so many valuable lives in taking the City of Mexico. It must be further investigated. No transaction of this or any other kind should be permitted to take place in the army and be concealed from the Government. If it was confidential in Gen'l Scott's judgment, it should not be so to the Government.

SUNDAY, *20th February, 1848.*— The treaty with Mexico received last night was of so much importance that I deemed it a public duty to give it a critical examination to-day and I did so. Mr. Buchanan also examined it and made notes of its several articles. Mr. Mason, Mr. Johnson, and Mr. Clifford also read it, or rather it was read by one of them in the presence of the others. Much conversation was had on the subject. I deemed prompt action upon it so indispensible that I called a special meeting of the Cabinet for to-night at 7 O'Clock and sent my Private Secretary, Col. Walker, to see Mr. Walker & Mr. Marcy, to invite them, if they were able, to attend. At the appointed hour (7 O'Clock) all the members of the Cabinet were present. The Treaty was again read, and the question to be

decided was stated, *viz.,* whether the Treaty should be rejected by me or sent to the Senate for ratification. A free discussion ensued. I took the advice of the Cabinet seperately and individually. Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Walker advised that I should reject it. Mr. Mason, Mr. Marcy, Mr. Johnson, and Mr. Clifford advised that I should accept it and send it for ratification to the Senate. All agreed if it was sent to the Senate it should be with a recommendation that the 10th article, which related to grants of land in Texas, and in the territories proposed to be ceded to the U. S., should be rejected. I reserved my opinion and requested the Cabinet to meet again at 12 O'Clock on to-morrow. All condemned Mr. Trist's disregard of the orders of his Government, to return to the U. S. when he was recalled.

MONDAY, *21st February, 1848.*— I saw no company this morning. At 12 O'Clock the Cabinet met; all the members present. I made known my decision upon the Mexican Treaty, which was that under all the circumstances of the case, I would submit it [to] the Senate for ratification, with a recommendation to strike out the 10th article. I assigned my reasons for my decision. They were, briefly, that the treaty conformed on the main question of limits & boundary to the instructions given to Mr. Trist in April last; and that though, if the treaty was now to be made, I should demand more territory, perhaps to make the Sierra Madra the line, yet it was doubtful whether this could be ever obtained by the con-

sent of Mexico. I looked, too, to the consequences of its rejection. A majority of one branch of Congress is opposed to my administration; they have falsely charged that the war was brought on and is continued by me with a view to the conquest of Mexico; and if I were now to reject a Treaty made upon my own terms, as authorized in April last, with the unanimous approbation of the Cabinet, the probability is that Congress would not grant either men or money to prosecute the war. Should this be the result, the army now in Mexico would be constantly wasting and diminishing in numbers, and I might at last be compelled to withdraw them, and thus loose the two Provinces of New Mexico & Upper California, which were ceded to the U. S. by this Treaty. Should the opponents of my administration succeed in carrying the next Presidential election, the great probability is that the country would loose all the advantages secured by this Treaty. I adverted to the immense value of Upper California; and concluded by saying that if I were now to reject my own terms, as offered in April last, I did not see how it was possible for my administration to be sustained. Mr. Buchanan repeated his objections to the Treaty. He wanted more territory, and would not be content with less than the line of the Sierra Madre, in addition to the Provinces secured in this Treaty. He admitted that the fact that Mr. Trist had been recalled before he signed the Treaty ought to have no influence upon the decision to be made. I deemed it to be my duty to remind Mr. Buchanan of his total change of opinion and position on the sub-

ject. I told him that I remembered well that at a Cabinet meeting which took place on the night of the day on which war was declared (13th of May, 1846) or about that time, he had been opposed to acquiring any Mexican territory. I told him that at that meeting he had prepared and read in Cabinet a circular which he proposed to address, as Secretary of State, to our ministers and consuls abroad, authorizing them to inform the Governments at which they were accredited, that we did not desire or intend to acquire any Mexican territory, that our only desire or object was to protect Texas and secure indemnity to our injured claimants (see this diary of that date for a more full statement). I told him that I had objected to his despatch, that a discussion took place which I supposed he and the Cabinet remembered; & that I had written a paragraph at my table as a substitute for his; & that at the close of that Cabinet meeting he had taken from the table his draft of his dispatch and the paragraph which I prepared with him, and the next day modified his despatch according to my instructions. I told him that up to last April he had been opposed to acquiring any territory, and that when the instructions were given to Mr. Trist in April, he had fully concurred in them. I told him I repeated these facts because it was proper that we should understand our relative positions on the subject, formerly and now. The rest of the Cabinet were silent. Mr. Buchanan replied that I might have gone further and added that he had been opposed to the military expedition to the City of Mexico (as I remember he was) but that he was

overruled, that since April we had spent much money and lost much blood, and that he was not now satisfied with this Treaty. He added that he gave his advice as a member of the Cabinet that the Treaty should be rejected, because that was now his opinion. I cannot help laboring under the conviction that the true reason of Mr. Buchanan's present course is that he is now a candidate for the Presidency, and he does not wish to incur the displeasure of those who are in favour of the conquest of all Mexico. That he earnestly wishes me to send the Treaty to the Senate against his advice, I am fully convinced, not from anything he has said, but from circumstances & his general bearing, I do not doubt. No candidate for the presidency ought ever to remain in the Cabinet. He is an unsafe adviser. My conversation with Mr. Buchanan was unpleasant to me, but I thought I ought to rebuke him, and let him understand that I understood the motive that governed him. He wished to throw the whole responsibility on me of sending the Treaty to the Senate. If it was received well by the country, being a member of my administration, he would not be injured by it in his Presidential aspirations, for these govern all his opinions & acts lately; but if, on the other hand, it should not be received well, he could say, "I advised against it." The Cabinet adjourned after a sitting of two or three hours. After night I prepared, with the assistance of Judge Mason, the rough draft of my message to the Senate to accompany the Treaty.

I learned that the Hon. John Quincy Adams was suddenly stricken from his seat in the House of

Repts. by the hand of disease to-day. It was probably a paralitic affection. He was borne from the Hall to the Speakers Room in a state of insensibility. Both Houses of Congress immediately upon the happening of this melancholy event adjourned. At a late hour to-night Mr. Adams remained in a senseless state in the Speaker's Room of the Capitol.

Note: The discussion between Mr. Buchanan & myself, as stated above, should have been inserted in yesterday's diary. The discussion took place at the meeting of the Cabinet last night. My Private Secretary, at my request, reduced the conversation as he understood it, to writing. I will preserve his statement.

TUESDAY, *22nd February, 1848.*— This morning I saw Senator Sevier and submitted to him the Mexican Treaty, which I proposed to send to the Senate to-day. Mr. Sevier is chairman of the committee on Foreign affairs. The Cabinet met at the usual hour; all the members present. About 1 O'Clock P. M. My Private Secretary started to the Capitol with a Message to the Senate laying the Mexican Treaty before that body, for their consideration as regards its ratification. He returned in less than an hour and informed me that in consequence of the extreme illness of Mr. Adams (who was still in a senseless state in the Speaker's room in the Capitol) [the Senate] had adjourned before he reached the Capitol. No business of much importance was considered in the Cabinet to day. In consequence of the illness of Mr. Adams I determined to decline attending the

birth night Ball to-night to which I had been invited on saturday, and sent a message to that effect to the committee who had waited upon me. Mr. Rockwell of Connecticut afterwards called and informed me that the Ball had been postponed. This was reception evening. But few persons called. Among them was the Hon. Henry Clay of Ky., who called to pay his respects before leaving the City. He will leave to-morrow for Philadelphia.

WEDNESDAY, *23rd February, 1848.*— I opened my doors for the reception of company this morning. I had not received company for two or three days past. An unusual crowd of persons called, most of them on the old business of seeking office. My Private Secretary took my message[1] to the Senate with the Mexican Treaty to-day. He delivered it to the Senate, and informed me that the Senate went immediately into Executive Session to consider it. By this Treaty it is provided that upon its ratification by Mexico three millions of Dollars are to be paid, and as the 10th article had been inserted without instructions, and could not be ratified by this Government, I determined that it was proper to transmit a despatch to Maj'r Gen'l Wm. O. Butler, who is now in command of the army in Mexico, instructing him to prevent the payment of the money until the Treaty as it might be ratified by the Senate of the U. S. should be transmitted to Mexico and ratified by that Government. I saw the Secretary of

[1] Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents,* IV, 573. The treaty is printed in *U. S. Stat. at Large,* IX, 922–944.

War and directed him to prepare such a despatch. Mr. Buchanan called and said that though opposed to the Treaty, if I wished it carried into effect, he advised me against sending such a despatch. I differed with him in opinion and did not change my order. The Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy concurred with me in the propriety of sending such a despatch. Mr. Trist's recal[l] had revoked the authority to draw for the money, with which he had been invested when he went out in April last, but still I apprehended, judging from his insubordinate course heretofore, that he might assume the authority to draw for the money. If he should do so and the Mexican Government should refuse to ratify the Treaty as amended or modified here, the money would be lost. Gen'l Butler will be instructed in the despatch to prevent Trist from doing this, and to inform the Mexican Government that he (Gen'l Butler) has been clothed with the authority to draw for and pay the money as soon as the Treaty as it may be ratified by the U. S. shall be ratified by Mexico.

Mr. Buchanan seemed to-day to be in a bad mood, and wore the appearance of being troubled. He at length remarked to me that it was rumoured in the streets that he was to be removed from the Cabinet on account of the supposed countenance given by him to the correspondent of the New York *Herald,* whose letters lately had been very abusive of myself. The writer of these letters is a fellow without character or responsibility, named Nugent. He signs himself Galvienses. I told Mr. Buchanan there was no

truth in the rumour about his being dismissed from the Cabinet, but I must be frank with him and say that I had learned from more than one person that the writer of these letters, which I had understood were very abusive of me, was in his confidence, that he was often seen about his Department, and some of the members of Congress, from this circumstance, attributed his vile effusions to him, Mr. Buchanan, but that I had not believed it. Mr. Buchanan said that he had held frequent conversations with Mr. Nugent, the correspondent of the *Herald,* with a view to secure the support of the *Herald* to the Mexican War, and that he had requested him not to abuse me in his letters. He said if I wished it he would direct him not to come to his Department any more, and would hold no further intercourse with him. I remarked to him in a stern manner he must judge of the propriety of his own conduct & [I had] no request to make, but that it presented a very singular appearance that a member of my Cabinet should be holding familiar intercourse with an unprincipled newspaper letter-writer who was in the daily habit of calumniating and abusing me, and that after expressing this opinion to him he could take his own course. I have read but few of the letters of Galvienses. Two or three of them have been called to my attention which contained calumnies of me. Their object seems to be to abuse Gen'l Cass, Mr. Woodbury, and myself, and to praise Mr. Buchanan. The[y] falsely represent that I am intriguing to obtain the nomination for a re-election to the Presidency. The truth is, I have no doubt, though I

cannot prove it, that Mr. Buchanan has become apprehensive that in the contest for the nomination between Gen'l Cass, Mr. Woodbury, and himself the Democratic party may ultimately be forced to look to me for a re-election. He knows that I have no such views & that I have constantly declared to all who have introduced the subject to me that I would retire at the end of a single term, but notwithstanding this he fears that a state of things might arise in which the party might require me against my will to be placed before the country for re-election. That he has been willing to see Galvienses assail me, until he has become alarmed at the impression which is being made upon many members of Congress and others, that he has given his countenance to it, I have no doubt. If I obtain any reliable proof that Mr. Buchanan has given countenance to Galvienses he shall not remain in the Cabinet. He denies that he has done so, and I am bound to believe him. Shortly after Mr. Buchanan held this conversation with me Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, called and introduced the same subject, and said he had heard Mr. Buchanan tell Mr. Nugent, the author of Galvienses, that he ought not to abuse me. I suppose Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Walker had conversed together on the subject before either called. I expressed myself to Mr. Walker in substance as I had to Mr. Walker [Buchanan]. Mr. Walker said that he had understood that it had been said that he was in habits of intercourse with Mr. Nugent. I told him I had never heard this. He said he had refused to have any intercourse with him, & had, within a

day or two past, received an insulting note from him.

I learned from my porter to-night that the Hon. John Quincy Adams died in the Speaker's Room in the Capitol a few minutes past 7 O'Clock this evening. Mr. Adams was struck down with a paralitic affection while in his seat in the House of Representatives on monday, the 21st Instant. He was borne to the Speaker's room, where he remained speechless and in a state of insensibility until his death this evening. The Ho. Repts has met & adjourned each day since he was taken ill, without transacting any business.

THURSDAY, *24th February, 1848.*— In testimony of respect for the memory of the Hon. John Quincy Adams, who died at the Capitol last evening, I issued an order this morning directing all the Executive Offices at Washington to be placed in mourning, & all business to be suspended during this day and tomorrow. Under this order the President's Mansion was placed in mourning by putting black crape over the front door. Orders were also given through the Secretaries of War & the Navy to cause the melancholy event to be observed with appropriate solemnity by the army and navy. Mr. Adams died in the 81st year of his age. He had been more than half a century in the public service, had filled many high stations, and among them that of President of the U. States. He was the sixth President under the Constitution. The first seven Presidents are all now dead. The ninth President is also dead. Mr. Van Buren who was the eighth President and Mr. Tyler,

who succeeded to the Presidency upon the death of President Harrison, are the only two of my predecessors who now survive. I am the tenth President elected by the people. Mr. Tyler was elected Vice President and became President when Gen'l Harrison died. So that I am the tenth President elected by the people & the eleventh President who has administered the Government from 1789 to this time, a period of Fifty nine years.

The Secretary of War finished his despatch to Maj'r Gen'l Wm. O. Butler which I directed to be prepared on yesterday. He brought it over to-day and read it to me. Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Walker, and Mr. Mason were present. Some modifications were suggested & made. Mr. Buchanan handed to me two dispatches from Mr. Trist, one dated Decr. 29th, 1847, and the other Jany. 12th, 1848, which he stated Mr. Freanor, the bearer of the Treaty from Mexico, had not delivered to him until this morning. Mr. Freanor's apology for the delay in delivering them was that they were placed in a different part of his baggage from that in which he carried the Treaty, and had been overlooked by him until this morning. After the members of the Cabinet retired I read these despatches, and found them to be arrogant, highly exceptionable, & even of an insulting character. I immediately sent for the Secretary of War and informed him that I wished him to add a paragraph to his despatch to Gen'l Butler, directing him, if Trist should attempt to exercise any official authority in Mexico, to prevent it, and to require him to leave the Head Quarters of the army as soon as a safe

escort could be furnished to conduct him to Vera Cruz. Trist has proved himself to be an impudent and unqualified scoundrel. The Secretary of War hesitated about inserting the paragraph, and said if, after thinking of it to-night I still thought it proper, it could go in a seperate despatch to-morrow and could overtake the bearer of despatches at New Orleans. To this I assented with some reluctance. I saw Mr. Freanor, who brought the Treaty from Mexico, to-night. He will leave as the bearer of the despatch of the Secretary of War to Gen'l Butler, by the Southern Boat to-morrow morning.

Senator Cass called to see me this afternoon and had some conversation with me about the Treaty and some other matters.

FRIDAY, *25th February, 1848.*— I did not open my doors for the reception of company to-day. In respect for the memory of Mr. Adams, whose funeral will take place on to-morrow, all the Executive offices were closed to-day. A number of Senators and Representatives called in in a quiet way. Half a dozen gentlemen from the City of New York, accompanied by the Hon. Mr. Tallmadge of the Ho. Repts., made a special request through my Private Secretary to be allowed to come in and pay their respects to me. They had no other business and I saw them. The Hon. Mr. Barringer of N. C. & the Hon. Mr. Kaufman of Texas, both of the Ho. Repts., called as a committee to invite me to attend the funeral of Mr. Adams on to-morrow. Mr. Clifford, the atto. Gen'l [of the] U. S. called on business. In the course of

conversation he informed me that after the Cabinet broke up on Monday last he had a conversation with Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Walker, from which he had serious apprehensions that they would both resign their seats in the Cabinet. He said if one had resigned both would. He said that Mr. Buchanan had accompanied him to his office and had conversed with him an hour on the subject. I told him there was no danger of such a result, and then told him of the conversation which Mr. Buchanan & Mr. Walker had held with me concerning the correspondent (Nugent) over the signature of Galvienses in the New York *Herald* (see this diary of Wednesday, 23rd Inst.). I told Mr. Clifford that I wished no rupture in my Cabinet, but that I must pursue my own convictions and do my duty regardless of consequences. I remarked freely to him of Mr. Buchanan's inconsistent course on the Mexican Question, an inconsistency only equally [equalled] by his course on the Oregon Question. I expressed to Mr. Clifford an indifference as to the course which Mr. Buchanan might think proper to pursue, but told him there was not the slightest danger of his resigning. I was surprised to hear that Mr. Walker had held any such conversation. Mr. Clifford requested me not to mention to any one what he had told me, & I told him I would not. Mr. Buchanan's real trouble is that he cannot use my administration and shape his course according to his own ever varying whims, in order to promote his aspirations to the Presidency. He cares nothing for the success or glory of my administration further than he can make it subservient

to his own political aspirations. I sent for Mr. Marcy & Mason to-day and with their assistance a despatch was prepared to Gen'l Butler, such as I wished the Secretary of War to insert in his despatch of yesterday, in relation to Mr. Trist. Indeed it was made stronger than that I had suggested on yesterday, and Gen'l Butler was directed to require Mr. Trist to leave the Head Quarters of the army, and to furnish him an escort to Vera Cruz. Mr. Mason fully approved of it. Mr. Marcy expressed no opinion, but made some suggestions and prepared a paragraph in preparing it. When it was completed I told Mr. Marcy I had directed this despatch and was willing to take the whole responsibility. I told him to take it to his Department, have it copied, and send the copy over to me, and that I would examine it again and would address a note to him directing him to send it forward, which note he could place on the files of the Department as evidence that he had sent it at my special direction and that I was responsible for it. Mr. Marcy and Mr. Mason retired and I sent for Mr. Buchanan and informed him what I had done, & that after reading the two insulting and highly exceptionable despatches of Mr. Trist which he had handed to me on yesterday I felt it to be my duty to the country and to myself to take this course. He said he could not object to my course, & that after receiving these despatches he approved of what I had done. He appeared to be in a better temper than he has been for several days past. He retired & I went to dinner. After dinner I received the despatch, copied by Mr. Marcy and ready for his sig-

nature. I addressed a note to him approving it and directing him to send it forward. In order to save a day by the mail which goes round by Baltimore & the Bay, a special messenger was sent by the Southern Boat with directions to have it mailed at Petersburg, Va. It will probably reach New Orleans before Mr. Freanor, the bearer of despatches, who left last night for Mexico, will leave the former City. I have thus done to-day what I thought ought to have been done on yesterday. I sent for Senator Douglass to-night and had a conversation with him about the Mexican Treaty. Mr. Johnson, the P. M. Gen'l, came in while we were conversing on the subject. After Mr. Douglass left Mr. Johnson expressed the opinion that the Treaty was in great danger, from what he had learned, of being rejected. He stated, among other things, that it was believed in the City that Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Walker were exerting their influence to have it rejected. He mentioned another astounding fact to me, *viz.*, that it was reported and believed that Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, had joined in a letter to Gen'l Taylor on the subject of the tariff and the Constitutional Treasury, and that Mr. Walker was in favour of Gen'l Taylor for the Presidency. If this be so, it presents the singular spectacle of a member of my Cabinet supporting a Whig and an opponent of my administration as my successor. If I ascertain this to be the fact it will be inconsistent with the success of my measures for Mr. Walker to remain in my Cabinet. I will require strong proof however before I can believe it to be true. The truth is that the

scheming and intriguing about the Presidential election, and especially by Mr. Buchanan, is seriously embarrassing my administration.

SATURDAY, *26th February, 1848.*— This being the day appointed by the two Houses of Congress for performing the funeral ceremonies of the late John Quincy Adams, the Cabinet assembled at the President's Mansion at 11½ O'Clock A. M. and proceeded with me to the Capitol. On reaching the Hall of the House of Representatives I was conducted to a seat provided for me on the right of the Speaker, the cabinet occupying seats on the floor of the House. On similar occasions heretofore the President has been seated on the floor with the Cabinet. I of course conformed to the order of arrangements which had been made by the Speaker, & took my seat on his right. The Vice President of the U. S. was seated on the left of the Speaker. An immense crowd attended at the Capitol, many more than could gain admittance to the Hall of the House. Every seat was occupied. In addition to the members of both Houses of Congress, the Judges of the Supreme Court of the U. S., the officers of the army & navy in uniform, Foreign ministers, most of them in their Court dresses, and a vast multitude of citizens and strangers were present. The galleries as well as the floor were crowded with ladies & gentlemen. Mrs. Polk, Mrs. Madison, Mrs. Dallas, and many other ladies occupied the ladies' gallery. The family of the deceased were on the floor. The corpse was brought into the Hall. Divine service was performed by the Rev.

Mr. Gurley, the chaplain of the Ho. Repts. The service being over, a long procession of carriages, persons on horseback & on foot, of military, the order of Odd Fellows, the fire companies, & citizens moved with the corpse to the Congressional Burying ground, where further religious ceremonies were performed & the body deposited in a vault, where, I understand, it will remain a few days, when it will be removed to the late residence of the deceased in Massachusetts. It was the most numerous funeral procession I ever witnessed. The whole ceremonies were conducted with order and solemnity. It was a splendid pageant. I returned to the President's mansion about 4 O'Clock P. M. I transacted no business in my office of any importance to-day.

SUNDAY, *27th February, 1848.*— I attended Divine worship at the Capitol to-day accompanied by Mrs. Polk, Mrs. Walker, and my nephew, Marshall T. Polk. The Rev. Dr. Matthews of New York performed the service. He preached a learned & able sermon.

MONDAY, *28th February, 1848.*— A large number of visitors called this morning. For several days the latter part of last week I did not open my doors for the reception of company generally, in consequence of the death of Mr. Adams. The consequence was that the office-seekers were numerous & very hungry this morning. Near 12 O'Clock Senator Sevier called and informed me that the committee of Foreign affairs of the Senate,

of which he is Chairman, and to which the Mexican Treaty had been referred, had held a meeting this morning and had resolved to recommend the rejection of the Treaty by the Senate, & to advise the Executive to appoint an imposing commission to be composed of three or five persons belonging to both political parties, to proceed to Mexico to negotiate a Treaty. Mr. Sevier informed me that he stood alone in the committee opposed to this course. The other members of the Committee are Senators Webster, Benton, Mangum, and Hannegan. Mr. Sevier said they did not object to the terms of the Treaty, with the modifications I had recommended in its ratification, but to Mr. Trist's authority to make it after his recall as commissioner. Mr. Sevier informed me that he had waited on me, with the knowledge of the committee, to inform me of what had been done, and to ascertain my views on the subject with a view to communicate them to the committee and to the Senate. He informed me also that both Mr. Webster and Mr. Benton had requested him to say to me that it would be well for me to be casting about for the commissioners, that the commission should be composed of distinguished men of both political parties, who should be appointed immediately after the action of the Senate should take place, and proceed forthwith to Mexico. I remarked to Mr. Sevier that the course proposed was an extraordinary proceeding, and one which I could not approve. I told him that if he deemed it necessary to say anything, as coming from me, to the committee or to the Senate, it would be that upon full deliberation I had sub-

mitted the Treaty to the Senate with my recommendation that with certain modifications it should be ratified, and that I had not changed my opinion; but that, if the Senate chose to recommend a different course, I would co-operate with them as far as in my judgment the public interests would permit. I told him I condemned the insubordinate & insolent conduct of Mr. Trist, but that the Treaty itself was the subject for consideration and not his conduct, and that if the provisions of the Treaty were such as could be accepted, it would be worse than an idle ceremony to send out a grand commission to re-negotiate the same Treaty. I told him, also, that if the Senate advised me to send out such a commission, I hoped they would advise me also what terms they would accept. I consider the course of the committee of the Senate weak, if not factious, and cannot doubt that the object of Mr. Webster is to defeat any Treaty, clamorous as the Whig party profess to be for peace, until after the next Presidential election. Indeed, Mr. Sevier informed me that Mr. Webster said he wanted *no* territory beyond the Rio Grande, and that he said also that if he voted for this Treaty and Mexico should not ratify it, he would be bound to vote for men and money to carry on the War, a position which he did not wish to occupy. I do not wonder at his course, but I am suprised at that of Mr. Hannegan and Mr. Benton. Extremes sometimes meet and act effectively for negative purposes, but never for affirmative purposes. They have done so in this instance. Mr. Webster is for *no* territory and Mr. Hannegan is for *all* Mexico, and for opposite rea-

sons both will oppose the Treaty. It is difficult, upon any rational principle, to assign a satisfactory reason for anything Col. Benton may do, especially in his present temper of mind, wholly engrossed as he seems to have been for some months past with the case of his son-in-law, Col. Fremont. The truth is the approaching Presidential election absorbs every other consideration, and Senators act as if there was no country and no public interests to take care of. The factions are all at work, and votes are controlled, even upon a vital question of peace or war, by the supposed effect upon the public mind. If the Treaty in its present form is ratified, there will be added to the U. S. an immense empire, the value of which 20 years hence it would be difficult to calculate, & yet Democratic and Whig Senators disregard this, and act solely with the view to the elevation of themselves or their favourites to the Presidential office. In the course of the day I saw Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Walker, Mr. Mason, & Mr. Clifford, and informed them of the information I had received from Senator Sevier. They all disapproved the course of the committee of Foreign affairs of the Senate, & I was happy to learn from the two former, who had opposed my sending the Treaty to the Senate, that they were utterly opposed to its rejection & sending a fresh commission to Mexico to do the same thing. Mr. Walker was excited, and thought the object of Mr. Webster was to defeat the acquisition of any territory. Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Walker left my office after night to visit Senators & urge them to vote against the project of [a] new commission to Mexico.

I received to-night two Resolutions from the Senate, calling for information and for all the correspondence with Mr. Trist. Much of this correspondence, and especially the letters of Mr. Trist after his recall, are impertinent, irrelevant, & highly exceptionable, but I resolved to send it all in to the Senate, and prepared a message to-night to that effect.

TUESDAY, *29th February, 1848.*— I saw a few persons who called this morning, and among them Senators Sevier & Bagby, with whom I conversed about the Mexican Treaty. I prepared or rather revised my message [1] in answer to the call of the Senate made on yesterday. In order to save time in preparing copies, I sent to the Senate Mr. Trist's original letters. The Cabinet met at the usual time; all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury. In the afternoon I learned that the mexican Treaty had been under discussion in Executive Session in the Senate, and that its fate was doubtful. From what I learn, about a dozen democratic Senators will oppose it, most of them because they wish to acquire more territory than the line of the Rio Grande and the Provinces of New Mexico & Upper California will secure. What Mr. Benton's reason for opposing it may be no one can tell. He has heretofore maintained that the true boundary of Texas was the Nueces instead of the Rio Grande, & he is apt to think that nothing is done properly that he is not previously consulted about. Mr. Webster['s] reason for opposing it is that it acquires too much ter-

[1] Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents,* IV, 574.

ritory. The result is extremely doubtful. If 8 or 10 Whig Senators vote with Mr. Webster against it, it will be rejected. Nineteen Senators will constitute one third of that body, and will reject it. I was much occupied in my office to-day.

This was reception evening. A number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

WEDNESDAY, *1st March, 1848.*— Many persons called this morning; and among them several Senators who wished to confer with me about the Mexican Treaty. Among them were Senators Cass, Sevier, Downes, & Bagby. They all regarded the fate of the Treaty as very doubtful. At 12 O'Clock the Secretary of War called, and I spent two or three hours with him in filling vacancies in the army. I will send a message with the names of those selected to the Senate to-morrow. While thus engaged Mr. Corcoran of the Banking house of Corcoran & Riggs called & informed us that he said [had] just seen Mr. Gales,[1] the Editor of the *Intelligencer,* who informed him that he had been sent for by Whig Senators to the Capitol this morning, & requested to prepare an article for his paper against the Mexican Treaty, and that being in favour of the Treaty he had declined to do so. Mr. Corcoran said Mr. Gales had informed him also that the Whig Senators had held a caucus on the subject this morning. Mr. Corcoran thought the body of the Whig Senators would vote against the Treaty and that it would be

[1] Joseph Gales, 1786–1860, of the firm of Gales and Seaton, proprietors of the *National Intelligencer.*

rejected. After night Senator Cass called, who thought from the indications in the Senate to-day the fate of the Treaty was extremely doubtful. After he retired Senator Moore [1] of Maine, called, who was also of opinion that its fate was doubtful. Mr. Osma, the Minister from Peru, called at 1 O'Clock to-day in pursuance of a previous arrangement, & had an audience with me, at which he delivered to me his letter of recall by his Government, having been transferred to another service. I received him in the parlour.

THURSDAY, *2nd March, 1848.*— Many persons called this morning and among them several members of Congress. I closed my doors. I sent two messages to the Senate to-day; one in answer to a call for the correspondence of Mr. Wise, late U. S. Minister to Brazil, in relation to the slave trade; and another in answer to a call made in Executive Session for information in regard to any disposition or overtures on the part of any considerable portion of the Mexican people to become annexed to the U. States. The Secretary of War called and I resumed with him the business left unfinished on yesterday, relating to appointments to fill vacancies in the army. The mexican Treaty is still under consideration in the Senate. I saw Senator Turney this morning, and am inclined to think he will vote for the ratification of the Treaty. The prospect now is that it may be ratified, but by a very close vote. I disposed of busi-

[1] Wyman Bradbury Sevey Moor, 1814–1869, appointed to the Senate from Maine on the death of Senator Fairfield.

ness on my table as usual to-day. In pursuance of previous notice all the parlours of the Presidential mansion were opened and lighted up for the reception of company this evening. The snow had been falling during the whole day, and the evening was very inclement; but notwithstanding this, many hundreds of persons, ladies & gentlemen, attended. Indeed, the drawing room was as well attended as is usual on such occasions.

FRIDAY, *3rd March, 1848.*— I saw company as usual this morning. Among others several Senators called. The probabilities now are that the Mexican Treaty will be ratified, though the vote will probably be close. Nineteen Senators constitute one third of the body and can prevent its ratification. Mr. Benton and Mr. Webster are the leading opponents of the Treaty. Eight or ten, perhaps twelve Democratic Senators, it is said, will act with Mr. Benton; and six or eight Whig Senators with Mr. Webster. Most of the Democratic Senators who will vote against the ratification will do so because they desire to secure more territory than the Treaty acquires; and most of the Whig Senators, perhaps all of them, who will vote against the ratification, will do so because they are opposed to acquiring any territory. My suspicion is that if the Whig party in the Senate shall ascertain that a sufficient number of Democratic Senators will vote against the Treaty to constitute a majority of the nineteen required to reject, Whig Senators enough will join with them, and then attempt to cast the responsibility of the rejection upon

the Democratic party. The Whig Senators who have been so long denouncing the War and clamouring for peace would, notwithstanding this, like to see the Treaty rejected, provided they can throw the responsibility upon the Democratic party. If the Democratic party were united in favour of the Treaty, I doubt whether a single Whig would vote against it. I repeat the remark I have heretofore made, that the Presidential election has too much to do with the question of the ratification of the Treaty. More Senators than one will probably give their votes in reference to the probable effect upon the election. It is deeply to be regretted that the best interests of the country should be affected by such considerations. I attended to-day to much current business on my table.

This day closes my third year in the Presidential office. They have been years of incessant labour, anxiety, & responsibility.

SATURDAY, *4th March, 1848.*— I saw several Senators and Representatives before the hour of the meeting of the Cabinet this morning. The Cabinet met at the usual hour; all the members present. Several matters of minor importance were disposed of. The [Cabinet] dispersed about 2 O'Clock P. M. I disposed of the business on my table as usual. I learn to-night that the Senate have not yet disposed of the Mexican Treaty. I learn, also, that it is doubtful whether it will be ratified.

Stephen C. Parrott[?], Esqr., took a family Dinner with me to-day.

SUNDAY, *5th March, 1848.*— I attended the First Presbyterian church to-day accompanied by Mrs. Polk and my nephew, Marshall T. Polk.

MONDAY, *6th March, 1848.*— Many persons called this morning, most of them to pay their respects, but some of them as usual to seek office. I saw the Secretaries of State, War, & Navy on business. I transacted business in my office as usual. Nothing of special interest transpired to-day. I learn to-night that the Senate had a long Session with closed doors on the Mexican Treaty to-day, but without coming to any decision. The opinion of Senator Rusk, who called to-night, is that the Treaty will be certainly ratified.

TUESDAY, *7th March, 1848.*— I saw several Senators this morning, and conferred with them on the subject of the Mexican Treaty now before the Senate. They were of opinion that it would be ratified. The Cabinet met at the usual hour; all the members present except the Attorney General, who was officially engaged in the Supreme Court of the U. S. In view of the probability that the Mexican Treaty would be ratified in a day or two, I informed the Cabinet that I deemed it important to despatch a commissioner to Mexico with it without delay, with the view to procure its ratification by Mexico with the modifications made by the Senate. In this all concurred. A free conversation then occurred in which I requested the advice of the Cabinet as to the person proper to be selected. Several prominent

public men were spoken of. I expressed the opinion that the Hon. Louis McLane of Maryland was emminently qualified, and from his character and great experience in diplomacy I would prefer him to any other. In this the Cabinet, except Mr. Buchanan, concurred. Mr. Buchanan preferred some one who spoke the Spanish language, and had objections to Mr. McLane on other grounds. I finally decided to tender the mission to Mr. McLane. I sent my Private Secretary to the Capitol to invite the Hon. Robert M. McLane of the Ho. Repts., and the son of the Hon. Louis McLane, to call and see me. He called about 3 O'Clock P. M., the Cabinet having adjourned, and I informed him of my desire to have the services of his father as commissioner to Mexico. I gave him my reasons for selecting his father, and at my request he agreed to go to Baltimore to-night and in my name to tender the mission to his father. He said he would return from Baltimore in the night-train of cars and bring me his father's answer on to-morrow morning.

In the Cabinet to-day Mr. Buchanan read an application from an agent of the Department of Yucatan in Mexico, setting forth that a savage and cruel war was now waging by the Indians of Yucatan against the white race, and as Yucatan now occupied a neutral attitude in the Mexican War, requesting that the U. S. would afford assistance to the white population to save them from destruction; and with this view that permission should be granted to a vessel now lading in New York to take out and land in Yucatan 10,000 lbs. of powder, to enable the

white race to defend themselves against the Indians. Mr. Buchanan earnestly urged that the permission be granted upon grounds of humanity, & such seemed to be the impression of Mr. Walker. I stated to Mr. Buchanan that giving due weight to considerations of humanity which he urged, it was yet not to be overlooked that Yucatan was an integral part of the Republic of Mexico, with which we were at War; and that it might be that the powder proposed to be introduced into Yucatan might be transported to other parts of Mexico and be used in the war against the forces of the U. S. In this view the Secretary of War expressed his concurrence. Mr. Buchanan appeared to be much dis[s]atisfied with my opinion, became silent, removed his seat to one of the windows of my office, and with his back turned towards me appeared for some time to be looking out of the window. He sometimes becomes petulant when his views are thwarted. I continued the conversation with the other members of the Cabinet; and finally agreed that the vessel in New York might proceed to sea with the powder on board without incurring the risk of the forfeiture of the remainder of the cargo, and upon her arrival on the coast of Yucatan should report to Commodore Perry, or the naval officer highest in command on that coast, to whom a discretionary power should be given by the Secretary of the Navy to permit the powder to be landed provided he was well satisfied that it could not [be] used by our enemy against our forces, but would be used by the white race to repel the attacks of the Indians upon them. It was understood that orders to this effect would be

given. This was reception evening. A large number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called. I learned from Several Senators who were present that the Senate continued in Session to-day until 7½ O'Clock P. M., and that no final action had been had on the Mexican Treaty.

WEDNESDAY, *8th March, 1848.*— I saw company this morning as usual. A large number of persons called. Hon. Robt. M. McLane, who had gone to Baltimore last evening with authority from me to tender the mission to Mexico to his father, Hon. Louis McLane, with a view to secure the ratification of the Mexican Treaty by that Government (see this diary of yesterday) returned this morning and informed me that his father (the Hon. Louis McLane) in consequence of the declining health of Mrs. McLane would be compelled to decline accepting. He delivered to me a letter on the subject from his father. I regret that I cannot avail myself of the services of so able a man and am wholly at a loss to know whom to select.

About 2 O'Clock P. M. I received two Resolutions passed by the Senate in Executive Session, calling for additional information on the subject of the Mexican Treaty. I promptly answered them and sent messages to the Senate in reply. I was much engaged in my office during the day. After night Mr. Dickens, the Secretary of the Senate, called and informed me that the Senate had adjourned at a late hour without having come to any final decision on the subject of the Mexican Treaty. Mr. Dickens informed me that

the general opinion was that the Treaty would be ratified with amendments on to-morrow. Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, called after night and informed me that the bids for the loan of about five millions of Dollars in Treasury notes to be re-issued had been opened this afternoon, & that the whole sum had been taken at a premium of between 1 & 2 per cent. I saw the Secretary of War, State, Navy, & the atto. General at different periods of the day on official business.

THURSDAY, *9th March, 1848.*— Saw company as usual this morning. Many persons, members of Congress and others, called, and I was much importuned about offices. I [was] not able to close my doors before 1 O'Clock P. M. I attended to much business which had accumulated on my table. After night Senator Sevier, chairman of the committee of Foreign affairs in the Senate, called & informed me that no final action had been had on the Mexican Treaty. Several important modifications have been made to it, and I fear they are of such a character as to jeopard its ratification by Mexico. There is every reason to believe that the body of the Whig Senators desire its rejection, but fear to take the responsibility of effecting their object by a direct vote. They desire to effect its rejection indirectly, by putting it in such a form that Mexico will not ratify it. Unfortunately a few Democratic Senators are impracticable, and the manifest effort of the Whig Senators is to throw the responsibility of its final rejection upon them. This is Senator Sevier's opinion. The treaty

will probably be ratified in a modified form, but in such a form that there is great danger that it will not be accepted by Mexico, and in that event the War must go on. The course of the Senate and their long delay on the subject is extremely embarrassing. Should the Treaty be ratified I am greatly at a loss for a suitable commissioner to send to Mexico with it; & my present impression is that I will entrust it to Gen'l Butler and perhaps associate with him Gen'l Cushing & Brevet Brig. Gen'l Persifer Smith. This I will decide hereafter.

FRIDAY, *10th March, 1848.*— I received company as usual this morning. Many persons, members of Congress and others, called. I transacted business with some of the members of the Cabinet & other public officers, & disposed of the business on my table. This was reception evening. A number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called. About 10 O'Clock P. M. Mr. Dickens, the Secretary of the Senate, brought me official notice that the Mexican Treaty had just been ratified by the Senate by a vote of 38 ayes to 14 nays, four Senators not voting. I immediately retired from the parlour to my office & sent for the Secretary of War, with a view to have a messenger despatched to Gen'l Butler in Mexico, to carry intelligence to him that the Treaty with Mexico had been ratified by the Senate of the U. S., with certain amendments, and that it would be sent out by a commissioner invested with plenipotentiary powers in the course of four or five days. The Secretary of War informed me that the clerks had left his office,

and that he could not have copies of a despatch which he had prepared for Gen'l Butler made to-night, in time for the bearer of them to set out to-night. The departure of the messenger was therefore postponed until to-morrow night. The Senate have so modified the Treaty that I fear it will not be ratified by Mexico.

SATURDAY, *11th March, 1848.*— I received a few persons who called on business this morning. The Cabinet met at the usual hour; all the members present. I informed the Cabinet that a special messenger would set out to-night bearing a despatch from the Secretary of War announcing to Gen'l Butler the ratification of the Mexican Treaty, with amendments, by the Senate of the U. S., and that a commissioner with plenipotentiary power would be appointed in a few days to proceed with the Treaty to Mexico. I consulted the Cabinet as to the proper person to be appointed commissioner. I suggested myself that Senator Sevier would be a proper person to be the commissioner. Several other persons were named, & their fitness and qualifications discussed and considered. Mr. Buchanan remarked that the commissioner should speak the Spanish language, but that, if one was to be appointed who could not speak that language, he knew of no one whom he would prefer to Mr. Sevier. Mr. Walker had doubts about the policy or propriety of selecting Mr. Sevier. After much conversation on the subject the Cabinet all acquiesced in the opinion that I could not do better than to select Mr. Sevier. I finally decided to tender

the mission to Mr. Sevier. After transacting some other business, the Cabinet retired about 2 O'clock P. M. Shortly after 3 O'Clock P. M., Mr. Sevier, whom I invited last evening to call at that hour, came into my office. I tendered the Mission to Mexico to him. It took him by surprise, as I had given him no previous intimation that I had any thoughts of the kind. He said promptly that he could not accept; assigning as reasons that he had no wish to leave the Senate; and that, if he had, he had taken a very active part in urging the ratification of the Treaty, & were he now to accept the Mission he would be subject to the imputation of having done so with a view to procure for himself the appointment. He manifested a commendable delicacy & a high sense of honour on the subject. I urged him to accept, and told him if any such imputation was made I would correct it. He stated other reasons why he could not accept it, but finally said he would consider of it until to-morrow morning, when he would give me a positive answer. On consultation with Vice President Dallas this morning, he thought I could not do better than to select Mr. Sevier. The fact that he is a member of the Senate & chairman of the committee on Foreign affairs, and perfectly acquainted with the subject of the Treaty and the difficulties which had been encountered in its ratification, would make his selection peculiarly proper, and might have a favourable effect upon the mexican Government and people. I had a dinner-party of 15 or 20 members of Congress to-day.

Maj'r Graham[1] of the U. S. army left to-night as special bearer of despatches to Gen'l Butler in Mexico, announcing to him the ratification of the mexican Treaty, with amendments, by the Senate, and that it [would be followed] by a commissioner invested with Plenipotentiary Powers, in the course of a few days. I saw Maj'r Graham with the Secretary of War at my office after my dinner-company retired, gave him a printed copy of the Treaty for Gen'l Butler, and explained to him the amendments which the Senate had made.

SUNDAY, *12th March, 1848.*— Senator Sevier called before church hour this morning, as he had promised to do in my interview with him on yesterday. (See this diary of yesterday.) He said he had reflected upon the tender I had made to him of the appointment of commissioner to Mexico, with a view to procure the ratification by that Government of the Treaty recently ratified by the Senate of the U. States, and though he would much prefer that I should select some other person, yet, if I still desired it, he could not decline. He said if he was nominated to the Senate, it was important in order to avoid any imputation upon his motives in advocating before the Senate, as he had done, the ratification of the Treaty, that the Senate should understand that he had not the slightest expectation at that time that he would be selected as the commissioner to bear the Treaty back to Mexico. I told him that I would see

[1] Lawrence Pike Graham; brevetted Major for gallant conduct in the battles of Palo Alto and Reseca de la Palma.

Senators Dix, Cass, Mangum, & Hannegan, and inform them how the facts were. Mr. Sevier had no intimation that he would be selected until I made known to him my wishes at 3 O'Clock P. M. on yesterday, the day after the Treaty had been ratified, and when I mentioned the subject to him he appeared to be surprised.

Mrs. Polk and myself attended the First Presbyterian church to-day.

MONDAY, *13th March, 1848.*— A much larger number of persons called this morning than usual. Indeed, my office was filled with visitors until after 12 O'Clock. The Senate did not sit to-day, and among others who called were about a dozen Senators. I communicated to Senators Hannegan, Dix, Cass, Turney, & Bagby my intention to nominate Senator Sevier to the Senate on to-morrow as commissioner to Mexico. I sent my Private Secretary to invite Senator Mangum of N. C. to call at my office, and he did so about 3 O'Clock P. M. Mr. Mangum, though a Whig, is a gentleman, and fair & manly in his opposition to my administration. He is a member of the committee of Foreign affairs of the Senate, and had zealously supported the ratification of the Mexican Treaty. After a conversation with him on the subject of the Treaty I informed him, and that was the principal object I had in sending for him, that I had tendered the Mission to Mexico to the Hon. Louis McLane of Baltimore, who had declined to accept, and that on the afternoon of saturday last I had invited Senator Sevier to accept

it, and that he had at first declined to accept, but had on my earnest solicitation finally agreed to do so. I informed Mr. Mangum that Mr. Sevier had felt a reluctance to accept it because [of] the active part he had taken in procuring the ratification of the Treaty, lest it might be imputed to him that he had had a personal object in view. I authorized Mr. Mangum, when his nomination was sent to the Senate, if he deemed proper to do so, to state the facts, and that Mr. Sevier had not the slightest intimation that I would select him until the afternoon of saturday, the day after the Treaty had been ratified by the Senate. Mr. Mangum intimated his preference for a joint commission of three commissioners, but expressed his satisfaction at my selection of Mr. Sevier, and said if it became necessary he would make the statement to the Senate which I had authorized him to make. I informed all the other Senators with whom I conversed to-day of the facts connected with Mr. Sevier's selection. Having made up my mind to appoint Robert M. Walsh, Esqr., of Pennsylvania, to be Secretary of Legation, I sent for him and tendered the appointment to him. He expressed his willingness to accept. Mr. Walsh was for many years Secretary of Legation to Brazil, and speaks and writes the Spanish and French languages, and is an educated gentleman, qualifications which emminently fit him for the Station. I saw the Secretaries of State & War and conferred with them freely in relation to the instructions to be given to the commissioner to Mexico, and to Gen'l Butler who commands the army in Mexico. In the midst of these important matters

I was greatly importuned for appointments to office by the crowd of persons who visited me to-day. I disposed of the business on my table as usual & retired at a late hour, much fatigued.

THURSDAY, *14th March, 1848.*— Several members of Congress called before the hour of meeting of the Cabinet this morning. The Cabinet assembled at the usual hour; all the members present. At 12 O'Clock I sent a message to the Senate nominating Senator Sevier of Arkansas to be commissioner, with the rank of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, to the Republic of Mexico; and Robert M. Walsh of Pennsylvania as Secretary of Legation. The Senate acted promptly on these nominations, and about an hour after they were sent in I received official notice that they had been confirmed. Mr. Buchanan read the draft of a despatch [1] which he had prepared to the minister of Foreign affairs of Mexico, to accompany the Mexican Treaty as amended by the Senate of the U. S., and explanatory of the amendments. Some slight modifications were suggested and made. The instructions to be given to Mr. Sevier were the subject of conversation and were agreed upon. They are to be prepared by Mr. Buchanan. The instructions to be given to Gen'l Butler, on the return of the amended Treaty, were also the subject of conversation and were agreed upon. They are to be prepared by Mr. Marcy. The Secretary of War submitted the answers of Gen'l Quitman and Gen'l Shields in reply to the letter of the Secre-

[1] Moore, *Buchanan,* VIII, 14–22.

tary of War on the subject of the council of War held by Gen'l Scott at Puebla, on the 17th of July last, at which Gen'l Scott submitted the proposition of the propriety of using money to bribe the Mexican authorities with a view to obtain peace. These letters, together with those heretofore received from Gen'l Pillow and Gen'l Twiggs, disclose a state of facts in relation to Gen'l Scott's and Mr. Trist's action in the matter, as to render it indispensibly necessary to investigate the subject further. I expressed the opinion to the Secretary of War that the Court of Enquiry of which Gen'l Tomson is President, now sitting in Mexico, should be directed to investigate it, and its connection, if any, with the halting of our army after the battle of Cherubusco on the 20th of August, and the subsequent armistice. There is ground to suspect that there was an understanding between Gen'l Scott & Santa Anna; that money was to be paid; that the army was to be halted before entering the City of Mexico; that an armistice was to follow and a Treaty be made. The matter must now be probed, and the whole of the facts be brought out. The subject was one of conversation in the Cabinet, but no definite decision was made. The Cabinet adjourned about 2 O'Clock P. M., and I disposed [of] several matters of business on my table.

This was reception evening, and the usual number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, attended.

WEDNESDAY, *15th March, 1848.*—An unusual number of persons called this morning, and my patience was almost exhausted by the importunities of

the office-seekers. For the convenience of members of Congress who wish to see me on business I am compelled to keep my office open each day until 12 O'Clock; and this affords an opportunity for all the adventurers and loafers who come to Washington, to crowd in and annoy me for offices. I refuse their applications one after another, but still they occupy much of my time. At 12 O'Clock I was glad to close my office. Mr. Sevier, U. S. minister to Mexico, called, and I had a long interview with him in relation to the objects of his mission. During the interview Mr. Buchanan called and read the draft of the instructions [1] to Mr. Sevier which he had prepared. I suggested a single modification, which he said he would make. The balance of the day I spent in attending to various official duties.

I learned with much surprise last evening that a motion had been made in Executive Session of the Senate to remove the injunction of Secrecy from the proceedings of that body on the ratification of the Mexican treaty. Believing that if the motion prevailed it would endanger, if not defeat, the ratification by Mexico, I spoke to several Senators, who called last night and this morning, & requested them to prevent it. There is no precedent for removing the injunction of secrecy from the proceedings of the Senate on Treaties, until after both parties have ratified the Treaty, & the ratifications have been exchanged. In this case, it would be peculiarly unfortunate to do so, because it would expose to Mexico, whilst the ratification of the Treaty on her part was

[1] Moore, *Buchanan,* VIII, 8–14.

still pending, the divisions in the Senate, as shown by the recorded votes on various propositions of amendment and on the final ratification, and would excite their hopes that by refusing to ratify they might hereafter obtain better terms. It would also expose to them the confidential instructions given to Mr. Slidell & Mr. Trist; as well as enable Senators opposed to the Treaty to publish their speeches on the Mexican side of the question, delivered in Executive Session. The removal of the injunction of Secrecy at this time could not be otherwise than mischievous.

THURSDAY, *16th March, 1848.*— It would seem that the annoyance to which I am subjected by the importunities of office seekers is never to cease. To-day an unusual number of them crowded my office, and among them several females, seeking places for their sons, brothers, or husbands. At one time to-day two ladies of respectability, whom I know, were addressing me at the same time in behalf of their brother, whom I have understood is a drunkard & wholly unworthy of any public trust. They desired to have him pensioned on the Government. They occupied half an hour of my time. Several other females were among the number who called on like errands. It is most disgusting that women are sent to me to seek office for their worthless relations, and whenever they apply the presumption with me is that the persons for whom they apply are unworthy of public employment.

I spent near two hours to-day in conferring with Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Clifford, and Mr. Mason in

relation to Mr. Sevier's instructions as minister to Mexico. An important question had arisen, whether, in the event of the Mexican Treaty as amended by the Senate was ratified by Mexico, the Secretary of the Treasury could execute a bond or obligation of indebtedness to Mexico bearing date at this time, but not to be delivered until the ratifications were exchanged. It was desirable that Mr. Sevier should take with him such contingent obligations, if it were lawful to issue them; for without an assurance that some evidence would be given to Mexico for the payment of the four installments of 3 millions each according to the stipulations of the Treaty, the Mexican Government might be unwilling to ratify it. Mr. Buchanan was clear that such evidence of indebtedness might be, and ought to be, furnished to Mr. Sevier by the Secretary of the Treasury. I concurred in this opinion and so did Judge Mason. Mr. Clifford at first dou[b]ted the legal authority to issue them, but finally assented that it was necessary and would be proper. Mr. Buchanan stated that Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, whom he had seen, & who was confined to his house to-day by sickness, doubted his authority. After discussing the subject, Mr. Buchanan & Mr. Clifford went to the House of Mr. Walker and conferred with him on the subject. Mr. Clifford returned and informed me that Mr. Walker had become satisfied and would issue the obligations, to be delivered by Mr. Sevier only upon the exchange of ratifications of the Treaty.

I sent my Private Secretary to see the Secretary of War, who was also confined to his house to-day by

sickness, to suggest to him the propriety of sending to the Court of Inquiry in Mexico of which Gen'l Tomson is President, instructions to embrace in their inquiries an investigation of the alleged use of public money by Gen'l Scott as a secret service fund to induce the mexican authorities to make peace. The answers of Gen'ls Scott, Pillow, Twiggs, Shields, & Quitman to enquiries made of them on the subject disclosed facts which made such an investigation proper. The Secretary of War being ill, after my Private Secretary returned from his house I saw Mr. Mason & Col. Cooper, asst. adjt. Gen'l, and directed the points to which the enquiries were to be made. This is a very delicate subject, and as a public examination into the facts might operate prejudicially upon the Mexican mind, I directed that the court of Enquiry might, if they chose, conduct the investigation in closed doors. Col. Cooper made a memorandum of the points of enquiry to which the attention of the Court of enquiry was to be directed.

I disposed of much business on my table to-day.

FRIDAY, *17th March, 1848.*— I had a large number of visitors this morning, most of them seeking office as is usually the case. A delegation of Cherokees waited on me and were introduced by the commissioner of Indian affairs. The Secretary of War has been confined to his house by sickness for two or three days, and being still so I saw Col. Cooper, asst. adjt. Gen'l and gave him further instructions in regard to despatches which he was preparing for the Court of Enquiry now sitting in Mexico, and to

Gen'l Butler, which, under my direction, he is preparing for the Secretary of War. About 2 O'Clock P. M. I was much concerned to learn that Mr. Sevier, lately appointed commissioner to Mexico, and who was expected to set out on his mission, was seriously ill. His instructions and all the despatches are prepared. I immediately addressed a note to his relation, Hon. R. W. Johnson [1] of the Ho. Repts., and sent my messenger with it to his boarding house to ascertain his actual condition. Mr. Johnson called shortly afterwards, when I learned that Mr. Sevier was quite ill, so much so that his physician had refused to permit any persons to visit him. I saw Mr. Buchanan on the subject, and decided at once that another commissioner to Mexico must be appointed, with full powers, &c., to proceed to Mexico with the Treaty as amended & ratified by the Senate. It was a case of emergency and no time was to be lost. I thought of Mr. Clifford, the Atto. Gen'l of the U. S., as a fit person, and one who was already informed of all my views, and told Mr. Buchanan if he would accept of the mission I would appoint him. Mr. Buchanan concurred with me in opinion as to Mr. Clifford's fitness. I sent for Mr. Clifford and informed him of the emergency which had arisen, and informed him that I wished him to accept the mission. The tender of the mission took him by surprise, but he said if I deemed it to be necessary for the public service he would accept it. I told him I would appoint him, if Mr. Sevier con-

[1] Robert W. Johnson, 1814–1879, Representative from Arkansas 1847–1853, Senator 1853–1861.

tinued so ill as to render it improbable that he could proceed to Mexico in two or three days. His attack, I understand, is such as he has been subject to, and from which he may recover speedily. I sent my Private Secretary to the Capitol to inform the chairman of the committee on Foreign affairs of the Senate, that in consequence of Mr. Sevier's indisposition, I would probably desire to nominate another commissioner to Mexico on to-morrow, and to request him to prevail on the Senate not to adjourn over until monday, as I learned they would probably do. The Senate is in the habit of adjourning over from Thursday or Friday in each week to monday, when no pressing business requires them to be in Session on Saturdays.

I had a Dinner party to-day, consisting of about 20 members of Congress, and three or four other persons. This was reception evening. The usual number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, attended.

SATURDAY, *18th March, 1848.*— This morning the Hon. Mr. Johnson, the brother-in-law of Mr. Sevier, and Dr. Hall, his attending physician, called and reported to me that Mr. Sevier had been quite ill last night, but was better this morning. From Dr. Hall's statement of his condition I was satisfied, if he recovered speedily, he could not be able to proceed on his mission to Mexico for some days to come; and I determined to nominate Mr. Clifford to the Senate as an associate commissioner to Mexico, with full diplomatic powers, to act either separately, or jointly with Mr. Sevier, if the latter should recover

from his illness and be able to follow & join him in Mexico. At my request Mr. Buchanan waited on Mr. Sevier, and learned from him that Mr. Clifford's appointment as associate commissioner would be entirely satisfactory to him. I sent for Senator Hannegan, chairman of the committee of Foreign affairs, and for Senator Cass, and informed them that they might explain to the Senate the necessity for the appointment of another commissioner. At 12 O'Clock I sent Mr. Clifford's nomination to the Senate and it was immediately confirmed by the Senate. At 5 O'Clock P. M. Mr. Clifford rode with me in my carriage to Mr. Sevier's boarding house, and [we learned that he was] better than he was in the morning. He was perfectly satisfied with Mr. Clifford's association with him as a joint commissioner, & thought he would be able to follow him in a few days. After night Mr. Clifford called, and I held a full conversation with him on the subject of his mission and its objects. He handed to me his Resignation of the office of Atto. Gen'l of the U. States. I informed him that I would not fill the place by a permanent appointment, but would make an appointment *ad interim,* in the hope that his absence on his mission might be of short duration, and that on his return I would desire him to resume the office of Atto. General. Mr. Clifford's appointment as commissioner is the best, under all the circumstances, which I could have made. He is perfectly familiar with all my views, as often discussed in the Cabinet, in relation to the Treaty and all its provisions. He is, too, a very discreet, sensible man. I[n]deed, upon the

happening of the sudden illness of Mr. Sevier, and the necessity of despatching another commissioner without delay, there is no other person out of my Cabinet, who could have been so well prepared to carry out my views. Mr. Clifford took leave of me in my office about 10 O'Clock to-night and will proceed on his journey, accompanied by Mr. Walsh, the Secretary of Legation, to-morrow morning at 3 O'Clock. He will travel by the Southern route. He bears despatches from the War Department to Gen'l Butler & the Court of Enquiry in Mexico of which Gen'l Tomson is President, and a letter to Gen'l Scott. He also bears despatches from the Secretary of the Navy to Commodore Perry, who is in command of the naval squadron in the gulf of Mexico.

This was the regular day for the meeting of the Cabinet, but no regular meeting was held. All the members were present at different periods of the day, except the Secretaries of the Treasury and War, both of whom are confined to their houses by sickness. I determined to appoint Mr. Clifford without having a Cabinet meeting on the subject, for I had no time to do so.

SUNDAY, *19th March, 1848.*— This was a wet day. I was much wearied by the unceasing labours of the past week. I did not attend church, but remained quiet & rested. Mrs. Polk did not attend church.

MONDAY, *20th March, 1848.*— A large number of persons called this morning, some to pay their respects and others on business, and, of course, some

seeking office, as is always the case when my office is opened for the reception of company. I appointed Judge Mason, the Secretary of the Navy, Acting Atto. Gen'l of the U. S. *ad interim,* during the absence of Mr. Clifford, or until a permanent appointment is made. Mr. Clifford left with me his resignation when he set out on his mission to Mexico on saturday night last. I did not accept it or take any action upon it, intending, if Mr. Clifford should return in two or three months, to re-appoint him attorney General. He is a safe and able lawyer and I was satisfied with him as a member of my Cabinet. I sent a message [1] to the Ho. Repts. to-day in answer to their Resolution of the 7th of February last, calling for the correspondence of Gen'ls Scott and Taylor and Mr. Trist. It was a very voluminous document, requiring much time in its preperation. It was delayed, moreover, for some days, from the fact that the originals of that part of it containing Mr. Trist's correspondence with the Department of State had, in order to save time in copying, been sent to the Senate confidentially in their Executive Session, during the pendency of the Mexican Treaty before that body, & had not been returned to the State Dept. I sent last week to the Secretary of the Senate to procure a copy of parts of the correspondence proper to be published with a view to send it to the House, and these copies were not completed until this morning. I learn that when my message reached the House to-day, that body were engaged in voting upon a Resolution enquiring into the cause of

[1] Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents,* IV, 577.

the delay in answering their Resolution. The resolution, I understand, was introduced by Mr. Clingman of N. C. last week. Mr. Appleton, the chief clerk of the Department of State, informs me that Mr. Dickens, the Secretary of the Senate, had informed Mr. Clingman of the cause of delay, *viz.,* that a part of the correspondence was in possession of the Senate and could not be furnished sooner by the State Dept. Notwithstanding Mr. Clingman had this information, it suited his party purposes to press his Resolution this morning. Mr. Clingman is a violent Whig. The announcement of my message to the House put an end to the party capital which he expected to make by his resolution. The conduct of Mr. Clingman was such as demagogues & little partisans will sometimes resort to. The Secretary of War, who had partially recovered from his indisposition, called to-day & spent two or three hours with me on official business. Among other things we examined the numerous recommendations for the 10 Cadets at large to be appointed by the President, and agreed upon the selections to be made, except one or two, which I will decide upon in a day or two. I cleared my table of the business upon it. After night Senators Hannegan & Bagby called.

TUESDAY, *21st March, 1848.*— I saw company and transacted business as usual this morning. The Cabinet met at the usual hour; all the members present (the office of Atto. Gen'l being filled *ad interim* by Judge Mason). The Senate of the U. S. having

passed a Resolution calling for a letter[1] addressed by the Secretary of State to Mr. Larkin, U. S. consul at Monterey, in California, in October, 1845, it was a question submitted for consideration to-day whether it was compatible with the public interest to comply with the call. The letter was read. It was confidential and had for its object the protection of American interests and the prevention of Brittish and French interference in California. All agreed that the letter should not have been called for, but that as it had been called for a refusal to furnish it would lead to erroneous inferences, prejudicial to the administration. A false impression is being attempted by the opposition in Congress, to be made, to the effect that this letter to Mr. Larkin contained instructions to produce a revolution in California before Mexico commenced the War against the U. S., & that Col. Fremont had the authority to make the revolution. The publication of the letter will prove the falsehood of such an inference. It was finally concluded to send the letter in, omitting a single paragraph relating to the probable designs of England on California. Some other business, of no great moment, was considered and disposed of. This was reception evening. Many persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

WEDNESDAY, *22nd March, 1848.*— Many persons called this morning. I was importuned for office as usual. At 12 O'Clock I closed my office

[1] Moore, *Buchanan,* VI, 275.

and proceeded to consider the business on my table. I send [sent] a message to the Senate in answer to a call made by that body for the correspondence of Mr. Wise, late U. S. Minister to Brazil. I spent some time with the Secretary of War on business. After he left I spent some time, also, with the Secretary of State on business. I disposed of much business of detail which was on my table. In the afternoon I gave a short sitting to Mr. Kellogg, in the ladies parlour above stairs, for my portrait. Mr. Kellogg is an artist of merit. He took my portrait at Nashville, while I was Governor of Tennessee in 1840. He has spent several years in Italy since that time. At his request Mrs. Polk & myself have agreed to sit for him for our portraits. He desires to take them to Europe with him. After night I was occupied as usual in my office.

THURSDAY, *23rd March, 1848.*— I was occupied as usual this morning in receiving visitors. Many persons called, some on business, some to pay their respects, and many on the usual errand, which so much annoys me, of seeking office. I was glad to be relieved from the pressure, especially of the office seekers, by closing my office at 12 O'Clock. I transacted business with some of my Secretaries & other public officers, and disposed of much public business on my table. I was much astonished at having the fact called to my attention this morning by my Private Secretary that the New York *Herald* of yesterday contained my confidential message to the Senate transmitting the Mexican Treaty to the Senate

for their ratification. After learning the fact I mentioned it to two or three Senators who called, and expressed my indignation at the breach of confidence which had been committed by some one, by which it had been communicated to the press. I learned also, but did not see the paper, that a portion of the confidential correspondence which accompanied my message with the Treaty to the Senate, had also been published in some other paper in New York. All communications relating to Treaties are made to the Senate in confidence, and in Executive Session. The Senate are in the habit of ordering such Executive communications to be printed in confidence for their own use; and some Senator has probably furnished a printed copy for publication, either to the Editors or to some of the unprincipled letter-writers who are stationed at Washington to collect news for them. Shortly after the Mexican Treaty was ratified by the Senate, I was informed that a motion had been made in the Senate to remove the injunction of Secrecy from their proceedings and the documents relating to the Treaty. I deemed it very important that this should not be done while the question of the ratification of the Treaty by Mexico was pending, and so expressed myself to many Senators who called, and among the rest to Senator Hannegan, the chairman of the committee of Foreign affairs. The injunction has not been taken off by the Senate, but now it appears that a part of these confidential papers are being published in the papers of New York. I learned in the morning that the Senate had appointed a committee to investigate how these confidential

communications had found their way into the New York papers. I am glad of it, and hope they will ascertain the guilty person and punish him. I had a dinner party to-day consisting of between 20 and 30 members of Congress and others. All the Democratic members of Congress, with few exceptions, & many of the Whig members have dined with me during the present Session of Congress. The late Senator Sevier of Arkansas, who had been appointed commissioner to Mexico, and who by sudden illness had been prevented from proceeding on his mission, called to-day and informed me that, though still feeble from his late attack, he had resolved to leave for mexico in the Southern Boat of to-morrow morning. I had a long conversation with him in relation to the objects of his mission.

FRIDAY, *24th March, 1848.*— I saw company as usual this morning. I closed my office at 12 O'Clock, and transacted business on my table and saw several of the public officers on business. I learned this morning that additional confidential documents communicated to the Senate with the Mexican Treaty, had been published in the New York *Herald,* and among others, the instructions to Mr. Slidell, given in November, 1845. These instructions I had refused to communicate to the Ho. Repts., in answer to a Resolution of that body calling for them, during the present Session of Congress, because I deemed their publication, pending the war with Mexico and until a Treaty of peace was concluded and ratified, prejudicial to the public interests. For the infor-

mation of the Senate, in Executive Session, I had communicated these instructions confidentially. The publication of these instructions and other documents sent to the Senate with the Mexican Treaty is a great outrage, and the person through whose agency it has been done deserves to be severely rebuked and punished (see this diary of yesterday). I sent a message [1] to the Senate to-day, in answer to a Resolution of that body calling for a letter addressed by the Secretary of State to Mr. Larkin, U. S. consul in California, in 1845. The subject of transmitting this letter to the Senate was considered in the Cabinet on the 22nd Inst. (see this diary of that day). On further reflection I came to the conclusion that its publication would be prejudicial to the public interests. The Resolution of the Senate calling for it had been passed in Legislative Session, and if the letter was communicated to the Senate in legislative session it would, of course, become public. I finally determined to communicate it in confidence in Executive Session, and after expressing my own opinion that it ought not to be made public, cast the responsibility of its publication on the Senate, if they chose to publish it, and this I did in my message. My Private Secretary returned from the Capitol about 3 O'Clock, and informed me that Senator Mangum of N. C. had told him that the committee appointed on yesterday to investigate by whose agency the Mexican Treaty and the confidential documents accompanying it had been published in the New York papers, had held a meeting this morning, and that they had examined

[1] Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents,* IV, 578.

a letter writer named Nugent, who corresponds with the New York *Herald* over the signature of Galvienses; that this witness had admitted that he had furnished a copy of the Treaty & confidential correspondence to the *Herald* for publication; had said, in his testimony, that he had not procured the copy from any Senator, but to the interrogatory whether he had obtained it from either of the Cabinet or Executive Departments, had refused to answer. Mr. Mangum informed Col. Walker that it was, he learned, pretty well understood that the copy had been obtained from the State Department. I was much astonished at this information. In taking my usual walk after dinner I met the Secretary of War and informed him of what I had heard. He was as much surprised as I was. Shortly after I returned from my walk Senator Hannegan called, & stated to me in substance the same thing which Mr. Mangum had communicated to Col. Walker. Mr. Hannegan told me that Senator Wescott had stated in debate, in Executive Session of the Senate to-day, that there was no doubt the copy had been obtained from Mr. Buchanan. Mr. Hannegan expressed his own belief that the fact was so, & added that such was the belief of the Senate. He said that much discussion had taken place in Executive Session on the subject, and that the Senate had finally added two more members to the committee of investigation, of whom he himself was one. I told him I hoped that there was a mistake about the copy of the Treaty and documents having been obtained at the State Department, but that I hoped the committee would probe the matter to the bot-

tom and as[c]ertain how and from whom they had been obtained. Mr. Hannegan said it was now notorious that this fellow, Nugent, the correspondent of the New York *Herald* over the signature of Galvienses, was in habits of intimacy with Mr. Buchanan; that he had for weeks been writing letters to the *Herald* praising Mr. Buchanan and abusing me. He said that Senators had called at the State Department and could not gain admittance to the Secretary because this fellow, Nugent, was closetted with him. He was very strong in his expressions, & had no doubt on his own mind that Mr. Buchanan had furnished him a copy of the Treaty & documents. I repeated the hope that it might turn out otherwise. Mr. Hannegan left and shortly afterwards the Secretary of War called, & told me he had seen Senators Wescott & Dickinson; that the latter knew nothing but what had transpired in the Senate to-day; but that Mr. Wescott had affirmed to him the confident opinion that the documents had been furnished by Mr. Buchanan, or been obtained at the Department of State. These disclosures gave me great pain. This fellow, Nugent, the correspondent of the New York *Herald,* is unknown to me. I never saw him, or if I did I did not know who he was. I have heard often of him, as one of the unprincipled letter-writers stationed at Washington who works for whoever will pay them best. I have often, within the last few months, been told that he was constantly about the State Department & at Mr. Buchanan's house, and that he is in his employ to puff him as a candidate for the Presidency. I fear this is true. Mr. Buchanan

though undoubtedly a man of talents, is in some respects a very weak man, and in nothing has he shown himself more mistaken, so far as his true interests are concerned, than in permitting so unprincipled a man as this letter-writer to enjoy his confidence. A few weeks ago Mr. Buchanan held a conversation with me on the subject of his intercourse with this letter-writer (see this diary of that period) and I then gave him my opinion very freely against the propriety of doing so. There is no reliance to be placed in Nugent. I would not believe him on his oath, and I fear Mr. Buchanan has placed himself in his power. Several members of Congress have within the last few weeks made insinuations to me, and some of them have openly expressed the opinion, that Mr. Buchanan had apprehensions that the Democratic National Convention, which is to meet at Baltimore in May next, might insist upon nominating me for a second term, and that, fearing this, he had procured this letter-writer to assail me through the New York *Herald* with a view to prevent such a result. The circumstances, I must confess, favour this belief. Nugent has been for weeks notoriously in constant and intimate intercourse with Mr. Buchanan, and during the same period his letters to the *Herald* have praised Mr. Buchanan, while they have been full of misrepresentations in relation to myself, and have abused Gen'l Cass and Mr. Woodbury, who are supposed to be Mr. Buchanan's chief competitors for the nomination for the Presidency. These circumstances, though strong, are not conclusive that Mr. Buchanan has instigated the attacks upon me. If

they were conclusive beyond the possibility of doubt, I would dismiss him from my Cabinet, for I would keep no one near me who was capable of such conduct.

It is a remarkable circumstance, in view of the foregoing facts & circumstances, that Mr. Buchanan today addressed me a note in the following words, *viz.*, "Mr. Buchanan respectfully requests that the President would furnish him with a copy of the letter which he addressed to the President in February, 1845, in answer to the President's letter of February 17th, 1845. If Mr. B. kept a copy of his answer it cannot now be found. 24th February [March], 1848." My letter of the 17th of February, 1845, is one addressed to each of the gentlemen invited to accept places in my cabinet, stating to them severally that if they accepted, and should become candidates for the Presidency or Vice Presidency, they would be expected upon the happening of that event to retire from my Cabinet. They all answered assenting to this condition. Mr. Buchanan has been publicly a candidate for the Democratic nomination for the Presidency for some months past, & this is the first time that he seems to have remembered the promise contained in his letter, for a copy of which he now asks. I have constantly, for months, felt the embarrassment which he gave me by remaining in the Cabinet. He has been selfish, & all his acts and opinions seem to have been controlled with a view to his own advancement, so much so that I can have no confidence or reliance in any advice he may give upon public questions. I could not, though feeling sen-

sibly the embarrassment which his remaining in the Cabinet, and his selfish views, produced, dismiss him during the pendency of the war with Mexico, and in the face of a talented and powerful opposition in Congress, without the hazard of doing great injury to my administration by endangering the success of all my measures. I have therefore borne with him and overlooked his weaknesses, for the sake of the public good. He is probably now troubled, in consequence of the investigations going on in the Senate concerning the publication in the New York *Herald,* through the agency of his political friend & my calumniator, Nugent, and it is a little singular that this precise period of time is selected by him to request a copy of his letter to me of February, 1845. I will search for his letter & direct my Private Secretary to give him a copy of it.

This being reception evening, a large number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

SATURDAY, *25th March, 1848.*— Though this was Cabinet day, I saw a number of members of Congress who called. The Cabinet met at the usual hour, all the members present, there being no Atto. Gen'l since Mr. Clifford left for Mexico a week ago. No business of importance was transacted. Mr. Buchanan read a private letter from Sir George Simpson to a friend in New York, offering to sell to a company, or to the U. S., all the rights of the Hudson's Bay company in Oregon, including the right to navigate the Columbia River, for one million of Dollars. This letter had been sent to Mr. Buchanan confi-

dentially. It was the subject of conversation in the Cabinet, but I did not deem it advisable to take any action upon it, at least for the present. I had a conversation with the Secretary of the Treasury about the finances & the present means of the Treasury. Some other business of minor importance was disposed [of], and the Cabinet adjourned about 2 O'Clock. After Mr. Buchanan & Mr. Walker had left, the subject of the investigation now going on in the Senate in relation to the publication in the New York papers of the Mexican Treaty & the confidential documents accompanying it (see this diary of yesterday and the day preceeding) took place between Mr. Marcy, Mr. Mason, Mr. Johnson, & myself. After they retired I felt it to be proper to send for Mr. Buchanan & to hold a conversation with him on the subject, and I did so. It was the first conversation I had had with him on the subject. He had not mentioned it to me, and I had felt a delicacy and reluctance to mention it to him sooner. He said he had had no agency in causing the publication to be made; that he had heard all that had occurred before the committee of the Senate who were investigating it; and that he was able to account for all the printed copies of the Treaty and correspondence which had been furnished to the State Department. He said that a conspiracy had been formed by certain Senators to fix the publication on him, or rather that Nugent, the correspondent of the New York *Herald,* had obtained the copy of the Treaty and correspondence from him, or from the State Department. He said that he had written a letter to Sen-

ator Cameron denying it, but had not sent it, as, on reflection, he thought his position as Secretary of State and his character should protect him from such an imputation. He spoke very harshly of Senator Wescott, and said he was capable of selling the copy to which he was entitled as a Senator for two dollars. He asked me if I thought he had furnished the copy to Nugent. I told [him] I did not. Of course I could not say otherwise after his positive denial that he had. I expressed my contempt for Nugent and all the other hired letter writers at Washington, regarding them, as I did, as employees wholly destitute of principle, and my regret that he had had any connection or intercourse with them. I said to him that I had expressed this opinion of them to him some weeks ago (see this diary of that period) and regretted extremely that he had since that time permitted Nugent to continue to visit his Department & hold confidential intercourse with him, and that he would now see the consequences of having done so. He said he had permitted him to do so in order to secure the support of the New York *Herald* to the Mexican War, and of [to] the administration. He said he supposed that he had written or revised twenty articles which Nugent had caused to appear in the *Herald,* supporting the war, and that Mr. Walker had through Nugent caused the *Herald* to support his Treasury Report and financial policy. I replied that it would [have] been much better to let the *Herald* take any course it pleased, rather [than] have anything to do with this unprincipled hired let-

ter writer. I told him that he knew that Nugent had been for months [calumniating], and still continued to calumniate and abuse me in his infamous letters to the *Herald,* and that this was a singular mode of giving the support of the *Herald* to my administration. He said that Mr. Walker and himself had both urged Nugent not to abuse me, but that they could not restrain or prevent him from doing so. I told him that it was deeply to be regretted that he had permitted so unprincipled a scoundrel to approach him, or to have anything to do with him. I did not say to him, because I desired if possible to avoid a rupture with him, that in my opinion no member of my Cabinet who was faithful to my administration and to me, would employ for any purpose a man who was habitually abusing & calumniating the Head of the Government. My conversation with Mr. Buchanan on the point of his intercourse with this fellow, Nugent, was not satisfactory.

Senator Hannegan called after night and informed me that the committee of the Senate had been in session several hours to-day; that Nugent had been again before them as a witness; and had positively refused to answer the question whether he obtained the copy of the Mexican Treaty & documents which he had forwarded to the New York *Herald* from the State Dept. or any officer connected with that Dept., upon the ground that he would not, by answering that question, put the State Dept. on trial. Mr. Hannegan told me that a member of the Committee

had stated, in Nugent's presence, that Mr. Buchanan had positively denied that he had any knowledge of, or participation in, furnishing the Treaty & documents from the State Dept., & that he had expressed his surprise, and enquired if he had positively denied it, & afterwards explained his surprise by saying that [it was] inconsistent with the dignity of the Secretary of State to condescend to make a denial. I told Mr. Hannegan that Mr. Buchanan had made the same denial to me to-day. Mr. Hannegan remarked in terms of strong condemnation Mr. Buchanan's intimacy and intercourse with Nugent, and stated that Senators had called at the State Dept. & could not see the Secretary on business, when Nugent was, on sending in his name, at once admitted. It was evident that Mr. Hannegan believed that Nugent had obtained the Treaty & documents from the State Dept. Mr. Hannegan enquired of me if there would be anything improper in his calling and seeing Mr. Buchanan on the subject. I answered that I perceived no impropriety in his doing so. He said he believed he would do so, but he was afraid he would find Nugent with him. He left me, leaving me uncertain whether he would call on Mr. Buchanan or not. Near 12 O'Clock at night I retired much fatigued. I have omitted to mention that I visited "Power's Greek Slave" this afternoon in company with Mr. Kellogg, the artist. This admirable work of art is now exhibiting in this City.

SUNDAY, *26th March, 1848.*— Mrs. Polk and myself attended the First Presbyterian church to-day.

MONDAY, *27th March, 1848.*— An unusually large number of persons called this morning and among them several ladies. Many of them were seeking offices, a business of which there is no end. I closed my office at 12 O'Clock. The Secretary of War & the commissioner of Indian affairs called at 1 O'Clock, and presented to me a delegation of Head-men and chiefs of [the] Creek nation of Indians, who had visited Washington on the business of their tribe. After conferring with the Secretary of War (the Indian Delegation having retired) I made the appointment of 10 cadets at large to West Point, which the President is authorized by law to make. Brig. Gen'l Shields [of the] U. S. army called to-day and held a conversation of an hour with me. I disposed of the business on my table as usual. In the evening Senators Cass and Felch and Mr. McClelland, a Representative from Michigan, called on business. Senator Cass informed me that Nugent, the letter-writer for the New York *Herald,* had to-day given a written statement acquitting Mr. Buchanan of all agency in furnishing him with a copy of the Mexican Treaty and confidential correspondence, which he had furnished to the New York *Herald.* Gen'l Cass said that the whole Senate now acquitted Mr. Buchanan of all agency in furnishing the documents, & that all were equally agreed that Nugent was an unprincipled man. Gen'l Cass expressed his gratification that Mr. Buchanan was relieved from all imputation in relation to any agency in the transaction. I am myself gratified that Mr Buchanan is thus relieved from so injurious an im-

putation. He will now, I hope, learn a profitable lesson, and that is that it is dangerous to have any connection or intercourse with the unprincipled letter writers at Washington. He had taken this scoundrel, Nugent, into his confidence in order to have himself puffed by his letters in the New York *Herald* as a candidate for the Presidency, and by placing himself thus in his power has been very near being disgraced and ruined by him. It was his notorious intimacy with Nugent which gave probability to the imputation that Nugent had obtained the Treaty & documents at the State Department. Senator Turney and several members of the Ho. Repts. called this evening.

TUESDAY, *28th March, 1848.*— Several members of Congress called before the hour of meeting of the Cabinet this morning. The Cabinet assembled at the usual hour this morning, all the members present. I consulted the Cabinet as to the persons proper to be nominated as charge d'affairs to the Papal States; and to the Republics of Guatamala, Bolivia, and Ecuador, and asked their advice on the subject. The act of Congress making appropriations to defray the expenses of these missions passed a day or two ago. Despatches were presented & read by the Secretary of War from Gen'l Scott & Gen'l Butler, dated at the City of Mexico on the 2nd Inst. The despatches of Gen'l Butler related exclusively to military operations, & gave no information of the prospects of the assembling of the Mexican Congress, or the ratification by Mexico of the Treaty of peace.

The despatch from Gen'l Scott was filled with complaints at being superseded in the command, and contained an uncourteous & even violent attack upon the Secretary of War, and through him on the Government. The despatch is weak and malignant, and requires an answer, which can be very easily given, placing Gen'l S. wholly in the wrong. After the transaction of some other business of no general importance the Cabinet adjourned. I learn to-night that the Senate in Executive Session were again occupied a part of the day in relation to the investigation into the publication of [the] Mexican Treaty & confidential correspondence accompanying it in the New York papers, & had come to no conclusion. This Nugent still persists in refusing to disclose how or from whom he obtained the copy which he admits he sent to the New York *Herald.*

This was reception evening. The usual number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

WEDNESDAY, *29th March, 1848.*— Many persons, members of Congress and others, called this morning; some on business, others to pay their respects, and not a few seeking office. After conferring with Senators Dix & Dickinson of N. Y. & Senators Cass & Breese and the Secretary of State in relation to the missions to The Papal States, to the Republics of Guatamala, Bolivia, & Ecuador, I sent a message to the Senate nominating Joshua L. Martin,[1] now Secretary of the Legation of the U. S. at Paris, to

[1] Jacob L. Martin of North Carolina, incorrectly nominated to the Senate by Polk as Joshua L. Martin. He was Chief Clerk

be charge d'affaires to the Papal States; Elijah Hise of Ky. to be charge d'affaires to the Republic of Guatamala; and John Appleton of Maine to be charge d'affaires to the Republic of Bolivia. Mr. Vanburgh Livingston of New York was much pressed for the mission to the Papal states. For reasons which I deemed satisfactory I deemed it improper to appoint him, but authorized Senators Dix & Dickinson this morning to say to him that he could have one of the South American missions if he desired it. About 12 O'Clock Mr. Livingston called, when I offered him the mission to Guatamala. He said he would desire to consult his friends and his family before he could decide whether he could accept. He also objected to Guatamala and expressed a preference, if he accepted a mission to any of the South American States, to go to Ecuador. I asked him to call again in the course of an hour & I would inform him whether I would appoint him to Ecuador. I sent for Mr. Buchanan & Mr. Appleton, the latter of whom I had determined to appoint to one of the missions. After a conference with them I determined to appoint Mr. Appleton to Bolivia. When Mr. Livingston returned I informed him that I could appoint him to Ecuador if he desired it. He said he would return to N. Y. & after consulting his friends & Mrs. Livingston would give me [an] answer. I learn this evening that the Senate have adopted an order in Executive Session requiring Nugent, the correspondent of the N. Y. *Herald* who

of the State Department 1840–1841, and Secretary of Legation at Paris 1844–1848.

communicated to that paper the Mexican Treaty & confidential documents, to appear at the bar of the Senate to-morrow to answer how and from whom he obtained them.

After night the Hon. Louis McLane of Baltimore, accompanied by his son, the Hon. Rob't M. McLane, called & spent more than an hour with me.

The French Minister (Pageot) addressed an official note to-day to the Secretary of State announcing that in consequence of the dethronement of Louis Phillipe, the King of the French, his functions as Envoy extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary would cease from this day. Mr. Buchanan read to me an official note which he had prepared in reply. The Revolution in France is complete, [the news] being fully confirmed by the arrival of the Steamer Calidonia at Boston two days ago. A provisional Government upon the basis of a Republic has succeeded the French Monarchy, suddenly and almost without bloodshed. It is the most remarkable, as well as the most important event of modern times.

THURSDAY, *30th March, 1848.*— Many persons called as usual this morning. I closed my office at 12 O'Clock. Mr. Buchanan brought to me the foreign mail, brought by the steamer Caledonia and received this morning. There was a private letter from Mr. Rush to Mr. Buchanan, stating that he had forwarded an official despatch on the day preceding its date. Unfortunately the despatch was not received. Despatches were received from Mr. Donelson, U. S. Minister to Prussia, and from several of

the U. S. consuls in Germany and the Two Sicilies. Great sensation had been produced by the Revolution in France, & the people of the German States and of Italy were making large demands of their sovereigns and the latter were making large concessions to their subjects. It is impossible to anticipate what the effect of the French Revolution may be upon the other Powers of Europe. One of two things will probably happen; either there will be a general war, or more liberal institutions must be granted by every European sovereign to their subjects than they have heretofore enjoyed.

Many matters of business had accumulated on my table & I spent several hours in disposing of them. I saw the Secretary of War and transacted business with him. After night Senator Hannegan called, & being chairman of the committee of Foreign affairs of the Senate I communicated to him the Foreign news which had been received. He informed me that the Senate to-day had called Mr. Nugent, the correspondent of the New York *Herald,* to the bar of the Senate and interrogated him as to the manner & from whom he had obtained the Copy of the Mexican Treaty and the confidential correspondence accompanying it, which he had admitted he furnished to the New [York] *Herald.* Mr. Hanegan informed me that Nugent had refused to answer the interrogatories propounded to him, and that the Senate had committed him to the custody of the Sargeant at arms.

Mr. C. J. Ingersoll called to-night & spent half an hour in conversation with me about the late

French Revolution, and its probable results & effects upon France & the other Powers of Europe.

FRIDAY, *31st March, 1848.*— My time was occupied as usual in seeing company until 12 O'Clock, when I closed my office. Mr. Buchanan communicated to me a despatch received from Mr. Rush, the U. S. Minister at Paris, dated March 4th, and received at the Department of State last night. It gave official information of the overthrow of the French Monarchy, and the establishment in its stead of a Provisional Government based on Republican principles. I immediately determined that it was proper to communicate the despatch to Congress, and in the afternoon prepared a message with that view. I approved A Bill to-day authorizing a loan of $16,000,000. I sent for the Secretary of the Treasury and held a conversation with [him] in relation to the negotiation of the loan and the state of the finances. I transacted business with several public officers and disposed of business on my table as usual to-day.

This was reception evening. A number of persons, ladies and gentlemen, called.

Mr. Buchanan read to me to-day the rough draft of a despatch to Mr. Rush, the U. S. Minister at Paris. It was not finished. I made some suggestions of modifications to him. He informed me that he would be much pressed for time in preparing his foreign despatches in time for the mail by the next steamer, and requested me to convene the Cabinet at an early hour on to-morrow that they might be considered, and particularly the despatch to Mr. Rush.

SATURDAY, *1st April, 1848.*— Several members of Congress called on business this morning. The Cabinet met at 10 O'Clock, having being [been] invited by me, at the instance of Mr. Buchanan, to assemble at an earlier hour than usual. All the members were present. Mr. Buchanan read to the Cabinet the despatch which he had prepared to Mr. Rush in answer to his of the 4th ultimo. Some discussion of some parts of it took place, and some modifications, not very material, were made. I read to the Cabinet a message which I proposed to send to Congress communicating information of the French Revolution and his own action in reference to it. Some immaterial modifications were suggested and made. The Senate did not sit to-day and therefore it could not be sent to Congress until monday next. Some other business of minor importance was considered and disposed of. The Cabinet adjourned about 3 O'Clock P. M.

SUNDAY, *2nd April, 1848.*— Mrs. Polk & myself attended the First Presbyterian church to-day.

Deeming the message which I proposed to send to Congress to-morrow on the subject of the French Revolution an important one, I sent for Mr. Marcy and Mr. Mason, who called after night and assisted me in revising it. I had read it to the Cabinet on yesterday, and no material alteration was suggested by Mr. Marcy or Mr. Mason.

MONDAY, *3rd April, 1848.*— Quite a large number of persons, members of Congress and others,

called this morning. At 12 O'Clock my Private Secretary took the message[1] which I had prepared on the subject of the French Revolution and transmitting Mr. Rush's despatch to Congress, and delivered it to both Houses. No action, I learn, was taken upon it in either House, except in the Senate to refer it to the committee on Foreign affairs. In the evening, Mr. Dickins, the Secretary of the Senate, called with two Indian Treaties which had been ratified by the Senate. He informed me that my message had been generally approved by Senators, as far as he had heard any expression of opinion. After night Senator Hannegan called and held a conversation with me on the subject of our relations with France.

TUESDAY, *4th April, 1848.*— I learned this morning that the Hon. James A. Black of the Ho. Repts. from S. Carolina, died at his lodgings in this City between 11 & 12 O'Clock last night. Mr. Black was a sound Republican, and one of the best men in Congress. He was a man of fine political sense, a useful member of the House, though modest, retiring, and unassuming. He was my personal as well as political friend, and I deeply regret his death. I saw company in the morning and transacted business on my table as usual. The Cabinet assembled at the usual hour; all the members present except the Secretary of War, who is confined to his house by sickness. No subject of general importance was considered by the Cabinet, and it adjourned at an early

[1] *S. Ex. Doc.* 32, 30 Cong. 1 Sess. V.

hour. This was reception evening. A number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

WEDNESDAY, *5th April, 1848.*— A number of members of Congress & others called on business this morning. At 12 O'Clock, accompanied by the members of my Cabinet, except Mr. Marcy, who is still confined to [his] house by indisposition, I repaired to the Capitol and attended the Funeral ceremonies of the late Hon. James A. Black of the Ho. Repts. from S. Carolina, who died in this City on the night of the 3rd Instant. I accompanied his remains from the Capitol to the Congressional burying ground.

After my return I disposed of business on my table. After night Senators Hannegan [of Indiana] & Houston of Texas & Mr. McClerenand of the Ho. Repts. from Illinois called. Six members of the Virginia Legislature, on their way home from their late session at Richmond, called to pay their respects. Mr. W. C. Whitthorne, who left this City in January last as a bearer of despatches to Mexico, called after night. He informed me that he left the City of Mexico on the 6th of March, 1848.

THURSDAY, *6th April, 1848.*— My office was crowded up to the hour of 12 O'Clock with visitors, and I was greatly annoyed by the importunities of office-seekers. It is most disgusting to be compelled to spend hour after hour almost every day in hearing the applications for office made by loafers who congregate at Washington, and by members of Congress

in their behalf, and yet I am compelled to submit to it or offend or insult the applicants and their friends. The people of the U. S. have no idea of the extent to which the President's time, which ought to be devoted to more important matters, is occupied by the voracious and often unprincipled persons who seek office. If a kind Providence permits me length of days and health, I will, after I retire from the Presidential office, write the secret and hitherto unknown history of the workings of the Government in this respect. I[t] requires great patience & self command to repress the loathing I feel towards a hungry crowd of unworthy office-hunters who often crowd my office. Late despatches were received to-day from Gen'l Butler, in which he states that at their date (13th of March) the prospects of the ratification of the Treaty by Mexico were favourable. I was occupied several hours in the after part of the day in disposing of much business of detail which had accumulated on my table. After night several members of Congress called. Among them were Senators Turney & Cass, and C. J. ingersoll & Mr. Thomas of Tennessee, of the Ho. Representatives.

FRIDAY, *7th April, 1848.*— I saw company this morning and was as usual much importuned by the office-seekers. I sent two messages to the Senate in answer to Resolutions calling for information. I saw several public officers and transacted business with them. I also disposed of much business which had accumulated on my table. Nothing of importance occurred to-day.

This was reception evening. The usual number of persons, ladies and gentlemen, members of Congress and others, called.

Mr. Kellogg, the artist, has been for several days painting a portrait of Mrs. Polk. He occupies the ladies parlour above stairs. I gave him a short sitting for my portrait to-day. He desires to take both portraits with him to Florence when he returns to that place, as he expected to do in the course of a few months.

SATURDAY, *8th April, 1848.*— Having business on my table to transact, I did not see company this morning. The Cabinet met at the usual hour, all the members present. The Secretary of War, who has been confined to his house for several days by indisposition, was able to attend to-day. I held a conversation with the Secretary of the Treasury in relation to the steps proper to be taken for the negotiation of the loan of sixteen millions authorized by an act passed a few days ago. It was agreed by the Cabinet that it would be proper to advertise & invite proposals for the loan abroad as well as at home. Some other subjects of no general importance were considered and disposed of. The Cabinet adjourned about 1 O'Clock. I gave Mr. Kellogg a short sitting for my port[r]ait to-day. I was occupied the remainder of the day in disposing of the business on my table.

SUNDAY, *9th April, 1848.*— I attended the First Presbyterian church to-day accompanied by Mrs.

Polk and Miss Anne Whitaker of N. C. Miss Whitaker is the daughter of Spear Whitaker,[1] Esqr., of Halifax County, N. C. Mrs. Polk and myself met her father and herself on our visit to the University of N. C. last summer and invited her to visit us. She is spending a short time in my family, and is an inmate of the Presidential Mansion. She arrived about the middle of last week. I rested from my labours to-day. I was much wearied by my incessant attention to business during the last week & required rest. Mr. Cave Johnson called after night and I had a full and confidential conversation with him in relation to the Presidential election. We both occupied the same position in one respect. We neither of us took any part between the aspirants for the nomination at the Democratic National convention at Baltimore in May next. Mr. Johnson remarked that many leading demo[c]rats looked to my nomination as the means of harmonizing the party, and expressed the opinion that I would be stronger than any other candidate who could be run by the Democratic party. The same thing has been repeatedly said to me by leading democrats of late. I told Mr. Johnson, as I have all others who have mentioned the subject to me, that I was not a candidate for the nomination, and did not desire it. I requested him to print[?] my letter [2] to the committee accepting the nomination in 1844, and said to him that I thought it would be proper for me to address a letter to some member of the convention, in the event

[1] Spier Whitaker, later Attorney General of North Carolina.

[2] Printed in Jenkins, *Polk,* 135.

my name should be thought of, repeating the sentiments of that letter. I have not seen that letter since it was first published, but I remember its substance was that the office of President was one neither to be sought or declined, that I accepted the nomination, but expressed my fixed purpose, in the event of my election, not to be a candidate for re-election.

Mr. Buchanan, the Secretary of State, left on a visit to Pennsylvania to-day. He expects to be absent a week or ten days.

MONDAY, *10th April, 1848.*— An unusual number of hungry office seekers greatly importuned and annoyed me from the time I entered my office until I closed it at 12 O'Clock to-day. Judging from their appearance and conduct and what I knew of some of them, scarcely one who called was worthy of the place he sought or was fit to fill it. It was with difficulty I could preserve my temper and patience. There were no vacancies and I gave them short & even abrupt answers. In the midst of the annoyances of the herd of lazy, worthless people who come to Washington for office instead of going to work and by some honest calling making a livelihood, I am sometimes amused at their applications. A case of this kind occurred on saturday last. One [of] these office seekers placed his papers of recommendation in the hands of Judge Mason to present to me. No particular office was specified in the papers; and the Judge reported to me that he enquired of him what office he wanted, to which he answered that he

thought he would be a good hand at making Treaties, and that as he understood there were some to be made soon he would like to be a minister abroad. This is about as reasonable as many other applications which are made to me. I was much occupied in disposing [of] the mass of business on my table to-day. Nothing of special interest occurred. I appointed Mr. John Appleton, ch. Clk., acting Secretary of State during the absence of Mr. Buchanan from the seat of Government. Mr. Buchanan left on yesterday on a visit to Pennsylvania.

TUESDAY, *11th April, 1848.*—This being Cabinet day I directed my messenger to admit no company. The Cabinet assembled at the usual hour; all the members present except the Secretary of State, who is absent on a visit to Pennsylvania. Several matters of business of no general importance were considered and disposed of. The Secretary of the Navy read recent dispatches which he had received from Commodore Perry commanding the Gulf Squadron. Late despatches were received to-day from Mr. Rush, U. S. minister at Paris; & from Mr. Donelson, U. S. Minister at Berlin. They give interesting accounts of the Revolution in France and of the onward progress of liberal principles in Prussia & in all the German States. The Cabinet adjourned about 3 O'Clock P. M. I devoted the remainder of the day to the business on my table. This was reception evening. A number of persons, ladies and gentlemen, called.

WEDNESDAY, *12th April, 1848.*— I saw no company this morning. The Secretary of War called at 9 O'Clock, and I spent from that time until 12 O'Clock with him in examining and revised [revising] a list of officers of the army upon whom it was thought proper to confer Brevet Rank for gallant and meritorious conduct performed by them in the war with Mexico. The list was a very numerous one. I suggested but few changes, and these consisting chiefly of the names of officers omitted by the Secretary of War which I thought it right to add [to] the list. I sent the nominations to the Senate about 1 O'Clock P. M. The conduct of the whole army in Mexico has been, so good that it was difficult to make discriminations among the officers. After revising the list with the utmost care it is probable that some officers have been omitted who are as meritorious as others who have been nominated for Brevet promotion. Should this be discovered to be so, I will hereafter do justice to the officers omitted in the list of nominations sent to the Senate to-day. I transacted business with the Secretary of the Navy, and was engaged the remainder of the day in disposing of the business on my table.

THURSDAY, *13th April, 1848.*— A large number of persons, members of Congress and others, called this morning. After 12 O'Clock I was engaged with the Secretaries of War & the Navy for one or two hours on business pertaining to their respective Departments. I was engaged as usual during the balance of the day in disposing of the business on my

table. Nothing of special interest occurred. At 5 O'Clock this afternoon a public meeting of citizens assembled in this City to celebrate the late French Revolution and the advance of liberal principles in other parts of Europe. After night a torch-light procession passed in front of the President's mansion. I went to the front door and witnessed the procession as it passed. I learn that the meeting was addressed, before the procession was formed, by several members of Congress and other speakers.

FRIDAY, *14th April, 1848.*— I saw company as usual this morning. After 12 O'Clock I attended to business in my office. It was a more quiet day than is usual with me. Nothing worthy of special notice occurred.

This being reception evening a number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

SATURDAY, *15th April, 1848.*— I saw a few persons before the hour of meeting of the Cabinet today. The Cabinet assembled at the usual hour; all the members present except the Secretary of State, who is absent on a visit to his residence in Pennsylvania. Several subjects of no general importance were considered and disposed of. The Cabinet adjourned at an early hour. I devoted the remainder of the day to the business on my table. After night Mr. Boyd of Ky. and Mr. Thompson of Miss. called. I retired at a late hour, fatigued, as I generally am, at the close of the week.

I prepared to-day the rough draft of a letter to

Mr. Rush, U. S. minister at Paris, transmitting the Joint Resolution of Congress tendering the congratulations of the U. S. to the French people upon their success in their late Revolution.

SUNDAY, *16th April, 1848.*— I attended the First Presbyterian church to-day accompanied by Mrs. Polk, my nephew, Marshall T. Polk, and Miss Whitaker of N. C., who is spending a few weeks in my family.

MONDAY, *17th April, 1848.*— A large number of persons called this morning, most of them seeking office for themselves or their friends. After I closed my office I revised and copied a letter to the Hon. Richard Rush, U. S. minister at Paris, transmitting to him, to be presented to the French Government, the Joint Resolution [of] Congress, " tendering the congratulations of the American to the French people," upon their recent successful Revolution, by which the French monarchy was overthrown and a Republic established in its stead. I delivered the letter & Resolution to Mr. Appleton, the acting Secretary of State, to be forwarded to Mr. Rush. I attended to much business of detail on my table. After night Senator Hanegan & Mr. Charles Brown & Mr. James Thompson of the Ho. Repts. from Penn. called. Despatches were rec'd to-day from Maj'r Gen'l Butler, commanding the army in Mexico.

TUESDAY, *18th April, 1848.*— I saw several members of Congress who called this morning. The

Cabinet met at the usual hour; all the members present except Mr. Buchanan, who is still absent on a visit to Pennsylvania. The despatches rec'd from the army in Mexico on yesterday were read by the Secretary of War. Among them was a despatch from the Court of Enquiry now sitting in Mexico, stating that Gen'l Scott had withdrawn the charges preferred by him against Brevet Col. Duncan, and that Gen'l Worth had withdrawn the charges preferred by him against Gen'l Scott, & recommending that no further proceedings be had in these cases. The Cabinet concurred in this recommendation. It was then decided that, as Gen'l Worth had withdrawn his charges against Gen'l Scott, the charges preferred by the latter against Gen'l Worth should be examined by the Court. The Secretary of War also read charges preferred by Gen'l Pillow against Gen'l Scott, received on yesterday. It was decided to direct the Court of Enquiry to investigate these charges also. After transacting some other business the Cabinet adjourned. I was occupied during the balance of the day in attending to business on my table. This was reception evening. A number of visitors, ladies & gentlemen, called.

WEDNESDAY, *19th April, 1848.*— A large number of persons called this morning, most of whom were seeking office for themselves or their friends. Mr. Buchanan called about 1 O'Clock P. M., having returned this morning from a visit to Pennsylvania where he has been on a visit for the last ten days. I was occupied in my office as usual during the balance

of the day. In the course of the day I saw the Secretaries of War and the Navy & several public officers on business. Nothing of much interest occurred to-day.

THURSDAY, *20th April, 1848.*— I saw company as usual this morning. Shortly after 12 O'Clock Mr. Elisha Whittlesey,[1] formerly a member of Congress from Ohio, accompanied by Mr. Cave Johnson, the P. M. General, [called]. Mr. Whitt[l]esey represented to me that great excitement existed in the City, and that there was danger that a portion of the people would engage in a riot to-night, tear down and destroy the printing office of the *New Era,*[2] an abolition paper printed in this City, and requested me to exert my authority to prevent it. The cause of the excitement is as follows. On saturday or sunday last a schooner, called the Pearl, left Georgetown and after night took on board at Greenleaf's Point a number of slaves and sailed with them on board. On the afternoon of sunday the schooner was pursued by a steamboat and about 30 citizens of Washington & Georgetown on board. The Schooner was overhauled by the steamboat near the mouth of the Potomac. Three white men & 77 slaves were captured and brought back to Washington & put in Jail on tuesday last. The outrage com-

[1] Elisha Whittlesey, 1783–1863, Representative from Ohio 1823–1838, appointed director and general agent of the Washington Monument Society in 1845.

[2] The *National Era.* For an account of the trouble, see the *National Intelligencer,* April 20 and April 21, and the *National Era,* April 20 and April 27, 1848.

mitted by stealing or seducing the slaves from their owners, and the attempt of abolitionists to defend the White men who had perpetrated it, had produced the excitement & the threatened violence on the abolition press. I told Mr. Whittlesey that I would coöperate with the City authorities, if necessary, in any proper steps to preserve the public peace & to cause the laws to be respected. I sent for the members of my Cabinet & after consultation with them directed them to issue an order to the Clerks & other employees in their respective Departments not to engage in the unlawful or riotous proceeding which was anticipated. The Deputy Marshall (Woodward), Justice Goddard, Mr. Lenox, [and] half a dozen members of the City council called on me in a body on the same subject. I told the marshall that he knew his duty, and that he should aid the City authorities in suppressing any outbreak such as was apprehended, but cautioned him to avoid violence or the shedding of blood, unless in self-defence & in the discharge of his lawful duties. I declined to call out the militia or to employ the military force, and the members of the City authorities present concurred with me that it would not be necessary to do so. The Secretary of War, who had called on other business, was present during my interview with them.

The Secretary of War read to me the draft of a long answer which he had prepared to a letter received from Gen'l Scott preferring accusations & complaints against the War Department. It was an able paper, well prepared, and I approved it.

I attended to much business of detail on my table to-day.

FRIDAY, *21st April, 1848.*— A large number of persons called this morning. Most of them were strangers who called to pay their respects. Among them was Gen'l D. E. Twiggs of the army. He is a gallant soldier and has performed valuable services in Mexico. For his meritorious & gallant conduct I nominated [him] to the Senate a few days ago for the Brevet rank of Maj'r General. The Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Navy called today and transacted business with me. I saw some of the subordinate public officers on business. I disposed of many matters of business, chiefly of detail, which were on my table. This was reception evening. An unusually large number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, members of Congress & others, called.

SATURDAY, *22nd April, 1848.*— Several members of Congress called this morning. The Cabinet met at the usual hour; all the members present. Mr. Buchanan read a communication which he had received from the commissioner of Yucatan to this Government, making an earnest and eloquent appeal for aid from the U. S. to preserve the White race in Yucatan from destruction by the savage Indians in the civil war now waging in that country. The subject of the relief which it may be in our power to grant was discussed at some length, but a final decision was postponed. At the request of the Commissioner of Yucatan, communicated to me in a note

received this morning, I appointed 9 O'Clock this evening to see him.

I informed the Cabinet that I deemed it necessary to fill the office of Atto. Gen'l, made vacant by the resignation of Mr. Clifford on his appointment as commissioner to Mexico. The selection must be made from the North. The persons spoken of in the conversation with the Cabinet were Gov. Toucey [1] of Connecticut; Hon. John Anderson [2] of Maine; Judge Shepley of Maine; and Gov. Vroom of New Jersey. The appointment of either of these gentlemen, I ascertained, would be satisfactory to the Cabinet. Mr. Buchanan and the other members of the Cabinet all expressed this opinion, provided it were first ascertained that they were opposed to the Wilmot Proviso. They all expressed an unwillingness to be associated with a Wilmot Proviso man. Mr. Buchanan remarked that the appointment of such a man would greatly injure the administration. I postponed deciding to which of the persons named, if to either, I would tender the appointment. I had a small Dinner party to-day consisting of Gen'l Twiggs of the army, senators Dix & Davis, Mr. Morgan, the father-in-law of Senator Dix, & his wife, and Miss Jordan of N. Y., Mrs. Dix, Hon. Rob't M. McLane of Baltimore & his wife, & Mr. Kellogg, the artist. At 9 O'Clock Mr. Sierra, the

[1] Isaac Toucey, 1796–1869, Governor of Connecticut 1846, Attorney General of the U. S. 1848–1849, Senator from Connecticut 1852–1857, Secretary of the Navy 1857–1861.

[2] John Anderson, 1792–1863, Representative from Maine 1825–1833, Collector of Customs at Portland 1843–1848.

Yucatan commissioner, accompanied by Dr. Baldwin as an interpreter, called according to a previous appointment. Mr. Buchanan called shortly afterwards, & I held a long conversation with Mr. Seara in relation to the state & condition of his country. I finally told him that I would determine in the course of two or three days what assistance, if any, could be given to his distressed countrymen.

SUNDAY, *23rd April, 1848.*— I attended the First Presbyterian church to-day accompanied by Mrs. Polk and Miss Henrietta Rachel Armstrong (the daughter of Gen'l R. Armstrong, U. S. consul at Liverpool). Miss Armstrong is attending Miss English's school in Georgetown, and frequently comes at the close of the week & spends the sabbath in my family.

MONDAY, *24th April, 1848.*— I had many visitors this morning, chiefly on the important business of seeking office. There was a procession of citizens of this City to-day in celebration of the late Revolution in France. I was called upon by Col. C. K. Gardner [1] to unite in it, but believing that it was not appropriate for the President of the U. States to do so, I declined to do so. The procession moved from the President's square to the capitol, on the Eastern fron[t] of which, I learn, an oration was delivered by Richard S. Cox,[2] Esqr.

[1] C. K. Gardner was postmaster of Washington.

[2] Richard S. Coxe, a lawyer of Washington.

About 2 O'Clock P. M. the Rev. Mr. Slicer introduced to me about a dozen Methodist clergymen from the states of Maine, N. Hampshire, Vermont, & N. York, who were on their way to a general conferrence of their church to be held at Pittsburg. I saw and transacted business to-day with the Secretaries of War & Navy, & disposed of much business on my table.

TUESDAY, *25th April, 1848.*— I saw a few persons who called this morning. The Cabinet met at the usual hour; all the members present. Mr. Buchanan presented the subject of the application of the state of Yucatan for the protection and aid of the U. S. against the devastating war now waging by the Indians against the White race, threatening the total extermination of the latter. He read a communication transmitted to him this morning by Mr. Seara, the Yucatan commissioner, from the Governor of that State. In this communication the Gov. of Yucatan asks the aid of the U. S., & states that the same aid had been asked from the Governments of Great Brittain & Spain, & that the Yucacatnas[?] were ready to surrender their country & the sovereignty over it to any Government which would protect & save them from extermination. Mr. Buchanan read the draft of a message to Congress on the subject, which he had prepared, with which I was not satisfied. The subject is environed with difficulties, and was fully discussed. I stated that we could never agree to see Yucatan pass into the hands of a foreign monarchy to be possessed and colonized by them, and that

sooner than this should take place the U. S. should afford the aid & protection asked, but that this could only be done by the authority of Congress. Yucatan is nominally one of the States of Mexico, with which we are at War, but has declared her neutrality in the War. Occupying this anomylous position, our course towards her is one of difficulty & embarrassment. After fully discussing the subject and having the opinion of the Cabinet, I requested Mr. Buchanan to prepare another draft of a message & submit it to me, placing the interposition of the U. S. upon the ground that it would be dangerous to us, and a violation of our settled policy, to permit either Great Brittain or Spain to possess & colonize the country, and to do this [prevent this] the U. S. ought to afford the aid asked. The Cabinet after transacting some other business of minor importance adjourned. The Secretaries of War & the Navy remained in my office & examined with me the draft of a Gen'l order announcing my decision upon an appeal made by Maj'r Gen'l Pillow from the finding of a Court of Enquiry, held in Mexico in October last, and the approval of the same by Gen'l Scott, in relation to two small howitzers taken from the enemy at the storming of Chepultepec in September last, by two young officers, Lieut. Hodge [and] Midshipman Rogers, & Mr. Walsh, who desired to appropriate them as trophies for themselves. It is very clear from the record of the proceedings of the Court that Gen'l Pillow had no agency in taking these Howitzers and no intention of appropriating them as trophies for himself, and it is equally clear that he

did nothing for which he deserves the slightest censure. In my decision I reviewed all the facts & circumstances. The Secretary of War & of the Navy, who had also examined the record, concurred with me in the decision which I directed the Secretary of War to make. This being reception evening a large number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, many of them distinguished persons from a distance, called.

WEDNESDAY, *26th April, 1848.*— A large number of persons called this morning & my time was occupied as usual in seeing visits [visitors] until 12 O'Clock. Mr. Buchanan called & read to me the draft of a message which he had prepared in pursuance of my request, in relation to Yucatan (see this diary of yesterday). He left it with me for my examination. I transacted business with the Secretaries of War and the Navy & other public officers. I disposed of much business on my table. About 1 O'Clock the Rev. Mr. Slicer called, & introduced half a dozen Methodist clergymen, who were on their way to attend a general Conferrence of their church to be held at Pittsburg. To-day my nephew, Marshall T. Polk, came up from his school in Alexandria & brought with him a letter which he had just received from his step-father, Dr. Wm. C. Tate of Morganton, N. C., informing him that his mother was dangerously ill. I immediately told him that he could start to visit his mother by to-morrow morning's Southern boat. He returned to Alexandria for his trunk & books, and at 9 O'Clock to-night he set out for Morganton to visit his mother.

The Boat leaves at 3 O'Clock A. M. to-morow, and he will sleep on board to-night.

Several members of Congress called after night. Gen'l Twiggs of the army also called, but as there was company in my office he remained but a few minutes. I invited him to call to-morrow evening.

THURSDAY, *27th April, 1848.*—I passed the morning as usual in seeing company. Many persons, members of Congress and others, called. During the Session of Congress I am compelled to keep my office open each day until the hour of meeting of the Houses to enable members to see me on business, and when my doors are open to receive them all others come in, and in this way I am much annoyed by office seekers, beggars for money, and all sorts of people. The morning of each day is generally spent very unprofitably, and yet I am compelled to submit to it, or give offense to members of Congress by refusing to see them. After I closed my office to-day I was engaged in disposing of the business on my table, and in preparing a message to Congress on the subject of our relations with Yucatan. A communication from the Governor of Yucatan to the Secretary of State, dated March 25th, 1848, was received a day or two ago, invoking the aid of the U. S. to save the White race from extermination by the Indians, and offering, in case the aid asked was granted, to surrender the " dominion & sovereignty " of Yucatan to the U. S. It is an important subject and requires much consideration. Mr. Buchanan, at my request, had drawn the draft of a

message, with which I was not satisfied, & I was engaged to-day in preparing one which met more fully my own views. After night Gen'l Twiggs of the army called & I had a long conversation with him in relation to affairs in Mexico.

About 2 O'Clock P. M. to-day Mr. Hannegan, chairman of the committee of Foreign affairs in the Senate, and Mr. McClellan of Michigan, a member of the committee of Foreign affairs of the House of Representatives, called at my request, and I held a free conversation with them in reference to our relations with Yucatan, and read to them the letter of the Governor of Yucatan and the rough draft of the message I had prepared on the subject. They approved it. After night C. J. Ingersoll of the Ho. Repts., & a member of the committee of Foreign affairs, called, and I read to him my proposed message in relation to Yucatan. He approved it, but said he would think more on the subject & see me again on to-morrow.

FRIDAY, *28th April, 1848.*—After spending the morning as usual in seeing company, I closed my office at 12 O'Clock. As my proposed message to Congress on the subject of our relations with Yucatan is one of great importance, I sent for the Secretary of State & conferred with him on the subject of the draft of it which I had prepared on yesterday. I sent also for the Secretaries of the Treasury, War, & the Navy. The two latter called & I conferred with them on the subject. Some immaterial modifications were suggested & made, & all

approved the paper. It was, however, too late to send it in to-day, and I was still not entirely satisfied with it. Mr. C. J. Ingersoll called & after reflecting on the subject since last night (see this diary of yesterday) was satisfied that I ought to send the message in. In the evening I held a conferrence on the subject with Senator Turney & Mr. Ingersoll, who called again to see me on the subject. After they retired Senator Cass, for whom I had sent, called. Messrs. Boyd & Peyton of Ky. and Mr. Wick of Indiana, all of the Ho. Repts., happening to call, I read to all of them my proposed message in relation to Yucatan, and, after giving them the information which I possessed, they were all of opinion that I ought to send the message to Congress.

This was reception evening. A number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called. After the company dispersed I invited Senator Bagby to accompany the Secretary of the Navy & myself to my office, & read to him my message in relation to Yucatan. He approved it.

SATURDAY, *29th April, 1848.*— I saw company before the meeting of the Cabinet this morning. I sent the message [1] in relation to Yucatan to the two Houses of Congress to-day. The Cabinet met at the usual hour to-day; all the members present. No business of importance was considered. Senator Ashley of Arkansas died at his lodgings in this City about 2 O'Clock to-day. His attack was sudden &

[1] *S. Ex. Doc.* 40, 30 Cong. 1 Sess. V.

very violent. I observed [him] at church with his family on the last sabbath in his usual health. He attended the Senate on monday, was taken ill the same evening, and to-day he died. "What shadows we [are] and what shadows we pursue." One week ago no member of either House of Congress had a better prospect of long life than Mr. Ashley. The Cabinet held but a short sitting. The Rev. Mr. Slicer called about 3 O'Clock & introduced half a dozen Methodist clergymen who were on their way to the General conferrence of their church to be held at Pittsburg. Among them was an Englishman who was a delegate of the Church in Great Brittain to the conferrence.

I disposed of business on my table as usual. After night Messrs. Boyd & Peyton of Ky. called and spent one or two hours with me. Miss Whitaker of N. Carilina, who has been spending several weeks in my family left to-night for her home. She was accompanied by Mr. Daniel of the Ho. Repts., from N. Carolina.

SUNDAY, *30th April, 1848.*— Mrs. Polk & myself attended the First Presbyterian church to-day. A despatch was received to-day at the Department of State from Mr. Clifford, dated at the City of Mexico on the 12th Instant. He reached that City on the 11th Inst.

MONDAY, *1st May, 1848.*— My office was open for the reception of company until 12 O'Clock as usual. Many persons called. The death of Sen-

ator Ashley, I learn, was announced at the meeting of both Houses of Congress to-day, after which both Houses adjourned without transacting any business. I was occupied as usual in transacting business in my office. I saw the Secretaries of State & War & some other public officers in the course of the day. Among others who called to-day were Ex. Senator Tappan [1] of Ohio and the Hon. Jesse Miller, Secretary of State of Penn. After night the Hon. Mr. Birdsall of the Ho. Repts. from N. Y. called and read to me a part of a letter from a man whose name I do not remember to Mr. Crosswell [2] of Albany, stating that Mr. Gould,[3] the U. S. Marshall of Western N. York, had stated that I had written a letter to some one in N. Y. expressing the opinion [that] the Utica convention lately held in that State, constituted the regular organization of the Democratic party in that State. I told Mr. Birdsall that I had written no such letter, that the statement was false; and that I had expressed no opinion, either in writing or verbally, on the subject. I told him that I regretted the divisions in the Democratic party in N. York, & had often publickly expressed the hope that they might be healed & the party be re-united & harmonious. This led to a conversation about

[1] Benjamin Tappan, 1773–1857, Senator from Ohio 1833–1845, a strong anti-slavery man.

[2] Edwin Croswell, journalist, 1797–1871. He became state printer and editor of the Albany *Argus,* the recognized Democratic organ of New York and the spokesman of the Albany Regency, in 1824. In 1844 he quarrelled with Van Buren and separated from the faction of the Democratic party led by him.

[3] Jacob Gould, marshal of the northern district of New York.

my appointments in N. Y. Both factions of the Democratic party complained that I had given too many appointments to the opposing faction. I told [him] that neither party complained of my measures, my policy, or the principles upon which I had administered the Government, but that their divisions resulted from a disreputably [disreputable] dispute among themselves about the offices, or who should have the larger share of the "loaves & fishes." Senator Houston of Texas came in before Mr. Birdsall left, and I repeated in his presence what I had told Mr. Birdsall in relation to Mr. Gould's alleged statement & the Utica Convention, & after Mr. Birdsall left I requested Mr. Houston to remember what I had said.

TUESDAY, *2nd May, 1848.*— I was occupied at my table until 11 O'Clock this morning, when the Cabinet assembled; all the members present except the Secretary of the Navy. I proceeded, accompanied by the Cabinet, to the Capitol, where I attended the funeral services on the occasion of the death of the Hon. Chesley Ashley, one of the Senators from the State of Arkansas, who expired at his lodgings in this City on Saturday last. Divine service was performed in the Senate chamber by the Rev. Mr. Slicer, Chaplain of the Senate. His discourse was solemn, eloquent, & impressive. I joined the procession & accompanied the remains of the deceased to the Congressional burying ground, where they were placed in a vault. On my return I attended to business on my table; and, what is a

very rare occurrence, I saw no company during the day. I believe this has not happened before (Sundays excepted) during the present Session of Congress. This was reception evening, but being a wet night not more than 30 or 40 persons, chiefly gentlemen, called.

I note an incident which occurred in the Senate chamber to-day. Immediately after the sermon of the Rev. Mr. Slicer & when the Senators were leaving the chamber to join in the funeral procession. Senator Benton, in passing near where I was seated bowed to me & saluted me, a civility which I, of course, returned. It is the first time he has done so since the commencement of the trial of his son-in-law (Col. Fremont) in the beginning of November last, before a Court martial. I approved & remitted the sentence of dismissal from the service of Col. Fremont, but this does not seem to have satisfied Col. B. I meet Col. B. almost every sabbath at Church, but he never speaks to me as he was in the habit of doing before the trial of Col. Fremont.

WEDNESDAY, *3rd May, 1848.*— An unusually large number of persons called this morning, and what is remarkable but few of them were seeking office. Between two or [and] three dozen physicians called in two or three bodies. The[y] were chiefly from the North and were attending a medical convention [1] now sitting at Baltimore. They had come to Washington, as they said, with no other business

[1] The American Medical Association met at Baltimore, May 2–6, 1848.

than to visit the Capitol, and had called to pay their respects to me. I transacted much business of detail & signed an unusual number of official papers to-day. The Secretaries of State and War called on business. I availed myself of some leisure from other duties to put on paper some general views to be presented in a message to Congress, in the event the Treaty with Mexico shall be ratified by Mexico & peace restored. I will lay the paper aside to be used if the occasion should arise. In the evening Senator Hannegan called & held a conversation with me about Yucatan and my late message to Congress on the subject of our relations with that State. After night Mr. Chase of the Ho. Repts. from Tennessee called and spent an hour with me.

THURSDAY, *4th May, 1848.*— In taking my usual walk before breakfast this morning I met Senator Calhoun of S. C., shook hands with him, and passed salutations with him. I [had] not spoken to him before since he called and formally paid his respects to me early in the present Session of Congress. Many visitors, members of Congress & others, called this morning. At 12 O'Clock, hearing that the Hon. James H. Thomas, who resides in the same town with me in Tennessee and represents my old District in Congress, was very ill, I rode with Col. Walker, my Private Secretary, to his boarding House (Mr. Wimsatt's) to see him. I found him very ill & I fear dangerously so. On my return I sent my servant (Henry) to wait upon him. I saw Dr. Hall, his attending physician, who

thought him dangerously ill. I was engaged the balance of the day in attending to business on my table. In the course of the day I saw the Secretaries of State and the Navy & some other public officers on business. After night the Hon. George S. Houston of the Ho. Repts. from Alabama called and spent an hour with me in conversation about public affairs and particularly about the business before Congress.

FRIDAY, *5th May, 1848.*— I saw company as usual this morning. Many persons called. I sent a message to the Senate in answer to a Resolution calling for information in relation to Yucatan. I saw and transacted business with the Secretaries of State, Navy, & War and some other public officers. I was occupied in my office all day in attending to various matters of business requiring my attention. Nothing of special interest transpired.

This was reception evening. A large number of persons, members of Congress, ladies & gentlemen, called.

SATURDAY, *6th May, 1848.*— I saw a few persons who called this morning. The Cabinet met at the usual hour, all the members present. Several matters of minor importance were considered & disposed of. A general conversation occurred in relation to the subject of our relations with Yucatan, which I brought before Congress in a message a few days ago. Mr. Walker was in favour of its ultimate annexation to the United States, & Mr. Buchanan

opposed to it. I concurred with Mr. Walker, rather than see it fall into the hands of England. After the Cabinet adjourned I was engaged in my office as usual until a late hour at night.

SUNDAY, *7th May, 1848.*— Mrs. Polk and myself attended to Divine worship to-day at a new Methodist [1] church in the 1st Ward of the City, West of the President's Square. It was the first service ever held in the church & it was dedicated to the service of God by a sermon delivered by the Rev. Mr. Sargeant. I contributed $25. to assist in paying for the building, a collection for this purpose having been taken up.

MONDAY, *8th May, 1848.*— Many persons called this morning. At 12 O'Clock I closed my office. I spent the balance of the day as usual in disposing of business in my office. The Secretaries of State & War & several other public officers called on business. After night Senator Hannegan & Messrs. Wick and Henly [2] of the Ho. Repts. from Indiana called. Nothing worthy of special note transpired to-day.

TUESDAY, *9th May, 1848.*— A number of persons called this morning. The Cabinet met at the usual hour; all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury, who was detained at his house by indisposition. There was nothing of im-

[1] The Union M. E. church.

[2] Thomas J. Henley, Representative from Indiana 1843–1849.

portance before the Cabinet to-day & the members remained together but a short time. I saw public officers & transacted business in my office throughout the day as usual.

This being reception evening an unusually large number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, members of Congress and strangers, attended.

WEDNESDAY, *10th May, 1848.*— A large number of persons called this morning: many of them as is usual seeking office. I closed my doors at 12 O'Clock. Shortly after that hour Senator Douglass of Illinois called with John O'Sullivan, Esqr., of New York. Their business with me was to urge that I would take early measures with a view to the purchase of the Island of Cuba from Spain. I heard their views, but deemed it prudent to express no opinion on the subject. Mr. O'Sulivan read to me and left with me a paper embodying his views in favour of the measure. Though I expressed no opinion to them I am decidedly in favour of purchasing Cuba & making it one of the States of [the] Union. I was occupied during the day in disposing of the business on my table & seeing public officers on business.

THURSDAY, *11th May, 1848.*— Saw company as usual this morning. Many persons called. There are many Delegates to the Democratic national convention to be assembled at Baltimore on the 22nd Instant, as well as other strangers now in the City. After 12 O'Clock I was occupied in my office. I

disposed of many matters of detail which were on my table. Congress is doing but little. The members of all parties [seem] to be more occupied in making a President than in attending to the public business. Nothing occurred to-day worthy of special notice.

FRIDAY, *12th May, 1848.*— Several persons called to-day, but not as many [as] usually call every day. I spent the day in attending to business in my office. A short despatch from Mr. Sevier, dated at the City of Mexico on the 18th ultimo., was rec'd to-day. He and Mr. Clifford had not had an interview with the Mexican authorities since their arrival. Mr. Sevier expresses no opinion as to the prospect of the ratification of the Treaty by Mexico. They had addressed an official note to the Mexican Government, but had not received an answer. The ratification of the Treaty by Mexico may be regarded as doubtful. In the event of its ratification I will have an important message to communicate to Congress, and I occupied a part of the day in reducing my views upon the points which I will present to writing. If the Treaty should not be ratified what I have written will be labour lost. Should it be ratified prompt action will be necessary and I desired to be prepared in advance. The Senate, instead of acting promptly, are still discussing the Yucatan question.

This being reception evening a number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

SATURDAY, *13th May, 1848.*— It is two years ago this day since War was declared by Congress against Mexico. They have been two years of unceasing labour and anxiety with me.

A number of persons called this morning. The Cabinet met at the usual hour. Nothing of importance occurred. All the members were present. After remaining a short time and without transacting any business of a general character they dispersed. Mr. Cave Johnson remained after the other members of the Cabinet retired. I read to him the draft of a letter which I had prepared to be addressed to some member of the Democratic National convention to assemble at Baltimore on the 22nd Inst., to be by him presented to the convention if, as has been often suggested to me it might be, my name should be brought before the convention for nomination. I will probably address the letter to Dr. J. G. M. Ramsey,[1] a Delegate to the convention from Tennessee. In this letter I re-iterated & declared my desire to retire at the end of my present term and not to be a candidate for re-election. I am induced to address such a letter to the convention in consequence of the use which has been recently made of my name in reference to a re-nomination, and [the] wish expressed to me by many members of Congress and others to run me as a candidate for a second term. A week ago I commenced reading the same letter to Mr. Johnson, but was interrupted by company coming in. On wednesday last I read it [to]

[1] James Gattys McGregor Ramsey of Tennessee, 1797–1884, author of *Annals of Tennessee.*

the Hon. James H. Thomas of the Ho. Repts. from Tennessee. I have also read it to my private Secretary, Col. Walker, and informed Judge Mason, the Secretary of the Navy, that I intended to write such a letter. Many members of the Democratic party desire that I should be the Democratic candidate, but I desire to retire & deem it proper to relieve the Convention of any embarrassment which the presentation of my name might produce, and leave the contest for the nomination to others.

This evening P. B. Glenn, Esqr., of Tennessee, in company with Senator Turney & Mr. Cave Johnson [called]. He and Mr. Johnson took tea with me. Mr. Glenn is a Delegate to the Baltimore convention. I disposed of business in my office as usual to-day.

SUNDAY, *14th May, 1848.*— I attended the First Presbyterian church to-day, & was accompanied by Mrs. Polk & Miss Henrietta Rachel Armstrong. Mr. P. B. Glenn of Tennessee, Mr. Cave Johnson, & Daniel Graham took a family Dinner with me to-day.

MONDAY, *15th May, 1848.*— Many persons called this morning, and among them several of the Delegates to the Baltimore convention of the Democratic party which is to assemble in B. on the 22nd Instant. I disposed of much business on my table to-day. Mr. Buchanan sent to me a despatch received from Mr. Rush, the U. S. minister at Paris, dated the 18th of April. It contains a very in-

teresting narrative of events of the late Revolution in France.

After night Mr. P. B. Glenn of Tennessee called, and remained until a late hour in conversation about political and other matters in Tennessee. He is a Delegate to the Democratic National convention at Baltimore, but nothing was said in our conversation about the Presidential election. He did not introduce the subject, & I did not.

TUESDAY, *16th May, 1848.*— A large number of strangers, chiefly Delegates to the Democratic national convention to be assembled at Baltimore, on the 22nd Instant, called this morning. Several members of Congress called with them to introduce them. The Cabinet met at the usual hour; all the members present. Despatches received from Gen'l. Price were read. They give a detailed account of the battle of Santa Cruz, and the capture of Chihuahua by the forces under his command. In this instance as well as in all others during the Mexican war, our arms were successful. The victory at Santa Cruz was a decided one. Some conversation took place in reference to the orders proper to be given to Gen'l. Price as to his future movements, if the Treaty of peace should not be ratified and the war should be continued. The Cabinet were agreed that if the war be continued his force is too small to hold Chihuahua, and that he should fall back to the Passo Del Norte[1] and after retaining a sufficient

[1] On the Rio Grande opposite El Paso, almost due north of Chihuahua.

force to hold New Mexico securely, to send a Battalion, if they can be spared, to California, where their services may be needed. Some other business was considered and disposed of.

Col. John D. Hawkins of N. C. & his daughter, Miss Jane Hawkins, the Hon. Waldon Edwards [1] of N. C., James M. Williamson of Somerville, Ten., & E. G. Eastman [2] of Nashville, Tenn., dined with me to-day. This was reception evening. The night was wet, but notwithstanding a number of persons, chiefly gentlemen, called.

WEDNESDAY, *17th May, 1848.*— Many persons called this morning and among them several of the delegates to the Democratic National convention to be assembled at Baltimore on the 22nd Inst. My old acquaintance and associate in Congress, Col. Abraham McClellan of Ten., & Col. Bowers of N.C., called. Whilst they were with me Mr. Stanton of the Ho. Repts. from Tennessee came in. In the course of conversation he said in the presence of the other two gentlemen that he wished to ask me a question, which I could answer or not, as I chose. His question was; are you a candidate before the

[1] Weldon Nathaniel Edwards, Representative from North Carolina 1816–1827, President of the North Carolina Secession Convention in 1861.

[2] E. G. Eastman, 1813–1859; he was a native of New England but was called to Tennessee along with J. George Harris to assist the Jackson-Polk faction of the Democratic party to regain control of the State in the election of 1839. He established the Knoxville *Argus* and later succeeded Harris as editor of the Nashville *Union*.

Democratic convention at Baltimore for the nomination of President? I answered him promptly that I was not. He knew that I was not a candidate, & it struck me as very strange that he should propound such a question. If he had been my friend he would have sought some opportunity to confer with me on the subject when we were alone. He desired no doubt to ask the question in the presence of witnesses so that if perchance the convention should be unable to agree on another & should think of tendering the nomination unsolicited to me, he might have an apology for opposing it. I do not anticipate or desire such a thing, but Mr. Stanton's interrogatory proves to me his unfriendly feelings.

I transacted business with the Secretary of War to-day. After it was over I consulted Mr. Marcy about the propriety of addressing a letter to the Democratic convention at Baltimore, to be communicated to the convention if necessary, to the effect that I was not a candidate before them for the nomination of President. He approved the suggestion. I then read to him the draft of such a letter which I had prepared, which he also approved. He suggested a single modification of one paragraph of the letter, which was not a material one.

The marine band played on the grounds South of the President's House this afternoon. A number of persons were collected on the grounds to hear it. After night I sent for Judge Mason, the Secretary of the Navy, and read to him the draft of the letter which I proposed to address to the Democratic Na-

tional convention. He examined it with care and suggested some modifications of phraseology. He approved of the letter & thought it ought to be sent to the Convention.

THURSDAY, *18th May, 1848.*—My office was crowded from an early hour this morning with visitors. Among them were a large number of Delegates from all quarters of the Union to the Democratic National convention at Baltimore. I was visited by them throughout the day, but after 12 O'Clock fewer called than in the morning. Several of them introduced the subject of the nomination to be made at Baltimore, & expressed a desire that I should be re-nominated. I promptly answered them that I was not a candidate, and re-iterated the declarations contained in my letter of the 12th of June, 1844, accepting the nomination tendered to me by the Democratic National convention of that year. Many of them express regret that I had in that letter and since that time declared my intention not to be a candidate for re-election, & expressed the opinion that I was the choice of the Democratic [Democracy] of the Union. All of them who conversed with me expressed their approbation of the manner in which the Government had been administered, & of the measures of my administration. I was enabled to transact business only at intervals to-day. As an unusual number of strangers from a distance were in the City, I thought it proper to keep my office open to afford them an opportunity to visit me.

FRIDAY, *19th May, 1848.*— A large number of Delegates to the Democratic national convention, & others, called on me to-day. In the morning my office was crowded, & throughout the day I had calls. Several of them expressed their desire to run me for a second term. I replied to them as I did to others on the same subject on yesterday (see this diary of yesterday). I have been informed by many delegates that among the large body of them now assembled in this City there is a general expression of approbation of the measures of my administration, & a general expression of regret that I ever made the pledge not to be a candidate for re-election. Several of them have expressed to me the opinion that a large majority of the Delegates desire to see me re-elected. These expressions of approbation are, of course, gratifying to me, but I have firmly maintained the ground I have heretofore occupied of not being again a candidate, & have repeated to many of them my fixed purpose of retiring to private life at the close of my present term. I sent for the Hon. Geo. S. Houston of Alabama this afternoon, and read to him the letter which I had prepared to the convention at Baltimore. He approved it, making some suggestions of modification of phraseology, not affecting its substance.

I had but little time to attend to business to-day but at intervals when my office was clear of company I disposed of some of the business on my table. This was reception evening. The company commenced to assemble at an unusually early hour. The Circular parlour, which is all that is usually

opened on reception evenings, was soon filled. The red parlour & the green parlour, as they are designated, were sucessively opened & filled. The crowd continued to increase until it became necessary to light up the East Room, which became also filled. The number of strangers in Washington is almost unprecedented. It is believed that a large majority of the delegates to the Democratic National convention, to assemble at Baltimore on Monday next, were present this evening. In addition to these many other strangers are in the City, and attended. Many members of Congress of both political parties, many citizens, ladies & gentlemen, were also present. It was in truth a numerously attended levee.

SATURDAY, *20th May, 1848.*— I had numerous visitors this morning. It was Cabinet day but there was no meeting. Most of the members of the Cabinet called at different times & remained a short time. The number of strangers calling made it impossible to hold a meeting without excluding & disappointing them in seeing me. There was, moreover, nothing of importance to be considered. I had an interview with Gov. Toucey of Connecticut, & read to him the letter which I proposed to address to the convention at Baltimore. He expressed his preference for me for the Presidency, regretted that I had made the pledges I had not to be a candidate for re-election, but thought it was proper for me to address such a letter to the convention. I also saw the following Delegates from Tennessee to the convention and read the letter to them, *to wit.,* Hon. Abraham

McClellan, Dr. J. G. M. Ramsey, Thomas Martin, Senator Turney, & Messrs. Chase, Thomas, & Hill of the Ho. Repts. I read it also to Gov. A. V. Brown of Tennessee, who is not a Delegate, but arrived in Washington on business a day or two since. They all approved the letter. I told them I would address it to Dr. Ramsey, with instructions to present it & have it read to the Convention before any balloting for a candidate for the Presidency took place. After night I read it to Senator Bagby of Alabama. Senator Turney was present. Senator Bagby regretted extremely that I felt it to be my duty to write it, as he preferred me to all others, and knew that the Alabama Delegation to Baltimore & many other Delegates to Baltimore did so also. After some conversation upon the subject he concluded that it was perhaps proper that I should write it. Gov. A. V. Brown & his wife, Dr. J. G. M. Ramsey & his daughter, & Mr. Thomas Martin, all of Tennessee, took a family Dinner with me to-day. After night Gov. Marcy, the Secretary of War, called & I again read to him the letter to the Baltimore convention, as I had modified some part of the phraseology since I had read it to him three or four days ago. He entirely approved [it]. Dr. Ramsey of Tennessee left his daughter, Margaret Jane, to spend a few days with my family during his absence to Baltimore. At 12 O'Clock to-day Mr. Crampton, acting charge de affairs of Great Brittain, called in full Court dress, & delivered to me with due solemnity a letter from the Queen announc-

ing the birth of a princess.[1] Such ceremonies appear very ridiculous to a plain Republican.

SUNDAY, *21st May, 1848.*— I attended the First Presbyterian church to-day accompanied by Mrs. Polk and Dr. J. G. M. Ramsey of Tennessee & his daughter. They & James H. Thomas of Tennessee took a family dinner with [me], as did also Daniel Graham of Tennessee. I delivered my letter[2] to Dr. Ramsey, addressed to him, but to be read to the Democratic convention at Baltimore. I completed the letter last night, but did not hand it to Dr. Ramsey until to-day. After dinner Dr. Ramsey & Mr. Thomas, accompanied by J. Knox Walker, left for Baltimore. I objected to Col. Walker's going, but he insisted upon it. After night Senator Moor of Maine called, & having introduced the conversation to me, I read to him a copy of the letter which I had addressed to Dr. Ramsey to be read to the Baltimore convention. He approved it.

MONDAY, *22nd May, 1848.*— This is the day appointed for the meeting of the Democratic National convention at Baltimore. They assemble for the purpose of nominating candidates for President & Vice President of the U. States. Many members of Congress are also members of the convention & have gone to Baltimore. Both Houses of Congress

[1] The Princess Louise, born March 18, 1848. She married John, Marquis of Lorne and Duke of Argyll.

[2] Printed in the Washington *Union,* May 26, 1848.

met and adjourned over until thursday next, without transacting any business. The crowd of Delegates & other strangers who thronged the City last week have gone to Baltimore and my office was very quiet to-day. A few persons only called. Among them were Mr. Rhett of S. C., Mr. Johnson of Ark., & Mr. Venable of N. C., all of the Ho. Repts. I read to each of them a copy of my letter to the Baltimore convention. They all approved it and expressed their gratification that I had placed myself on high ground by writing such a letter. They all expressed a strong & decided preference for me over all others, if I had permitted my name to be used as a candidate. Mr. Rhett said that the people of S. C. approved my administration and would have supported my re-election with unanimity, notwithstanding Mr. Calhoun's course. He declared that he could not support Gen'l Cass if he should be the nominee, and that S. C. could not and would not support him. He spoke enthusiastically in approbation of the principles & measures of my administration. Mr. Venable[1] expressed similar opinions, & declared that if I had been a candidate N. Carolina could have been carried for me, but that she could not be for either of the candidates spoken of. He said he would support either of them who might be nominated, but could not do so with any enthusiasm, or with hope of carrying the State for him. He said he thought my letter was worthy of me, and after all that had occurred was worthy of me.

[1] Abraham Watkins Venable, 1799–1876, Representative from North Carolina 1847–1853.

Senator Sturgeon called and introduced a friend. I saw Judge Young, the commissioner of the General Land office, and transacted business with him. I read to him my letter to Baltimore. He approved it. The Secretary of War called & read to me a despatch which he had prepared to Gen'l Price. With the suggestion of a single modification I approved it. Mr. Buchanan called and introduced two gentlemen & two ladies, his Pennsylvania friends. I transacted some unimportant business with him. Gov. A. V. Brown called and spent an hour with me. Senator Dix also called on business. I spent the greater part of the day in transacting business on my table, and, being less interrupted by company than usual, disposed of many minor matters of business which had accumulated on my hands. The day was unusually quiet. In the absence of my Private Secretary (Col. Walker) who is at Baltimore, Mr. James K. Stephens of Tennessee, one of the clerks in the General Land Office, at my request occupied his office & attended to the current business for me. I learn nothing from Baltimore, except that the convention met & had selected Judge Bryce of Louisiana as temporary presiding officer, & Mr Treat of Missouri as temporary Secretary, & had appointed a committee to examine credentials with a view to a permanent organization.

After night the Rev. Mr. Bridel, a Protestant clergyman from Paris, and the Rev. Alex. King, a Protestant clergyman from Dublin, called. They were accompanied by the Rev. Mr. Baird, and brought a letter of introduction from Walter Laurie,

Esqr. Mrs. Polk & myself received them in the parlour. They are recently from Europe, & gave an interesting account of the late Revolution [at] Paris. The Rev. Mr. Bridel presented me with a new French coin, a 5-Frank-piece, struck since the French Revolution.

TUESDAY, *23rd May, 1848.*— This was a remarkably quiet day. Not half a dozen persons called. Congress having adjourned over until thursday, almost all the members, I learn, have gone to Baltimore to attend the Democratic National convention now sitting in that City. Not a single member of Congress called to-day. Brigadier General Caleb Cushing of the U. S. army called to-day. The Court of Enquiry of which he is a member, which has been sitting for some weeks past in Mexico, has adjourned to the U. S. and will resume its session at Frederickton, Maryland, on the 29th Instant. I had an interesting conversation with Gen'l Cushing concerning affairs in Mexico, and particularly the prospects of a ratification of the Treaty by Mexico. Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Marcy, and Mr. Mason of the Cabinet were present during the conversation. This being Cabinet day all the members attended. Some matters of detail were attended to, but nothing of any importance was considered. Information was received by the Telegraph from the proceedings of the Convention at Baltimore at two or three periods in the course of the day. The Convention had not fully organized at the last date, 3 ½ O'Clock P. M. After the Cabinet dispersed to-day, I took a walk

around the President's square, and meeting Mr. Dallas, the Vice President of the U. S., he walked with me. I informed him of the letter I had written to be read to the Baltimore convention, and of its purport. He approved it. Mr. Ritchie called about 4 O'Clock P. M. and read to me a letter which he had received from the Chairman of the Democratic central committee of the State of Florida, enclosing one to the Delegates to the Baltimore convention from that State. The letter to Mr. Ritchie informed him that the one enclosed to the Delegates instructed them to vote for my nomination for President, and Mr. Ritchie enquired of me whether he should send it to them at Baltimore or not. I told him I was sorry he had consulted me on the subject, but that, as he had done so, I must decline to give him any advice on the subject. I told him I had read to him the letter which I had addressed to Dr. Ramsey to be read to the convention, and beyond what that letter contained I had nothing to say.

WEDNESDAY, *24th May, 1848.*— A number of persons called in the course of the day. They were chiefly strangers who called to pay their respects. I saw none of my Cabinet to-day, but transacted business in my office as usual. Mr. J. K. Stephens performs the duties of Private Secretary in Col. Walker's absence. Several telegraphic despatches from the Baltimore convention were received to-day. The Convention had not decided between the contesting claimants to seats in that body from New York at 6 O'Clock P. M., but the subject was still

under discussion. Great confusion, I learn, exists at Baltimore, & great uncertainty who the nominee will be. A Telegraphic despatch was received from the South to-day to the effect that the Congress of Mexico had been dispersed and the existing Government overthrown, and that there was no prospect of the ratification of the Treaty.

The Marine band played on the grounds of the President's square this afternoon. Many citizens, ladies & gentlemen, were present. Gen'l Cushing & Gov. Brown of Tennessee and his wife took tea with my family this evening.

Very few members of Congress, I learn, are in Washington. A large majority of both parties in Congress, I learn, are at Baltimore attending to President-making. I doubt whether there will be a quorum in either House to-morrow. No business will be done until after the Baltimore convention adjourns.

THURSDAY, *25th May, 1848.*— Congress having adjourned over from monday last until to-day, at the hour of meeting scarcely a quorum attended in either House. No business was transacted and the Senate adjourned over until monday next. The members are still absent at Baltimore. Several persons called to-day and I transacted business in my office as usual. About 2 O'Clock P. M. a Telegraphic despatch was received announcing that Lewis Cass of Michigan had, on the fourth ballot, been nominated by the Democratic convention at

Baltimore as the candidate of the Democratic party for President of the U. States. About 5 O'Clock Gen'l Cass called (I having sent for him) and I congratulated him on his nomination. He was in a fine humour, and I had a pleasant conversation with him. About 8 O'Clock P. M. I was informed that the convention had nominated Gen'l William O. Butler of Kentucky as the Democratic candidate for Vice President of the U. States, and that the convention had adjourned to meet again on to-morrow.

My letter addressed to Dr. Ramsey, I learn, was read to the convention at Baltimore before any balloting was had. In this letter I declared that I was not a candidate for the nomination, and [that it was] my intention to retire to private life at the close of my present term. Gen'l Cass informed me in my interview with him that in his letter accepting his nomination he would declare his intention, if elected, to serve but a single term.

FRIDAY, *26th May, 1848.*— Several members of Congress who had returned from the convention at Baltimore, returned [called] this morning. Many other persons also called, most of whom were seeking office. I transacted business with public officers and on my table as usual. Mr. Meek, a bearer of despatches from the Governor and Legislative assembly of Oregon, called to-day. He delivered to me a memorial from the Legislative assembly, and other papers, together with letters from the Governor and other citizens of that Territory, represent-

ing that the Indian Tribes in Oregon have commenced a war upon them. They pray for the establishment of a Territorial Government, and for aid and protection. I will communicate a message to Congress on the subject, but can not do so earlier than monday next, because the Senate will not sit before that day. I learn that the Democratic convention at Baltimore adopted to-day the Resolutions of the Democratic convention of 1844.

This was reception evening. Many persons, ladies and gentlemen, attended. Among them were Gen'l Cass, the nominee of the Baltimore convention for President, many members of Congress, and many Delegates who had attended the Baltimore convention.

Maj'r John W. Childress, the brother-in-law of Mrs. Polk, and Mr. Rob't B. Jetton of Murfreesborough, arrived to-night and took apartments in the President's House, and will remain with my family during their stay in Washington.

The Secretary of War left this evening on a visit to New York, and expected to be absent a week or ten days.

SATURDAY, *27th May, 1848.*— Many delegates who had attended the Baltimore convention, and others, called this morning. The Cabinet met at the usual hour, all the members present except the Secretary of War, who left on last evening on a visit to New York. Several matters of minor importance were considered and disposed of. I read to the Cabinet the memorial which was delivered to me

on yesterday from the Legislative assembly of Oregon, and they agreed with me that I should communicate it by a message to Congress. I resolved to do so, and after night prepared the rough draft of a message. The Cabinet adjourned at an early hour. I disposed of business in my office as usual to-day.

SUNDAY, *28th May, 1848.*— Mrs. Polk and myself attended the First Presbyterian church to-day. Maj'r Childress and Mr. Jetton of Tennessee, who are spending a few days with me, attended the Catholic church. After night I sent for Judge Mason, and Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Cave Johnson happening to call in, I read to them the message which I had prepared transmitting the memorial from Oregon to Congress. They approved it, but suggested some change of phraseology not affecting its substance.

MONDAY, *29th May, 1848.*— Many members of Congress and others called this morning, and solicitations for office seemed to be quite as numerous & pressing as they had been for months past. It would seem they will never cease. I transmitted a message to both Houses of Congress communicating the memorial and other papers which I had received from Oregon. I transacted much business on my table in the course of the day. Intelligence was received from Mexico as late as the 14th Instant, to-day. A Quorum of the Mexican Congress had assembled and the prospect of their ratification of

the Treaty was favourable. In the evening Gen'l Cass called and spent half an hour with me. He told me that in his letter accepting his nomination for the Presidency he would express his full approval of the Resolutions adopted by the Democratic national convention at Baltimore. This evening Miss Ramsey of Tennessee, who has been a member of my family for the last ten days, left with her father, Dr. J. G. M. Ramsey, for the North. Dr. Ramsey is one of the visitors to West Point at the annual examination of the cadets which commences on monday next. I transacted much business in my office to-day.

TUESDAY, *30th May, 1848.*— At 6 O'Clock this morning Maj'r John W. Childress & Mr. Rob't B. Jetton of Tennessee, who have been [for] two or three days members of my family, left for Baltimore and the North, intending to travel by the way of the Lakes on their way to Tennessee. Mr. James Avent of Tenn. spent last night with them in the Presidential mansion & left with them.

Many persons called this morning. Among them was the Hon. Mr. McKay of N. C., who called on business. He desired me to appoint Robert Strange, jr., a Paymaster in the army, vice Beatty, of N. C., who declined to accept, which I readily agreed to do. Mr. McKay informed me that his father, the Hon. Rob't Strange, Sr.,[1] had been a Delegate to the Baltimore convention, and had been

[1] Robert Strange, 1796–1854, Senator from North Carolina 1836–1840.

in Washington City recently & had declined to call and see me because, as he alleged, he had called to see me last year and on leaving me I had invited him to call again; that he had accordingly called at my door & was told by my porter that I was engaged & could see no company, and that the porter had refused to take his card to me. This had given him offense and therefore he would not call on me. I was much surprised at this statement. Mr. Strange has been a Senator in Congress, and ought to have known that the President must sometimes have public duties to perform which render [it] impossible for him to see company. When I have important duties to perform I occasionally find it to be absolutely necessary to close my doors & to give directions to my porter to admit no one & bring me no cards. I had no knowledge, until Mr. McKay informed me to-day, that Mr. Strange had called & been refused. He has acted very foolishly in taking offense & has shown himself to be a much smaller man than I had estimated him to be. The circumstance, however, proves how impossible it is for the President to avoid giving offense to weak & self-conceited people.

The Cabinet met at the usual hour; all the members present except the Secretary of War, who is absent on a visit to New York. Some business of minor importance was disposed of. Despatches received from Com. Perry, relating to the state of affairs in Yucatan, were read. I gave the despatches to Col. Walker, my Private Secretary, and requested him to show them confidentially to Mr.

Hannegan, chairman of the committee of Foreign affairs in the Senate, & to suggest to him that there would be no impropriety in communicating them to the Senate if they were called for. I informed the Cabinet that I deemed it necessary to appoint an Attorney General of the U. States, in place of Mr. Clifford resigned; that I had thought of Gov. Toucey of Connecticut, and Gov. Vroom of New Jersey, either of whom were qualified for the office, and as whoever was appointed would be associated with the Cabinet, I asked their advice. They all expressed a high opinion of both gentlemen, and that they would be satisfied to be associated with either but expressed a preference for Gov. Vroom, chiefly upon the ground that no appointment of importance had been made from the State of New Jersey during my administration, while a minister to Russia & several other appointments had been made from Connecticut. I did not inform them which of the gentlemen I would appoint, but said I would determine in a day or two. I was much more intimately acquainted with Gov. Toucey than with Gov. Vroom, & knew him to be my personal & political friend, but the consideration that no citizen of New Jersey had been appointed to any important station had weight in my mind. In reflecting on the subject after the Cabinet adjourned, I determined to tender the appointment to Gov. Vroom, & after night I addressed him a letter tendering the appointment to him. I informed the Cabinet to-day that I desired to invite their atten-

tion, not for the purpose of immediate decision, but for consideration, [to] the important question whether a proposition should not be made to Spain to purchase the Island of Cuba. The subject was freely discussed. The great importance of the Island to the U. S., and the danger, if we did not acquire it, that it might fall into the hands of Great Brittain, were considered. Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, was earnestly in favour of making the attempt to purchase it, and was willing to pay one hundred millions of Dollars for it. Mr. Mason, the Secretary of the Navy, concurred in opinion with Mr. Walker. Mr. Johnson, the Post master General, had objections to incorporating the Spanish population of Cuba into our Union, and did not seem to favour the idea of purchasing it. Mr. Buchanan, the Secretary of State, expressed a general wish to acquire Cuba, but thought there were objections to making the attempt at this time. He feared [if] it became known that such a step was contemplated, that it might act prejudicially to the Democratic party in the next Presidential election. He said he would reflect on the subject and be prepared to give me his advice upon the subject hereafter. I intimated my strong conviction that the effort should be made without delay to purchase the Island: and informed Mr. Buchanan that at the Cabinet meeting on Saturday next I would again bring up the subject for deliberate consideration. He said he had doubts on the subject, but would be prepared by that time to give me his advice. The

Hon. Lewis Cass called about 6 O'Clock P. M., and read to me a letter[1] which he had prepared to the committee of [the] Democratic National convention at Baltimore, in answer to their letter informing him of his nomination as a candidate for the Presidency. He invited the freest criticism of it on my part. I suggested two or three material modifications. One was to strike out from the letter the declaration which it contained that he would answer no enquiries or interrogations which might be propounded to him in relation to his political opinions. In the letter he endorsed & approved the Democratic principles embodied in the Resolutions adopted by the convention. This I fully approved, but disapproved a sentence which immediately followed which, I thought, diluted & weakened or qualified the approval of them. It was to the effect that he would, if elected, carry out the principles embodied in the Resolutions as his Democratic predecessors had done. I suggested to him that Mr. Madison had given way upon the Bank question and had signed the Bank charter,[2] whereas one of the Resolutions declared a national Bank to be unconstitutional; I suggested to him that Mr. Monroe had changed his original opinions upon the subject of internal Improvements[3] and had given way upon

[1] Washington *Union,* June 1, 1848.

[2] Madison signed the bill for the establishment of the second United States Bank in 1816, contrary to the strict constructionist principles of the Jeffersonian school.

[3] In his veto of the Cumberland Road bill in May, 1822, Monroe took the ground that Congress did not possess the constitutional

that question. I presented also other illustrations to him, and gave it to him as my clear opinion that he had better confine his declaration to an unqualified approval of the principles embodied in the Resolutions. This would be unequivocal and would admit of no cavil or discussion. My suggestions seemed to strike him with force, but he did not say what he would do. He had, in a conversation with me two or three days ago, informed me that he intended in his letter accepting the nomination fully [to] endorse and approve the whole course of my administration. There was no such clause in the letter, but a general clause approving generally of the policy of the Democratic Presidents who had preceded him, a clause which was so general as to have but little meaning in it. He informed me that he had modified the clause, which was originally as he had informed me it would be, & put it in its present form at the suggestion of Senator Allen of Ohio and Mr. Treat of Missouri. As a matter of delicacy I made no remark upon this part of the letter. The concluding clause, which spoke of this being an age of progress and advancement, and that the "principles of action" of the Government should yield to and keep pace with public opinion, I suggested to him might be misconstrued to mean that constitutional principles might be changed, in order to accommodate themselves to what might

authority to carry on a system of internal improvements, but that the exercise of such a power, if it could be secured by the passage of a constitutional amendment, would result beneficially to the country.

seem from time to time to be public opinion, which I thought was an untenable & dangerous doctrine. He finally said he would consider of my suggestions & revise the letter. Whilst we were in conversation Mr. Venable of the Ho. Repts. from N. C. called. Gen'l Cass remained until after Mr. Venable retired, when we continued & concluded our conversation.

I disposed of business on my table as usual to-day. This was reception evening. Many persons, ladies & gentlemen, & among them several delegates to the Whig convention at Phila., which will assemble in that City on the 7th of June, called.

WEDNESDAY, *31st May, 1848.*— A large number of visitors called this morning, ladies & gentlemen. Some called to pay their respects; some on business; but the more numerous class were seeking office. A delegation of chiefs of the chickasaw and choctaw Tribes of Indians called about 1 O'Clock P. M., accompanied by the commissioner of Indian affairs. They had visited Washington on business for their respective Tribes & called to pay their respects to their Great Father, as they call the President of the U. S. One of the Chickasaw chiefs addressed me in his native tongue in their behalf. His speech was interpreted to me & I responded to it. I disposed of much business on my table to-day. The marine band played on the grounds South of the President's House this afternoon. A large crowd of ladies and gentlemen attended. I was on the South porch & received company as is usual on such occasions.

My old friend, the Hon. Abraham McClellan of Tenn., & his wife, took a family dinner with me to-day. To-night Miss Jane Hawkins of N. C., who has been spending two or three weeks with my family, left for her home. Her father, Col. John D. Hawkins, called for her about 8 O'Clock P. M.

THURSDAY, *1st June, 1848.*— Many visitors called this morning, and among them several Whig Delegates to the Philadelphia convention. Senator Bagby of Alabama called on business. Before he left I informed him that Mr. Ralph I. Ingersoll, U. S. minister to Russia, had asked to be recalled, and that it would be necessary before the adjournment of Congress to appoint a successor. I tendered the appointment to Mr. Bagby. It seemed to take him by surprise; indeed, I am satisfied that he had never thought of it. He had not been suggested to me by anyone, nor had I informed any one, not even any member of my Cabinet, of my intention to offer it to him. He thanked me for the tender of the appointment, and said he would reflect on the subject & give me an answer. Gen'l Cass's letter accepting the nomination for the Presidency, appeared in the *Union* newspaper this morning. It had been modified since I saw it, and in the particulars which I suggested to him in my conversation with him on tuesday last, 30th ultimo (see this, Diary of that day). These modifications were not only an improvement, but made the letter sounder in principle and less susceptible of misconstruction than was the draft of the letter which he showed to

me; though still it was not precisely, on the points which I had suggested to him, as I would have had it. In the course of the day Mr. Ritchie called & said to me, you had not your spectacles on when you read Gen'l Cass's draft of his letter the other day, or you would not have approved the concluding paragraph and some other paragraphs of it. After learning from him that he had seen it and that he knew it had been submitted to me, I told him of my conversation with Gen'l Cass and of the modifications which I had suggested, & some of which I perceived from the published letter had been made. Mr. Ritchie then told me that some of these modifications, & particularly of the last paragraph, had been made by himself. Mr. Ritchie informed me that Mr. Stevenson of Richmond, Va., had also seen the draft of the letter & had felt some concern about the last paragraph until it was modified. Mr. Ritchie said that Gen'l Cass had remarked to him that that paragraph was penned for the young Democracy, and that he had replied to him that he must take care that he did not dissatisfy the old Democracy. Mr. Stevenson, I learn, has been in the City several days, but he has not called on me. I have reason to believe that he expected to fill a place in my Cabinet, and that he has since desired to go on a foreign mission. I presume, like hundreds of other disappointed expectants for office, he is dissatisfied. I know of no other reason why he did not call. As a member of the convention and the committee who addressed Gen'l Cass informing him of his nomination, he has approved the policy

of my administration. I have never had any personal misunderstanding with him, and cannot, I think, be mistaken in attributing his failure to call to his disappointment in not having been invited to fill some high office in my gift. The Hon. Mr. Sebastian[1] of Arkansas, recently appointed U. S. Senator in the place of the late Senator Ashley deceased, called to-day. I was happy to recognize in him the son of an old Tennessee friend. His father resides in Hickman County, Ten., about 30 miles from Columbia, my late residence, and the Senator himself was for a time at school at Columbia. I was engaged as usual during the day in attending to business in my office. In the afternoon I took a ride on horseback. Mr. Buchanan sent to me to-day an important despatch from Mr. Campbell, U. S. consul at Havannah, dated May 18th, 1848, in relation to the dissatisfied state of the inhabitants of the Island, and expressing the opinion that there would probably [be] a revolution or civil war soon. He expresses the opinion that the Creoles of the Island desire to be annexed to the U. S. Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, called and read to me a private letter which he had received from Mr. Campbell on the same subject. Mr. Walker was of opinion that no time ought to be lost by the U. S. in endeavoring to purchase the Island.

FRIDAY, *2nd June, 1848.*— Many visitors called to-day, who occupied my time until 12 O'Clock when

[1] William King Sebastian, 1814–1865, Senator from Arkansas 1847–1861.

I closed my office, though I saw an occasional visitor after that hour. Among them was John O'Sullivan of N. York. He informed me that he had received very important information from Cuba, which he proceeded to detail confidentially to me. It was in substance that there was a design on foot among many of the wealthy and influential planters and other inhabitants of the Island to revolutionize the country, overthrow the Spanish authority, and then seek annexation to the U. States. His account of the discontent of the inhabitants of Cuba corresponds with the account given by Mr. Campbell, U. S. consul at Havannah, in his despatch to the Secretary of State dated May 18th, 1848 (see this diary of yesterday). He stated to me, in addition to the information contained in that letter, that an agent of the principal planters in Cuba was now in Baltimore with a view to obtain aid in the U. S. to enable them to effect a Revolution in Cuba, and that he desired to see him in Baltimore, as he feared if he came to Washington that his movements would be observed. Mr. O'Sullivan said he would visit the agent at Baltimore this evening & would return & see me on to-morrow. Mr. O'Sullivan also informed me that a distinguished Gen'l of the U. S. army, now in Mexico, had agreed with the Cubans to resign his commission at the close of the Mexican War and proceed to Cuba with such of the discharged volunteers as would join him, to aid the Cubans in effecting the establishment of their Independence. I at once said to Mr. O'Sullivan that if Cuba was ever obtained by the U. S. it must be by

amicable purchase, and that as President of the U. S. I could give no countenance to such a step, and could not wink at such a movement. After Mr. O'Sullivan left me Judge Mason, the Secretary of the Navy, who had retired from my office when Mr. O'Sullivan came in, returned to my office, when I related to him the conversation which had taken place. The subject was freely discussed by Judge Mason & myself. In the course of conversation Judge Mason informed me that after the Cabinet consultation of tuesday last on the subject of Cuba, Mr. Buchanan had intimated to him that if the President should decide in favour of acquiring Cuba, he (Mr. Buchanan) could not be the agent of carrying out the President's views. This surprised me, as no such intimation was given by him in the Cabinet meeting. Mr. Buchanan in the course of the discussion on Tuesday had expressed the opinion that any attempt to purchase Cuba at this time would injure Gen'l Cass's election to the Presidency. Gen'l Cass called to see me shortly after Judge Mason left. I deemed it proper to communicate to Gen'l Cass all the information I had in relation to Cuba, including the letter from Mr. Campbell, U. S. consul at Havannah. I inquired of Gen'l Cass his opinion in relation to Cuba. He said at once that he was in favour of acquiring the Island, if it could be done by amicable purchase, and referred me to his late speech on the Yucatan question in which he had alluded to Cuba. I asked him if he thought an attempt to purchase Cuba at this time would injuriously affect his election to the Presi-

dency, which he answered in the negative. I asked him what price I would be justified in offering for the Island. He answered that Cuba was immensely valuable, & that he would be willing to pay a large sum for it. This was reception evening. A large number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, and among them many Whig members of Congress & Whig Delegates to the Philadelphia convention, called.

SATURDAY, *3rd June, 1848.*— Several persons called this morning. Senator Bagby of Alabama called and intimated his willingness to accept the mission to Russia which I had tendered to him on tuesday last. The Cabinet met at the usual hour, all the members present, Mr. Marcy, the Secretary of War, having returned from a visit to New York this morning. I informed the Cabinet that since the last meeting I had written to the Hon. Peter D. Vroom of New Jersey, and had tendered to him the office of Attorney General of the U. States. The Cabinet unanimously approved the selection of Gov. Vroom. Mr. Buchanan read instructions which he had prepared to Mr. Hise of Ky., charge de affaires of the U. S. to Guatamala. Mr. Hise is now in this City. I brought forward the Cuban question and communicated all the information I possessed on the subject, including that given to me by Mr. O'Sullivan on yesterday. Mr. Buchanan said the proposed purchase of Cuba was the gravest & most important question that ever had been submitted to my Cabinet. The attempt if successful, he said, might involve the country in war with Great Britain or France. He

proceeded to give his views at some length, but still, he said, he desired to acquire Cuba. It was clear that he desired to shun the question during my administration, but if the measure was pressed for decision now, he was unwilling to take uncompromising ground against it, and that if he yielded his assent, it would be reluctantly. At the last Cabinet meeting he had expressed his apprehension of the prejudicial effect which the agitation of the subject might have on the prospects of Gen'l Cass in the approaching Presidential election. I adverted to this objection & told him I had held a full conversation with Gen'l Cass on the subject since the last meeting of the Cabinet (see this diary yesterday) and that Gen'l Cass was decidedly in favour of purchasing Cuba from Spain, and had expressed his opinion that an offer to purchase it, or the actual purchase of it, would not injure his election. Mr. Buchanan said he differed with Gen'l Cass in opinion. The subject of Cuba & its purchase was the subject of a lengthy conversation among the members of the Cabinet, Mr. Walker earnestly urging that immediate steps be taken for its purchase. As Mr. Marcy, the Secretary of War, was not present on the last Cabinet day, when the subject was presented for consideration, I did not press it for a decision to-day. Indeed Mr. Marcy intimated that he was not prepared to give an opinion. In a late despatch, as well as a personal letter, addressed to me by Mr. Ralph I. Ingersoll, U. S. minister to Russia, he requests to be recalled from his mission. The same request had been made some time ago & refused on account of

[the] French Revolution and other events which had occurred in Europe, & which seemed to render it proper that the U. S. minister at St. Petersburg should remain at his post. I stated that I was of opinion that the leave asked might now be granted. Mr. Buchanan had no objection provided a successor should be appointed and go out to relieve Mr. Ingersoll before he left St. Petersburg. To this I assented. I then informed the Cabinet that I proposed to appoint Senator Bagby of Alabama to succeed Mr. Ingersoll. Each member of the Cabinet expressed his satisfaction at the selection of Mr. Bagby for the mission. Gen'l Cass and Mr. Benjamin F. Hallett[1] of Boston took a family dinner with me to-day. After dinner Gen'l Cass took leave of me intending on monday morning next [to leave] for his residence in Michigan. After night Mr. J. L. O'Sullivan called & had another conversation with me upon the subject of Cuba. He informed me that after he saw me on yesterday he had gone to Baltimore, where he met the agent from Cuba of whom he had informed me. He did not communicate to me anything material which he learned from him, but was very earnest in urgent [urging] his former views in favour of the purchase of Cuba. Mr. O'Sullivan belongs to the section of the Democratic party in New York called Barn-burners. The conversation turned on the politics of New York and the course of the Barn-burners in the Presidential election. I expressed the opinion to him that if they did not

[1] Benjamin F. Hallett of Massachusetts, 1797–1862, ardent advocate of temperance and anti-Masonic principles.

support the nomination of Cass & Butler they could not continue to be members of the Democratic party, but would in effect join the Whigs. I was satisfied from the conversation that he prefers to see the Democratic party defeated, rather than see Gen'l Cass elected President of the U. States. The Treaty with New Granada was ratified by the Senate to-day.

SUNDAY, *4th June, 1848.*— Mrs. Polk and myself attended the First Presbyterian church to-day. Senators Borland & Sebastian of Arkansas, both of whom were formerly citizens of Tennessee, took a family dinner with me to-day. Daniel Graham, Esqr., also dined with me.

MONDAY, *5th June, 1848.*— An unusual number of persons called this morning. Among them were twenty or thirty ministers and elders of the Presbyterian church, who had been attending the General Assembly of the old school Presbyterian church, which has been in Session at Baltimore for some days. On their return to their homes they called on me to pay their respects. I transacted business in my office as usual. The Senate held a short sitting to-day, there being scarcely a quorum, many of the members having gone to attend the Whig national convention which meets at Philadelphia on wednesday next. Gen'l Cass left this City in this morning's cars for the North on his way to his residence in Michigan. My nephew, Marshall T. Polk, returned to-day from a visit to his mother who resides at Morganton, N. Carolina. He has been appointed

a cadet in the military academy, and will proceed in two or three days to West Point to enter upon his duties. To-night my Private Secretary, Col. Walker, left with his wife and four children on a visit to relatives of Mrs. Walker at Lynchburg, Virginia. Mrs. Walker and her children will remain at Lynchburg some weeks. Col. Walker will return in a few days. The Senate adjourned over to-day until thursday next.

TUESDAY, *6th June, 1848.*— Several persons called this morning. The Cabinet met at the usual hour; all the members present. After the consideration of business, not important, I brought up the question of Cuba, and the policy of making an attempt to purchase the Island from Spain. Mr. Walker and Mr. Mason were earnestly in favour of making the effort to purchase it. Mr. Johnson did not favour the proposition, chiefly because he was unwilling to incorporate the population of Cuba with the Federal Union. Mr. Marcy said he concurred with Mr. Buchanan in the views expressed by him at the last meeting of the Cabinet (see this diary of that day). Mr. Buchanan said he had reflected much on the subject, and continued to entertain the opinions which he had heretofore expressed. He said he desired to acquire Cuba, but thought in the present condition of affairs in Europe this was not the proper time to make an overture to Spain with that view. He feared it might involve [us] in War. He said with these impressions & convictions he would, however, though with reluctance, write such

a despatch to our minister at Madrid on the subject as I might direct, and as would carry out my views. I decided that the proposition to purchase Cuba should be made through Mr. Saunders, U. S. Minister at Madrid, and I stated generally the substance of what the despatch to Mr. Saunders should contain. Mr. Buchanan said he wished specific instructions from me before he wrote the despatch. I informed him that I would reduce the points to writing which I desired should be embraced in the despatch, and would furnish him with it. Mr. Buchanan will take no responsibility in the matter, but will simply execute my directions in his official character as Secretary of State. I was indisposed to-day, having taken cold which had affected my whole system. I lay upon a sofa most of the time the Cabinet were in session. I attended to no business after the Cabinet adjourned. This was reception evening, but I was too much indisposed to accompany Mrs. Polk to the parlour. My nephew, Marshall T. Polk, attended her. Mr. Russmann of Tennessee, a clerk in the General P. Office, attended to-day, and will perform the duties of my Private Secretary during the absence of Col. Walker from the City.

WEDNESDAY, *7th June, 1848.*— I was in the office & received company as usual this morning, though I was quite indisposed. I attended to none but indispensible business on my table to-day. The Secretaries of State, War, and Navy called on business. I received a letter to-day from the Hon. P. D. Vroom of N. Jersey, declining to accept the appointment of

Attorney General of the U. S. which I had tendered to him by a letter addressed to him some days ago.

Continuing to be indisposed, I sent for Dr. Hall in the afternoon, who prescribed for me. The marine band played on the President's grounds this afternoon, but I did not go out. Most of the members of Congress, I learn, have gone to Philadelphia to attend the Whig national convention which meets in that City to-day. Some of them have accompanied Gen'l Cass as far as New York on his way home. After night I took the medicine which Dr. Hall had prescribed.

THURSDAY, *8th June, 1848.*— I continued to be indisposed this morning, though I attended in my office and saw a few persons. I transacted some business which was indispensible. Having received a letter from the Hon. P. D. Vroom on yesterday declining to accept the office of attorney Gen'l of the U. S., which I had tendered to him, I addressed a letter to-day to the Hon. Isaac Toucey of Connecticut, tendering the office to him. It had been a matter of doubt in my mind & was discussed in the Cabinet, whether the appointment should not be tendered to Gov. Tou[c]ey instead of Mr. Vroom. It had been decided in favour of the latter, chiefly on the ground that no important appointment had been given to a citizen of the state of New Jersey. I am personally better acquainted with Gov. Toucey than with Mr. Vroom, and if he accepts I will be entirely satisfied with him. I omitted to mention in yesterday's Diary that a dispatch was received from

Messrs. Sevier & Clifford, dated at the City of Mexico on the 21st May, 1848, which confirmed the rumours which had been circulated through the Telegraph for some days passed [past], that the Treaty had been ratified by the chamber of Deputies at Queretero, in Mexico, and that no doubt was entertained that it would be ratified by the Senate also. There is now, I hope, a good prospect of a speedy peace.

FRIDAY, *9th June, 1848.*— A Telegraphic despatch from the South reached this City last night to the effect that the Treaty with Mexico had been ratified by the Mexican Senate.[1] The Treaty had previously received the ratification of the House of Delegates of the Mexican Congress. Half a dozen members of Congress, all of the Democratic party, called early in the day to congratulate me on the news of peace. I sent for the Secretary of War and consulted with him in regard to the orders necessary to be given, in addition to those which had heretofore been given, in relation to the disbanding all the forces engaged to serve during the Mexican War. Mr. Walker, the Secretary of the Treasury, called to see me in relation to the purchase of the Island of Cuba from Spain, a subject which has been one of consideration in the Cabinet lately. He expressed the opinion that if any of the volunteers in Mexico should, after their discharge, go to Cuba, as it had been intimated they would do, and should engage with the Cubans in an attempt to revolutionize that

[1] The Mexican Senate ratified the treaty on May 25, 1848.

Island, it would postpone, if not defeat, the acquisition of the Island by the U. S. He recommended that an order should be issued by the Secretary of War to Gen'l Butler commanding the army in Mexico, to prevent such a step, so far as our troops in Mexico who would be entitled to their discharge were concerned. Concurring with Mr. Walker in this suggestion, I sent for the Secretary of War and appointed a special meeting of the Cabinet at 1 O'Clock P. M. to-day to consider this and other points connected with the Cuba[n] question, about which I had a full conversation with Mr. Walker. Mr. Walker left to see Mr. Buchanan on the subject. In about an hour he addressed me a note stating that he had seen Mr. Buchanan & that he concurred entirely in our views. The Secretary of War called, and after a full conference with him he retired to prepare his order to Gen'l Butler. At 1 O'Clock P. M. the Cabinet assembled; all the members present except Mr. Mason, the Secretary of the Navy, who, I learned, left last evening on a short visit to the Naval school at Annapolis. The subject of Cuba was brought up. All concurred in the propriety of issuing the proposed order to Gen'l Butler. The Secretary of War read the order which he had prepared at my suggestion, and it was approved. The Secretary of State at my request read to the Cabinet the draft of the letter to the U. S. consul at Havannah, in answer to one received from the consul dated 18th ult., and which he had previously read to me. In this letter the consul was informed the U. S. must preserve the national faith with Spain,

and take no part in the civil war or revolution in Cuba which the consul in his letter apprehended would take place in that Island soon. He was also informed that the U. S. would keep in good faith her Treaty with Spain and preserve her neutrality, [but] she could never consent to see Cuba transferred to any European power. I suggested two modifications of the letter, to which Mr. Buchanan assented, and as modified it was unanimously approved by the Cabinet. Mr. Walker then repeated the suggestion which he had made to me this morning. It was that the best mode of approaching Spain with the view to purchase Cuba would be to do so in a manner to satisfy her of our friendly disposition, and that we did not intend to take any part in any revolution by which the Spanish authority should be overthrown. With this object he proposed that copies of the order of the Secretary of War to Gen'l Butler & of the Secretary of State's letter to our consul at Havannah should be transmitted to the U. S. Minister at Madrid with instructions to communicate them to the Spanish Government. He proposed that our Minister should at the same time [say] that if it would be agreeable to Spain, the U. S. Government would make an offer to purchase Cuba for a pecuniary consideration. This mode of making the proposition was discussed & unanimously agreed to by the Cabinet. Mr. Buchanan, who had doubted and been reluctant to act on a former occasion, said he heartily approved the plan suggested, and if adopted he would cheerfully prepare the necessary instructions to Mr. Saunders. I told him that I was glad to find

unanimity in the Cabinet, & that I would adopt the plan proposed. Mr. Buchanan said as the note of Mr. Saunders making the communication to the Spanish Government would be a very important one, he thought it ought to be prepared here and sent to him to be signed and delivered. This suggestion was also assented to unanimously, & [I] directed Mr. Buchanan to prepare the instructions and note accordingly. When the Cabinet was about to disperse I informed them that [I] would have nothing of importance to lay before them on to-morrow, which was the regular day of meeting of the Cabinet, and that there would be no meeting of the Cabinet on to-morrow unless I notified the members to the contrary. Early this morning I learned that two ballottings had taken place in the Whig national convention sitting at Philadelphia, late in the day on yesterday, without making a choice. Later in the day a Telegraphic despatch announced that on the 4th balloting Maj'r Gen'l Zachary Taylor of the U. S. army had been nominated as the Whig candidate for the Presidency, and Millard Fillmore of New York had, on the 2nd balloting, been nominated as the Whig candidate for the Vice Presidency. This being reception evening I attended in the parlour, although I was still somewhat indisposed. The usual number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

SATURDAY, *10th June, 1848.*— I was more unwell this morning than I was on yesterday. I was able to be in my office, but saw but few persons and transacted but little business. I transacted some business

with the Secretary of War & the Secretary of the Navy. The Hon. John J. Crittendon of the Senate called to take leave of me, intending to leave the city on Monday for Kentucky, to enter upon the canvass as the Whig candidate for Governor of that state. He said he could not in justice to his own feelings or his sense of duty to me, leave the City without returning to me his warm thanks for my kindness to his son, Capt., now Maj'r Crittendon, of the mounted Rifle Regiment. His son had been involved in difficulty in the army and was about to be dismissed from the army, and I had pardoned him & restored him to duty. He is [a] gallant officer, but occasionally indulges too much in the use [of] intoxicating drink. My personal relations with Mr. Crittendon have always been of a friendly character, & I am sure he parted with me my personal friend. Continuing to be unwell to-night I took medicine prescribed by Dr. Hall.

SUNDAY, *11th June, 1848.*— I was indisposed to-day and did not attend church. Mrs. Polk, accompanied by Miss Henrietta Rachel Armstrong, attended the First Presbyterian church.

My Private Secretary (Col. Walker) returned from Lynchburg, Va., where he had gone with his family, this morning. He left his family at Lynchburg.

MONDAY, *12th June, 1848.*— Though somewhat indisposed I attended in my office this morning. Many persons called and I was annoyed as usual by

the office seekers. I sent a message to the Senate in answer to [a] Resolution of that body, and transacted business in my office during most of the day. I was informed to-day that two persons in this City, one an upholsterer (Boyd) and the other a grocer, I believe (Donaba) who have heretofore professed to be democrats, have announced that they have changed their politics and are now Whigs, and for Gen'l Taylor for the Presidency. They were both applicants to me for office and were disappointed. They will not, of course, avow this as the reason of their change of their politics, but there is no doubt it is the true reason. Theirs is but an illustration of the case [of] hundreds, and I might add thousands, of others. The herd of professional office-seekers who have besieged me during my whole term are, with rare exceptions, men without political principle. From the necessity of the case, many more who seek office must be disappointed than can be gratified, and I have therefore long since become satisfied that any President is greatly weakened by the patronage of his office. I am more & more disgusted with the selfish importunities of those who continue to harrass me about office.

TUESDAY, *13th June, 1848.*— A number of persons called this morning and among them several members of Congress. The Cabinet met at the usual hour; all the members present. Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Walker having business in their respective Departments, asked to be excused unless I desired their presence on some special matter. I told them

I had nothing important to present to the Cabinet to-day and they retired. I transacted business in my office as usual. This was reception evening. The usual number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, attended in the parlour.

WEDNESDAY, *14th June, 1848.*— The number and importunities of office seekers was quite as great as they have been any day for months passed [past]. I have no offices to bestow, & am much disgusted with the unceasing pressure for them which occurs daily. A great portion of those who thus annoy [me] have no claims upon the public & are wholly unworthy. All of them had much better engage in some honest employment for a livelihood than to seek to live on the public. I disposed of much business in my office to-day. Nothing of unusual interest occurred. The Marine band played on the President's grounds this afternoon, many persons attended.

THURSDAY, *15th June, 1848.*— The Secretary of War left this morning for Frederickton, Md., where he had been summoned to testify before the military Court of Enquiry in Gen'l Pillow's case, and of which Brevet Brig. Gen'l Tomson is President. Many persons called as usual this morning. In the course of the day I saw the Secretaries of State and the Navy and transacted business with them. I nominated to the Senate to-day the Hon. Isaac Toucey of Connecticut, as Attorney General of the U. S., and the Hon. Arthur P. Bagby of the Senate, from Alabama, as En. Ex. & Minister Plenipoten-

tiary to Russia, vice R. I. Ingersoll, recalled at his own request. I transacted business in my office as usual to-day. To-night Maj'r Graham of the U. S. army arrived bearing a despatch from Messrs. Sevier & Clifford, U. S. Commissioners in Mexico. They write from the City of Queretero on the 25th of May, and announce their arrival at that City on that day, and that the Treaty had been ratified by both branches of the Mexican Congress. The exchange of ratifications would probably take place a day or two afterwards.

FRIDAY, *16th June, 1848.*— I saw company as usual this morning. I transacted business in my office until between 1 & 2 O'Clock P. M., and while in conversation with Senator Bagby of Alabama now U. S. minister to Russia, I discovered systoms [symptoms] of a chill & mentioned the fact to Mr. Bagby. In half an hour afterwards the chill was upon me. It was followed, of course, by a fever. I sent for Dr. Hall, who prescribed for me in order to prevent its recurrence. After the fever subsided, having much business before me, I transacted some of it. This was reception evening, and although not well I was present in the parlour. A number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called. At bed time I took the medicine prescribed by Dr. Hall.

SATURDAY, *17th June, 1848.*— I was in my office at the usual hour this morning, though I was slightly indisposed. The Cabinet met at the usual hour; all the members present. Mr. Buchanan read

the despatch [1] to Mr. Saunders, U. S. minister to Spain, on the subject of the purchase of Cuba, which he had prepared in pursuance of the decision made at a previous Cabinet meeting (see this Diary of the 9th June, 1848). It was an able and well-written despatch. It authorized Mr. Saunders to inform the Spanish Minister of Foreign affairs of the Secretary of State's despatch to the U. S. consul at Havannah and of the Secretary of War's order to Gen'l Butler, for the purpose of satisfying him of the good faith of the U. S. towards Spain. He was authorized to inform him in conversation that the U. S. could never permit Cuba to pass into the hands of any European Power, and that whilst the Island remained a possession of Spain the U. S. would in no way interfere with it. He was authorized, after having done this, to signify to him in a detailed manner that the U. S. would be willing to purchase the Island if it would be agreeable to Spain to cede [it] for a pecuniary consideration to the U. S. In his confidential instructions he was authorized to stipulate to pay One Hundred Millions of Dollars in convenient installments for the Island. He was furnished with full powers to make a Treaty to this effect. The whole matter was profoundly confidential, and the knowledge of it was to be confined to the Cabinet alone. I will not even make known the result of the Cabinet deliberations on the subject to Mr. J. L. O'Sullivan of New York, who first suggested to me the idea of purchasing Cuba, and who takes much interest in the subject. I do not deem

[1] Moore, *Buchanan,* VIII, 90–102.

it prudent to entrust the knowledge of the authority given to Mr. Saunders to any but the Cabinet. The Cabinet adjourned about 1 O'Clock P. M., and in half an hour afterwards I found that a second chill was coming on me. It was severer than the chill of yesterday. While the fever was on me I sent for Dr. Hall, who prescribed for me. I retired to my chamber. I spent a restless & uncomfortable night.

SUNDAY, *18th June, 1848.*— I was quite unwell this morning and was closely confined to my chamber during the whole day. About 1 O'Clock P. M. I had a chill. This is the third day I have had a chill about the same hour. It was not so severe to-day as on yesterday. Dr. Hall called to see [me] twice in the course of the day. I spent an uncomfortable night.

MONDAY, *19th June, 1848.*— I continued to be unwell & remained closely confined to my chamber during the whole day. Dr. Hall called to see me two or three times. I had no chill to-day. I signed some official papers in my chamber and gave some directions about necessary business.

TUESDAY, *20th June, 1848.*— I was convalescent this morning, but did not leave my chamber. Senators Houston of Texas & Davis of Mississippi sent in their names with a verbal message that they had called to see me as a sub-committee of the Committee on military affairs, on official business. I received them in my chamber. They informed me

that the committee on military affairs desired information and the views of this Executive in relation to the Peace establishment, or the amount of land forces it was deemed necessary to retain in service upon the restoration of peace with Mexico. I informed them that in my judgment all the land forces raised to serve during the war with Mexico, whether regulars or Volunteers, should be discharged, and that the old army, with authority to fill up the rank & file of the companies to 100 men each, would be all that the public service would require to be retained. They suggested that three or four more Regiments would be needed for the protection of our extended Western frontier. I differed with them in opinion and assigned to them my reasons. The chief reasons were, first, that the old army of 15 Regiments, filled up to the maximum of 1,000 men each, would amount to 15,000 men, exclusive of officers, which I thought altogether sufficient for a period of peace; and secondly, the leading objection which existed in my mind to the creation of a large standing army in time of peace. I gave them my views at some length, but told them that I had not laid the subject formally before the Secretary of War, and requested them to call again on to-morrow morning. I told them it was my intention in submitting the ratified Treaty with Mexico before Congress for the necessary legislation to carry it into effect, to communicate the views I had expressed to them, in reference to the peace establishment of the army. I felt that it would be unsafe in my present state of health to attend the meeting of my Cabinet in my office, and

therefore I directed my messenger to invite them to meet me in my chamber. They accordingly assembled in my chamber, all the members present. I submitted to them the subject of the peace establishment of the army, and communicated to them the conversation which I had just held with Senators Houston & Davis. After some discussion they all concurred in my views. It was deemed proper by the Secretary of War to retain in service the additional Major for each Regiment, and the increase of the staff in some of the corps, which had been authorized during the war. In this I concurred. I sent to my office & my Private Secretary brought to me the rough draft of a message which I had prepared just before I was taken sick, designed to be sent to Congress as soon as the ratified Treaty with Mexico was received. In that message I had expressed the views, substantially, in relation to the peace establishment of the army, which I had repeated this morning to Senators Houston & Davis & to the Cabinet. The message also contained my views on other subjects relative to the execution of the Treaty, and the policy to be pursued upon the restoration of peace. The Cabinet concurred in the views expressed, but [thought] one paragraph in relation to the misnamed & exploded "American system" had better be omitted. To this I assented. As the paper related in part to the operations of the war. Department & the army I gave it to the Secretary of War & requested him to examine it & return it to me with any suggestions he might think proper to make. No other business of importance was considered by

the Cabinet. When the Cabinet retired I was much fatigued. I saw a few friends in my chamber, and made an effort to go to the red parlour above stairs to meet my old friend, Dr. Lewis P. Jordan of Kingston, Tenn., & his wife. I remained in the parlour but a few minutes. This was reception evening, but I was too feeble & too unwell to go to the parlour. Mrs. Polk informed me that a large number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, attended.

WEDNESDAY, *21st June, 1848.*— Being somewhat feeble from the effects of my late indisposition, I remained the greater part of the day in my chamber. I walked two or three times to my office & attended to necessary business. I saw the Secretary of State on business. My nephew, Lucius Marshall Walker, a cadet at West Point, arrived this morning and spent the day with my family. He is on furlough and left in the Southern boat to-night on his way to visit his father's family in Tennessee. He has been two years at West Point, maintains a fair standing in his class, and is a promising young man. Senator Davis of Miss. called. I received him in my chamber. He called in pursuance of my request to himself & Senator Houston of Texas on yesterday. They were deputed to call on me by the committee of military affairs of the Senate to ascertain my views in relation to the reduction of the army on the restoration of peace with Mexico (see this Diary of yesterday). I repeated to him substantially the views which I had expressed to Senator Houston & himself on yesterday. I had in the mean-time consulted the

Cabinet, who concurred with me in these views. The Marine band played on the grounds south of the President's House this afternoon. Many persons attended. I was too much indisposed to go out.

THURSDAY, *22nd June, 1848.*— I spent a short time in my office this morning, saw a few persons, and transacted some business. I saw the Secretary of State. I sent for the Secretary of War and transacted business with him. This afternoon Lieut. Gardner, U. S. army, arrived bearing despatches from the city of Mexico. He left that City on the 1st instant, and among other despatches brought one from Messrs. Sevier and Clifford, dated at Queretero, May 30th, 1848, announcing that the exchange of ratifications of the Treaty of peace had taken place on that day. The Commissioners would immediately return from Queretero to the City of Mexico, from which City Mr. Sevier would return to the U. S. bringing with him the ratified Treaty. He brought also despatches from Gen'l Butler stating that part of the army in Mexico were on the march to Vera Cruz to embark for the U. S.

FRIDAY, *23rd June, 1848.*— I was in my office this morning. Many persons called. Among others, Gen'l H. Dodge,[1] one of the recently elected Senators in Congress from the State of Wisconsin, called.

[1] Henry Dodge, Territorial Governor of Wisconsin 1836–1841, Delegate to Congress 1841–1845, Governor 1846–1848, Senator from Wisconsin 1848–1857.

Maj'r Gen'l Gideon J. Pillow of the U. S. army also called. The Court of enquiry in his case, which held its last sittings at Frederick, Maryland, closed the testimony on Wednesday last. Gen'l Pillow will remain at Washington until the Court make their report. There was company in my office when he called and I had but little conversation with him. This morning Senator Davis of Mississippi called and informed me that three gentlemen, citizens of Cuba, had called with him and were in the anti-chamber, & that he desired to inform me of their business before they saw me. He informed me that they had information that a revolution was about to break out in Cuba about this period, and that if successful the Cubans would desire to be annexed to the U. S. I told Senator Davis that it was a very delicate subject upon which to hold a conversation with them, and that if I saw them I would hear what they had to say, but would make them no answer. He then introduced them into my office in comeopany [company] with Wm. J. Brown, ass't P. M. Gen'l. In the presence of Senator Davis & Mr. Brown they informed me of the contemplated revolution by the inhabitants of Cuba with a view to overthrow the Spanish authority in that Island, & that the revolution would probably take place about this day or to-morrow. They spoke of the desire of the Cubans to throw off the Spanish Yoke and to become annexed to the U. S. They did not ask the interference of this Government, but suggested that a part of the troops of the U. S. might be stationed at Key West

and at other convenient points on the Gulf coast to watch over & protect, if necessary, the interests of American citizens in Cuba. I gave them no answer but a general evasive reply to the effect that I would consider of the information they had given me. One of them produced a letter in Spanish which he had received from his correspondent in Cuba, dated May 25th, 1848. This letter was read to me in English by Col. Davis. It was to the effect that in 20 or 30 days from its date the revolution would take place. Upon further enquiry I learned that neither of the three men were recently from Cuba, and that two of them resided in the U. S., one of them at Philadelphia. Their names I did not hear distinctly. After a short interview they retired, in company with Senator Davis & Mr. Brown. Shortly afterwards Mr. Buchanan, Sec. of State, and Mr. Walker, Sec. of the Treasury, called on business, and I communicated to them the fact that they had called and what they had said. The Secretary of War called & I transacted business with him. He returned to me my draft of a message to Congress on the occasion when I should lay the Treaty of peace with Mexico before that body for their action. I had handed it to him at the Cabinet meeting on tuesday last. He had suggested a few unimportant modifications of my draft. I took a ride in my carriage with Mrs. Polk this afternoon. This was the regular reception evening, but I did not receive company, Mrs. Polk having resolved that during the remainder of the warm season she would receive company but one evening (Tuesdays) in the week.

SATURDAY, *24th June, 1848.*—I saw a number of persons this morning. The Cabinet met at the usual hour. Some business of no special importance was transacted. The Secretary of the Navy read a despatch which he had prepared to Commodore Jones, commanding the Pacific squadron. He made some modifications of it at my suggestion. During the sitting of the Cabinet Senator Hannegan called & I saw him in my Private Secretary's office. I had a conversation with him about the distracting subject of slavery, which is embarrassing the Bill to establish a Territorial Government in Oregon. I advised Mr. Hannegan, as I had previously done some days ago, to bring forward & press the adoption of the Missouri compromise line & extend it to the Pacific. He concurred with me that this was the only practicable means of settling the agitation and excitement on the subject which existed in and out of Congress. On returning to the Cabinet I informed them of my conversation with Mr. Hannegan & submitted the question to them for their opinions. They all concurred in opinion that the adoption of the Missouri compromise was the only means of allaying the excitement & settling the question. After the Cabinet adjourned I requested my Private Secretary to invite Senators Breese of Ill. and Bradbury of Maine to call this afternoon. They did call at different hours, and I held with each a conversation in which I presented to them the urgent considerations which made it proper to adopt the Missouri compromise line of 36° 30′, as applied to the Territories of Oregon, Cal-

ifornia, & New Mexico, and thus quiet the agitation of the slavery question in & out of Congress. Mr. Breese expressed his readiness to take the Missouri compromise line, & said he would exert his influence with Northern Senators to induce them to do so. Mr. Bradbury was not so decided on the subject as Mr. Breese, but admitted the great importance of adjusting the question. He seemed to be desirous to support the Missouri line, but was timid & fearful of public opinion in his State. The necessity for settling the question is the greater since the convention of Barnburners, held at Utica, New York, on the 22nd Instant, have bolted from the regular Democratic nominations made by the Baltimore convention in May last, and have nominated Martin Van Buren for President and Henry Dodge of Wisconsin for Vice President distinctly upon the ground of the Wilmot Proviso. This is a most dangerous attempt to organize Geographical parties upon the slave question. It is more threatening to the Union than anything which has occurred since the meeting of the Hartford convention in 1814. Mr. Van Buren's course is selfish, unpatriotic, and wholly inexcusable. The effect of this movement of the seceding and discontented Democrats of New York will be effectually co[u]nteracted if the slave question can be settled by adopting the Missouri compromise line as applied to Oregon, New Mexico, & Upper California at the Present Session of Congress. If the question can be thus settled harmony will be restored to the Union and the danger of forming geographical parties be avoided. For these reasons I am using

my influence with members of Congress to have it effected.

Maj'r Gen'l Pillow and his wife took a family dinner with me to-day.

SUNDAY, *25th June, 1848.*— Being still feeble from my recent indisposition I did not attend church to-day. I saw Senator Turney of Tennessee about 3 O'Clock P. M. and held a conversation with [him] on the subject of adopting the Missouri compromise (see this Diary of yesterday). Mr. Turney concurred with me in my views. The conversations noted in yesterday's Diary as having taken place with Senators Atherton [Breese] and Bradbury should have been noted as having taken place this day instead of yesterday. I[t] was this day I saw them and conversed with them. The mistake in writing them as of yesterday instead of to-day, occurred in consequence of my having omitted to write up my diary since friday & I inadvertantly recorded the conversations as of yesterday instead of to-day. This evening I was informed that Joseph H. Talbot, Esqr., Dr. Ja[c]kson & his wife, & Miss Hurt, all of Ja[c]kson, Tennessee, were in the parlour. Although our habit is not to receive company on the sabbath, as they were Tennesse[e]ans, and Mr. Talbot an old acquaintance, Mrs. Polk & myself went to the parlour to see them. The[y] took tea with us.

MONDAY, *26th June, 1848.*— I saw company as usual this morning. Members of Congress, office seekers, and others called. I saw several public offi-

cers and transacted business on my table to-day. Nothing unusual or [of] particular interest occurred. Gen'l Pillow called and held a long conversation with me.

Judge Mason, as acting attorney General of the U. S., and to whom the subject had been referred for his opinion, read to me an opinion which he had prepared relating to certain negro slaves claimed by the Seminole Indians, who claimed their freedom under an alleged proclamation of Gen'l Jesup, when commanding the army in Florida some years go. The opinion was to the effect that the negroes will [were] still slaves & the property of the Seminoles. Mr. Buchanan was present & had some doubts of the correctness of the opinion on some points. I concurred with Judge Mason in his views.

TUESDAY, *27th June, 1848.*— Several persons called before the meeting of the Cabinet this morning. Among others Senators Bright of Indiana and Foote of Mississippi called and held a conversation with me. The[y] concurred with me in opinion that the only practicable mode of settling the slavery question was to adopt the Missouri compromise line. An amendment [1] to be offered to the Oregon Territorial Bill, now pending before the Senate, was written at my table, first by Mr. Foote as I dictated it

[1] An amendment which in effect provided for the extension of the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific was introduced in the Senate by Bright on June 27, 1848. It passed the Senate, but was rejected by the House on August 11.— *Globe,* 30 Cong. 1 Sess. 875, and *H. Journal,* 30 Cong. 1 Sess. 1245.

to him, & was then copied by Mr. Bright. I learn that Mr. Bright gave notice that he would offer the amendment when it was in order to do so, and the amendment as written at my table was ordered to be printed for the information of the Senate. I learn that there is a fair prospect that the amendment will pass the Senate. The Cabinet met at the usual hour; all the members present except the Secretary of the Treasury, from whom I received a note stating that he was indisposed. Several matters of detail were considered and disposed of in Cabinet, but none of them of any general importance.

This was reception evening. The usual number of persons, ladies & gentlemen, called.

WEDNESDAY, *28th June, 1848.*— A crowd of persons called this morning; a large majority of them were seeking offices which I had not to bestow. Quite a number of females were among them, seeking places for their husbands, sons, and other relations. Some, too, of the number were begging money. It was a morning not only unprofitably spent, but was really a disgusting scene. But as I have to open my doors every day, I can never tell who will call or what their business is, and I am compelled to endure such annoyances. Poor people! they had much better go to work & make an honest living by their own exertions that [than] to be hanging on the Executive for office & relying upon the Government to support them.

The Hon. Isaac Toucey of Connecticut, recently nominated to the Senate and confirmed by that body

as Attorney General of the U. States, arrived in Washington to-day, and called and informed me that he was ready to enter upon the duties of the office. I delivered to him his commission. I disposed of business on my table, and saw public officers on business as usual. This afternoon the Marine Band played on the grounds south of the President's mansion. A large number of persons were present. I met many of them on the south porch of the President's House. Gen'l Pillow & his wife & his aid de camp, Lieut. Rains,[1] took tea with us this evening.

THURSDAY, *29th June, 1848.*— Before sun-rise this morning I was taken with a violent diarrhea accompanied with severe pain. I was very soon prostrated by it. I sent for Dr. Hall, who prescribed for me. I took medicine & remained in my chamber during the day. In the course of the day I signed some official papers in my room and gave directions about some public matters.

FRIDAY, *30th June, 1848.*— I continued to be unwell this morning and remained in my chamber. I transacted no business but such as was absolutely necessary. The committee of enrolled bills of the two Houses of Congress called and presented to me Bills which had passed Congress. I received them in my chamber.

SATURDAY, *1st July, 1848.*— Though still weak from my late attack I went to my office at the hour

[1] Gabriel Jones Raines of North Carolina, of the 7th Infantry.

of the meeting of the Cabinet. All the members of the Cabinet were present. The Secretary of War brought with him and read to the Cabinet the Report of the military Court of Enquiry in Maj'r Gen'l Pillow's case. The Court acquit him of all the material charges and give it as their opinion that no further military proceedings be had in the case. Though the Court acquit Gen'l Pillow, they do not, I think, do him full justice. I will, however, give to the case a more critical examination. Some other matters were considered, but becoming fatigued & exhausted I was compelled to retire to my own chamber.

SUNDAY, *2nd July, 1848.*— Mrs. Polk attended church in the morning & evening to-day. I remained in my chamber all day, except a short time in the morning when I went to my office & saw Senator Turney & Mr. Thomas of Tennessee, who called to see how I was. In the afternoon I rode out in the carriage with Mrs. Polk.

MONDAY, *3rd July, 1848.*— I was in my office this morning. A crowd of persons called, most of them as is usual seeking offices. I was still feeble from my late attack & retired to my chamber about 12 O'Clock. After resting I returned to my office & transacted some business. I received a letter to-day from Mr. R. C. Pearson of Morganton, N. C., enclosing one to my nephew, Marshall T. Polk, announcing the death of his mother. His mother was the widow of my brother, Marshall T. Polk decd.,

and was at the time of her death the wife of Dr. W. C. Tate of Morganton, N. C. Marshall is the only surviving child by her marriage with my brother. He had a sister who died some years ago. She had six or seven children by Dr. Tate. I wrote to Marshall, now a Cadet at West Point, and enclosed to him Mr. Pearson's letter conveying to him the melancholy intelligence of the death of his mother. In the latter part of the day I transacted some business, and in the afternoon rode out in the carriage with Mrs. Polk.