

LETTERBOOK
of
GENERAL WILLIAM PRESTON

1864 - 1865

A TRANSCRIPTION

Every effort has been made to transcribe the Letterbook of General William Preston as it appears in the original, including variations in punctuation and spelling.

The Original is in The Margaret I. King Library
at the University of Kentucky
Lexington, Kentucky

No 1

Havana 13th February 1864

Sir

Arrival at
Havana

I left Wilmington two days after my departure from Richmond, and arrived at Nassau on the 18th ultimo. Having embarked on the first Steamer from that port, I reached here on the 7th instant safely.

Disturbed
condition
of Mexico

I learn that Mexico is still in a very disturbed condition. It would have been difficult, if not impossible, for me to have reached the City by land through the Northern provinces. The adherents of Juarez occupy the country or molest the routes in the North. Mr. Da Ponto an intelligent agent, who has recently returned from the City of Mexico says that the road from Tampico is impracticable from the refugees and banditti who infest it, and that escorts are necessary from Vera Cruz to the City. At La Hoya a few days since, a French detachment was attacked and some frightful outrages committed. A young daughter of Genl Arista being murdered, and other persons of consideration massacred.

European news
and movements
of Maximilian

By the news from Europe to the 24th of January it appears that the Arch Duke Maximilian will reach Paris during this month, and will be received as Emperor of Mexico, by the Emperor of the French. Spain will recognize the new government and send an envoy as soon as Maximilian assumes the Crown. It is said that this will not take place until the deputation who tendered the throne and returned to ascertain the will of the people of Mexico, shall return to Paris. This will probably occur during this month, and the Emperor after a short delay in Paris, will sail for Vera Cruz. I learn from Mr. Da Ponto that the Regent, Senor Almonte informed him some two months since, that he had received orders to put the Castle of Chapultepec in order for the Emperor's reception. From all I can learn Maximilian will not reach the City of Mexico, before the middle of March, or more probably, before the first of April.

Reasons for
determining to
remain at
Havana

It was my intention on arriving here, to go to Vera Cruz on the English Steamer that sails on the 22nd instant, but in looking over your dispatch No 1. I find I am instructed to reach the City of Mexico at an early date after the arrival of the Emperor Maximilian. This and some other reasons have caused me to alter my original purpose, and wait at this place, until the Emperor embarks or reaches Vera Cruz. My own reflections too convince me that I ought not to go forward immediately. The object of my mission is to obtain recognition from, and enter into treaties with, the Emperor, not the Regency. We do not desire treaties with the latter, and even if we did, they would doubtless postpone all negotiations until after the arrival of Maximilian. It would be embarrassing to me, and not complimentary to the Regency, to be in the City of Mexico, understood by rumor to be charged with a mission of importance, and yet declining to confer with the existing

government, or by premature discussion with irresponsible parties, unauthorized or unwilling to act, to have the questions involved rendered stale before the arrival of the Emperor. Moreover I do not think it wise for me as the Envoy of the Confederate States to manifest too much solicitude as to recognition by Mexico, but that it will be more appropriate not to be in Mexico awaiting the arrival of the Emperor, and more complimentary to the new Ruler of the Country, so to time my visit as to be present at the time, or shortly after he ascends the throne. It seems to me that it is far better to wait here, than to go to Mexico, and stay in Jalapa, Puebla, Tacubaya or any of its provincial cities until the Emperor arrives. The frequent European intelligence and the communications with Vera Cruz, will enable me to be informed of events, and reach Mexico more opportunely from this, than any other point.

Dispatches
forwarded

The dispatches for Europe were transmitted from Nassau via St. Thomas. Those for Charles J. Helm, Esq C. S. Agent, have been delivered. Those for Señor Quintero will be sent forward as soon as practicable.

I have the honor to remain
Your obedient servant

W. Preston
Brig General, C. S. A
Env. Ext Min Plen etc

Hon J P Benjamin

Secretary of State Richmond Va

Man-sent by Mr. Da Ponto from Havana
February 13, 1864

No

Havana 29th Feb 1864

Sir

You may have been informed already by the Secretary of State that in January last I was charged by the President with a special mission, as Minister to Mexico. When I left Richmond it was supposed that the Archduke Maximilian would have reached Vera Cruz early in February. On my arrival at this place, I found that the departure of the Archduke had been delayed and that great uncertainty existed as to whether he would accept the Empire. The speech of Mr. Bright predicted that Maximilian would never ascend the throne, and the Journals of France and England seemed to admit that his acceptance would be based upon satisfactory guarantees by France and Austria, and possibly might depend upon the recognition of the Empire by the United States and the prearrangement of his finances by negotiating a loan for fifty millions of dollars in Europe. In this uncertain state of affairs, I determined to remain in Havana, until events developed more fully the future policy to be pursued in Mexico. I did not intend to treat with the provisional government in regard to the subjects of my mission, and considered my presence before the arrival of Maximilian and the establishment of a permanent government as useless and premature.

I have considered from the first however, that the acceptance of the Empire by the Archduke was assured. It seemed to me that the Emperor of France had no thought of relinquishing a settled purpose, and that the opposition of M. Favre, M. Thiers, M. Berryer, and others, might cause him to temporize with public opinion for the moment, but never could induce him to abandon his ultimate purpose. The chief cost of the war has been incurred, and the Country conquered and occupied. I cannot believe that after such an expenditure of her blood and treasure, France will renounce her policy in Mexico unless the opposition has a degree of power, and control over public opinion, beyond my conception of its strength.

From the intimate relations existing, and which must exist for a time between France and Mexico, it is manifest that the former, will in a great measure, mould or control the policy of the latter. The real object of the Archduke in visiting Paris, before sailing for Vera Cruz, is doubtless to consider with the Emperor of France, the questions affecting Mexico, and to determine, under the suggestions of his powerful ally, the future policy of the Empire. It may be proper in this connection to add, that General Santa Anna left this place, with his family, in the British Steamer on the 23rd instant for Vera Cruz.

You will perceive the necessity of my being informed of the views prevailing in Paris, the probable policy of the Emperor, the strength and purposes of the opposition, and all the important events that may relate to Mexico. I mentioned the subject to the Secretary of State, who recommended me to put myself in communication with you, so as to devise directly that intelligence, which in the present disturbed condition of the country, cannot be regularly transmitted to me from Richmond.

Under these circumstances I enclose a copy of my instructions No 1. which will inform you of the general scope and purpose of my mission and have the honor to request that you will communicate to me under cover to Charles J. Helm, Confederate States Agent at this place, any information upon the topics to which I have alluded, that you may deem material to the public interests or to the success of my mission.

I have the honor to remain
Your obdt Svt

Hon John Slidell

W Preston
Brig General C.S.A
Env. Ext & Minister
Plenip

Havana March 4th 1864

Sir

I enclose you a copy of the law you desire. The ultimate propriety of issuing or withholding the requisite papers is confided to me by the President. This I cannot decide till I arrive at my post. I think probably the policy under the new regime may render the issue inexpedient, but you may say to your friends, and rest assured yourself, that if any are issued, they will have precedence, as there are none that would be preferred by me, thus giving, as a matter of course, the requisite guarantees for a compliance with the existing laws

Very rsptfly

W Preston

Edward H. Farrow Esq

Havana March 4th 1864

No 2

Sir

There is no news of the arrival of the Archduke at Paris, or his departure for Mexico. It is stated here positively by the Diario de la Marina, that he will arrive in April and touch at Havana. The result of the debate in the French Chambers seems to denote that he has determined to accept the throne, and that Louis Napoleon is resolved to support him.

General Santa Anna left here with his family for Vera Cruz on the 23rd of February. I think on his arrival, he will pronounce for Maximilian and the establishment of a monarchy. He showed to a gentleman of my acquaintance, the manifesto he intended to publish. I learn that the Archbishop, La Bastido, and the clerical party are dissatisfied with the French, because they will not restore the confiscated property of the Church, and that his retirement from the regency, and a rupture are not improbable events. In such a contingency, General Santa Anna might fill his place. An intelligent acquaintance thinks that General Santa Anna has revisited Mexico at the request of Louis Napoleon, so that he might form a third party to treat with in the event that Maximilian should not accept the throne. The Minister of State, M. Rouher, has already declared in the French Chambers in the debates of the 26th and 27th of January that the government would neither treat with Juarez nor Almonte, and the conjecture is that General Santa Anna would be acceptable to the French Emperor, and has sufficient strength to organize and establish a government, in the event that the Archduke should decline the Crown.

These suppositions are given for what they may be worth. The rumors confirm me in the propriety of my not going to Mexico until events show the policy that is to be pursued.

This island looks with great solicitude to the struggle between the Confederacy and the United States. The native Spaniards are almost unanimous in their sympathies for the Confederacy, while the Creoles, generally, are in favor of the United States, and advocate gradual emancipation here, either from fear of the future, or hostility to the Spaniards

I have the honor to be,

Very Respectfully
Your obedient servant

W Preston
Brig General C. S. A.
Env. Ext & Min Plenip

Hon J P Benjamin

Secretary of State, Richmond Va

Private

Havana March 9th 1864

My Dear Sir

I write to Hottingeur & Co Bankers, endorsing a bill of the Treasury Dpt on Fraser Trenholm & Co for Lb. 1649.9.8 payable to my order.

I have left the letter to Hottingeur enclosed, so that you can read it and see the arrangements I wish to make.

I wish Lb. 1000. of the amount in a circular letter from the Union Bank in London to be available in travelling, and the remainder, viz Lb. 649.9.8 to remain on deposit to my credit at Hottingeur.

May I ask of you the favor to see that the letter for Lb. 1000 is issued, and mailed to me under cover to Charles J. Helm, Esq No. 12 Mercaderes St. Havana.

The news from home is very encouraging. Our troops volunteer for the War, with unabated ardor, the people bear without a murmur the shocks of the currency, and a noble resolution transcending in its lofty abnegation, anything known in modern history is every where manifested by our countrymen.

The victory of Finnegan in Florida was decisive and brilliant. It is now confessed, after the Northern Journals announced that the expedition was a "Complete success", and the "triumphant march" of Sherman towards Mobile, is followed by his retreat and arrest.

I wrote an official dispatch to you in relation to Mexican affairs. The movements of the Archduke seem yet unknown, if not undecided. The settlement on him of the Austrian Empire, in the event of the death of Francis without issue, it is rumored has changed his purpose, and in consequence, that he has determined not to leave Europe. This I consider must be an idle report as he was heir presumptive in the event of a failure of the Emperor's issue, when the Empire of Mexico was tendered to him, and I do not see how his rights of succession are or have been altered. I am very anxious to know the state of affairs, and whether and when he will come.

I pray you to present my respects to Mrs. Slidell and your family, of whom I have the most agreeable recollections, and to believe me

Very respectfully yours

W Preston

Hon John Slidell

Private

Havana March 9th 1864

Messrs Hottingeur & Co
Bankers Paris

Gentlemen

I enclose the original of a Bill of Exchange for Lb. 1649.9.8 dated Jany 9th 1864, Richmond Va. drawn by W D North acting Treasurer of the Confederate States on Fraser Trenholm & Co Liverpool, payable at sight to Hon J P Benjamin Secty of State, and endorsed by the latter payable to my order.

I wish you to send me one of the circular letters of credit, issued by the Union Bank of London for Lb. 1000, so that I can draw on it in travelling, and that, after collecting the enclosed Bill, you will credit the remainder viz Lb. 649.9.8 to my account.

Any communications for me will reach me through the Hon John Slidell, Commissioner of the Confederate States Paris, or through Charles J. Helm Esq No 12 Mercaderes Street Havana, or the Count de Montholon, Embassador of France, Mexico.

I remain very respectfully

your obdt svt

W Preston

Private

Havana March 9th 1864

Messrs Fraser Trenholm & Co.
Bankers of the State Dpt C.S.A.
Liverpool

Gentlemen

I enclose to you a letter of credit issued to me in triplicate by the Secretary of State of the Confederate States with my signature annexed. The duplicate is herewith transmitted, in order that you may hereafter honor my drafts in conformity with its terms.

You will please acknowledge the receipt of the letter, addressing any communications to me, to the care of Charles J. Helm Esq No 12 Mercaderes Street Havana until further directions.

Respectfully,

W. Preston

No 3.

Havana March 11th 1864

Sir

Movements
of
Maximilian

The European news seems to be decisive, that the Archduke will accept the throne of Mexico. It is said he will visit the King of Belgium, his father-in-law, the Emperor Louis Napoleon, and probably the Queen of England before his departure. If this be so, he will probably not arrive before May at Vera Cruz.

Vidaurri
and
Juarez

The last advices from Mexico state that the power of Juarez is utterly gone. Vidaurri the Governor of New Leon, has expelled him with opprobrious insults from the North of Mexico, and I presume he will seek asylum with the Federal forces at the mouth of the Rio Grande. Vidaurri in his order denounced Juarez as a robber, and the men who were with him as a band of thieves.

Spain and
San Domingo

The government of Spain is greatly embarrassed with the Colony in San Domingo. After these years of struggle, it seems probable that Spain will halt in her purpose or abandon the island. From fifteen to twenty thousand men are now near Samana and in other parts of the island without having effected any establishment of Spanish power. The drain on the resources of Cuba and the Spanish government are great, and general dissatisfaction prevails in this island at the reoccupation of the country. General Gondara the second in command in San Domingo is now here, and today orders have come from the new liberal ministry of Arrozola in Spain to send no more troops to San Domingo though reinforcements are asked. The alleged cause is a fear of servile insurrection in this island, and the small number of troops left here, in consequence of the war in San Domingo. I do not think the reason assigned has any solid foundation in fact.

I have the honor to remain
Your obdt svt

W. Preston
Brig General P.A.C.S.
Env. Ext & Min Plenip etc

Hon J P Benjamin
Scty of State
Richmond Va

Havana March 20th 1864

Sir

The dispatches you sent forward by Mr. E. H. Farrar, reached Richmond safely, and the government determined to send an embassy to Mexico, to arrange the relations between the two countries.

The trust was confided to me by the President and I left Richmond in January, and arrived here last month. The Archduke Maximilian not yet having left Europe, I have remained in Havana, awaiting the progress of events. I will probably not leave this place before the 23rd of April, it being my intention to reach the City of Mexico shortly after the arrival of the Archduke.

The Department was gratified by the zeal, and energy you employed in forwarding the intelligence to Richmond.

I write this note to ask you to communicate with me, regularly, in regard to the events and policy of the country, and particularly as to the condition of affairs, trade and intercourse on the frontier. Letters to me, here, will reach me, if addressed under cover to Chas J Helm Esq No 12 Mercaderes Street. You are also requested to send me communications through some trusty channel to the City of Mexico.

Mr. E. H. Farrar accompanied me this far, and has returned to Mazatlan by St. Thomas and the Isthmus.

I have the honor to remain

Your obt servant

W. Preston.
Brig Genl P A.C.S.
Env Ex and Min Plen.

Mr. John A Quintero

Monterey Mexico

Hottingeur & Co
Private letter to

Havana March 27th 1864

Lb. 1649.9.8.

Messrs Hottingeur & Co.
Bankers Paris

On the 9th instant I enclosed to you the original of a Bill of Exchange for Lb. 1649.9.8 dated 9th January 1864 on Fraser Trenholm & Co. Liverpool, requesting you to collect the same and to send me a circular letter of credit on the Union Bank of London for Lb.1000 and to credit the remainder to my account.

I now enclose herein the duplicate of the said Bill of Exchange (?) that it may be used if the original has not reached you, in the manner heretofore indicated.

My address is through the Hon John Slidell, Commissioner of the Confederate States, Paris or Charles J Helm Esq No 12 Mercaderes St. Havana, or the Comte de Montholon, Ambassador of France, Mexico.

I remain very resptfly

Your obdt svt

W. Preston
Brig Genl
Confederate Army

P.S. My residence is Lexington, Ky.

Copy of Bill of Exchange enclosed.
No 5609 Lb 1649.9.8 No 2272

Treasury of the Confederate States
Richmond Jany 9th 1864

At sight, Pay to Hon J. P. Benjamin Secty of State or order, sixteen hundred and forty nine pounds nine shillings and eight pence. W.D. North Acting Trea. of Confed States

No 5609 Registered Jany 9 1864 Lb. 1649.9.8
Fraser Trenholm & Co. R. Tyler
Liverpool England. Register of the Treasury.

Endorsements

Pay to the order of Genl Wm Preston
J P Benjamin, Sec of State
Pay to the order of Hottingeur & Co Bankers Paris for my use
W Preston
B General, C S Army--

War

Havana March 29th 1864

Messrs Fraser Trenholm & Co.
Bankers of the State Dept C. S. A.
Liverpool

Gentlemen

I enclosed to you on the 9th March instant, the duplicate of a letter of credit issued to me by the Secretary of State of the Confederate States, as Minister to Mexico from Jan 7 1864, so that my drafts might be honored by you in conformity to its terms.

I now enclose the original of the set which was tripartite, with my signature annexed.

Respectfully

W Preston

Brig Genl C.S. Army
Envy Ex & Min Plenipo
to Mexico

No 4

Havana 9 April 1864

Sir,

Movements
of
Maximilian

The recent news from Europe announced that the Archduke Maximilian, after visiting the King of the Belgians, went to Paris during the first week of March and was received by the Emperor of the French with great courtesy and distinction. While in Paris, it is stated the most satisfactory financial arrangements were consummated, the French debt arranged and assumed, and a loan of some Lb 10,000,000, adjusted in terms and upon conditions which rendered the chief capitalists of Europe competitive to undertake its management. Rothschild and Baring are said to have assumed control of the affair. The Archduke has returned to Miramar where he will receive the plebiscite of the Mexican people, and from whence he will soon sail for Vera Cruz. He will probably arrive in May.

Expulsion of
Santa Anna

General Bazaine issued an order requiring General Santa Anna to leave Mexico, and he returned to this place from Vera Cruz in a French vessel of war, some three weeks since. It appears that he was invited back by Marshal Forey and was warmly welcomed by Gen. Almonte and the Regency, in a letter which arrived at the same

time with Gen. Bazaine's order, seeming to indicate a conflict of views between the French General and the provisional civil government. The reason for Gen. Bazaine's order was the publication of a manifesto by Gen. Santa Anna, though the instrument declares warmly for Maximilian, and the Empire. Gen. Bazaine, it is probable, deemed that the manifesto might revive agitations now allayed.

Military move-
ments in Mexico

The condition of Mexico is yet very much disturbed. In the North, Vidaurri has thoroughly identified his fortunes with the Empire. Juarez is near New Leon, and on the 26th of February issued his decree severing the political union between that State and Coahuila. The forces of Vidaurri and those of Doblado have probably met before this time. Myia was also moving against Doblado. Uruga, the Juarist Chief, has not taken Guadalajara as reported, but his forces are rapidly disbanding, and the Imperialists hold the place. The French have complete possession of the central portions of the country, and its avenues from the Gulf. Gen. Castagny in the North West completely defeated Gonzalez Ortega, who commanded against Marshall Forey at Puebla, and reached his division on the 18th of February at Colotlan in Jalisco. In the West Alvarez was at Tixtla in Guerrero, at the head of the Juarist forces, but about to retreat to Acapulco. Many Juarist Chiefs are availing themselves of the amnesty, but a number yet make head against the Empire. The French columns are pushing forward steadily, while the adherents of Juarez day by day diminish in resistance and yield to the inevitable establishment of the Empire.

Mr. Farrow

I have received no despatches from the Department. Mr. Farrar has returned to Mazatlan by St. Thomas and the Isthmus.

Time of
departure

I will probably leave here on the 23rd for Vera Cruz, regulating my departure as stated in my former despatches. I have not heard from Mr. Slidell or Mr. Quintero.

I have the honour to be

W. Preston

Hon. J. P. Benjamin

No 5

Havana 28 April 1864

Sir

Maximilian
at
Paris

The most recent news from Europe brings dates to the 7th inst. stating that the Archduke Maximilian had not then sailed from Trieste for Vera Cruz. When he left France a fortnight before every preliminary for his departure seemed satisfactorily arranged.

Sent by Gen. Sibley,
via Mobile 28 April

The French claims, private and public were adjusted; a loan sufficient for the establishment of his finances upon a respectable footing was successfully negotiated with Glyn, Mills & Co. of London, and it was understood that upon his return to Miramar, he would receive the Mexican deputation, proclaim the Empire, and sail on the 27th of March. England, France, Austria, Russia, Prussia Spain and Belgium, were to recognize the Emperor immediately and send ambassadors to Mexico.

Postponed voy-
age to Mexico

The difficulties which have since caused him to postpone his voyage are said to arise from certain questions in regard to his contingent right of succession to the Austrian throne. The Archduke Maximilian being the eldest brother of the Emperor of Austria, who has but one son, the Archduke Rodolphe, a child of six years of age, the contingency of the crown devolving upon Maximilian is not very remote. It is said that immediately on the eve of his departure for Mexico the Austrian government required Maximilian to renounce for himself and his posterity all claims as an agnate of the reigning Emperor to the throne of Austria, and that he and the Archduchess Charlotte have refused to make the concession. Another explanation states that the impediment arose from the settlement of the succession to the throne of Mexico, in the event of the death of Maximilian without issue, as he has no children of his present marriage, and that a proposition was pending to settle the Mexican Crown upon a Prince of the House of Spain, but this is denied in Spain, and is not generally credited. There are also rumours that the questions have been arranged, but at the last dates he had not sailed.

Question of
Succession

I give this account of the complications causing the postponement of the voyage, but, in my opinion, matters have gone too far, for the Archduke to withdraw, and all minor difficulties will be removed in the end. It is said he is to stop, in any event, at Civita Vecchia, to see the Pope, and the indications are that he will not arrive for some time in Mexico.

Despatches
from
Mr. Slidell

I have received despatches from Mr. Slidell of the 15th and 29th March, the former of which was delayed a fortnight by the failure to mail it by the French Steamer. Mr. Slidell applied for an interview with the Archduke through Mr. Gutierrez de Estrada, the Chief of the Mexican deputation, who informed him that it would be accorded, and said that he would receive a note from the Archduke's Secretary. Not receiving the expected communication, he enclosed to the Baron du Pont, the Secretary, the note of Señor de Estrada, but no audience was granted and no answer received. Mr. Slidell informs me that he knows the Archduke considered the recognition of the Confederacy by France, as so important for his future interests, as to make it almost a condition precedent to his definite acceptance of the throne, and had very recently expressed himself to that effect, both verbally and in writing. Maximilian caused letters of similar tenor to be written from Miramar to Mr. Slidell. This view of Mr. Slidell is

Intention of
Archduke to
recognize
Confederacy

corroborated by Governor Morehead, now here, who informs me that the Archduke had written to a gentleman who had shown him letters of similar import, and by an acquaintance, a Frenchman of distinction and rare intelligence most accurately informed, who has recently gone to Mexico to prosecute his observations. This latter gentleman will keep me advised of all that occurs. He is known to you by reputation, and, I think personally, and will have extraordinary advantages for obtaining accurate information.

Refusal of
audience to
Mr. Slidell

Mr. Slidell thinks the Archduke refused to grant him the audience he accorded, and changed his mind, from fear that he might give offence to the Lincoln government, after consultation with the Emperor of France. At the time, M. Mercier, who was in Paris, was reported to have said that President Lincoln had told him, on the occasion of his parting visit, that he would recognize the new government of Mexico, provided it would hold no intercourse with the Confederacy.

Promise of
the U.S. to
recognize
Maximilian.

It seems certain that Mr. Dayton gave assurances that the United States would send a minister to Mexico, and used every means to conciliate the future Emperor. The action of the House of Representatives of the United States declaring unanimously that it would not recognize a monarchical government in America, founded upon the ruins of a republic, did not occur till April. The Resolution of the House yet lingers in the Senate under the supplications of Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward, but if the course of Congress had been known to the Archduke, I cannot but believe that Mr. Slidell would have had a very cordial reception.

Embarrassment
of
Mr. Seward

This condition of affairs leaves Mr. Seward in a dilemma. If he should recognize the Emperor of Mexico after the action of the House of Representatives generally, if not universally approved by the Press of the United States, he would imperil or defeat his party in the approaching election. If he delays sending a minister till after the November election, he will lose the remainder of the year. The friendly promises of Mr. Lincoln through M. Mercier, and of Mr. Seward, through Mr. Dayton, must be postponed or utterly falsified by being indefinitely abandoned.

Probable
course of
Maximilian

After this resumé of events and information since my last despatch I will state that in my judgment the Archduke has a strong desire to recognize the Confederacy at once, as necessary to his own interests and security, but is restrained from doing so for the present, and will be for a short time, by the French Emperor. I think he is willing to establish amicable relations at the earliest moment he can obtain the acquiescence of Louis Napoleon.

In the nature of things the Emperor cannot take up the question of recognition until he organizes his own government and that will probably cause a delay of sixty or ninety days after his arrival at the Capital.

Mr. Slidell suggests propriety of temporary delay

Agent in Mexico

This will present a question as to the proper time for me to go forward. Mr. Slidell writes to me suggesting the propriety, after the events at Paris of my taking the precaution of assuring myself, in advance, of a proper reception before going on to Mexico. This has already been done through M. Qtobager-ampvlv-kn-jpl-Vkdnjst-bgy-Rajvw-Njro-, who will have easy personal intercourse with M. Montholon, and the leading personages in Mexico, and without doubt will have interviews with the Emperor personally in reference to our relations. He will keep me advised of every thing of importance affecting our interests. It was my intention to have sent forward Captain Fearn, but I succeeded in effecting the other arrangement which was deemed preferable.

Intention not to proceed immediately

Under these circumstances, I will not proceed to Mexico until a favorable moment occurs, or until I am informed that the Emperor will be in a condition to act promptly in regard to the subject of my mission, but as there is ample time, if the better judgment of the President should determine otherwise, to hear from Richmond, and reach Mexico at such moment as the Department might deem proper, I have given all the necessary information, so that it might correct, if it did not approve my intention, and might give me such instructions as it may deem expedient. I consider entire liberty of action is reposed in me by your instructions and dispatches, in regard to the matter, but make this full statement in order that my purpose may be known to my government in time.

Vidaurri x

State of affairs in Mexico

I presume you have already received the intelligence of the advance of Juarez on Vidaurri and the abandonment of Monterey by the latter about the 1st of April. The adherents of Juarez have appeared in greater strength than it was supposed he could exhibit in Northern Mexico. Alvarez in Guerrero and the vicinity of Alcapulco holds out obstinately against the Imperialists. The Juarists hold Tobasco which is temporarily abandoned by the French. The country is yet in a very disturbed condition. From the best estimates I can make, the various hostile chiefs can show some thirty five thousand troops scattered over the whole country, without general head or organization, that yet resist the establishment of the Empire and seek to continue the existing anarchy.

I have the honour xz

W. Preston

Hon. J. P. Benjamin

x-x-

Havana May 6th 1864

Sir

The Archduke Maximilian received the Mexican deputation on the 10th of April, at the Castle of Miramar, and announced his acceptance of the throne, in a striking response to the address of Mr. Gutierrez de Estrada- The Emperor of Austria visited his brother the Emperor of Mexico, and any obstacles which may have existed have been satisfactorily removed, by his consent to the accession of Maximilian. The requisite official acts have been consummated, the principal officers of the imperial household appointed, and the establishment of the Empire will be announced to the principal courts of Europe through ambassadors who have been already nominated.

The Emperor was to have sailed from Trieste on the succeeding day, but he has been detained by a slight fever, and had not left on the 17th of April. He announces his intention of visiting the Pope, and may be expected in June at Vera Cruz.

It remains to be seen what course the United States will pursue in regard to this remarkable event in American history. The Archduke has accepted the Empire with the general consent and approbation of Europe. For years the United States proclaimed the Monroe doctrine as the corner stone of their foreign policy, and even when the just interests of civilization demanded it forbade all intervention by the Powers of Europe in American affairs. They claimed to be the peculiar guardian of the American republics, and have betrayed their trust. Animated alone by selfish motives, they behold these republics lapse one after another, into anarchy without even having the wisdom or generosity to incur the slightest risk to remedy their disorders or arrest their ruin. A great and sagacious monarch of the old world undertook the noble task. Opposed by the general sentiment of France he has persevered, and a nation, redeemed from the tyranny of petty military chiefs will hereafter revere his name. The United States yet encourage, while they will not assist the Anarchists, and have recently declared by the solemn and unanimous resolution of the House of Representatives that they will not recognize the Empire. The measure of their shame will be full when President Lincoln abandons Juarez, as he will do, or sends a suppliant minister to the new Emperor. I find in examining my letters of credence and full power that they are dated 7th January 1864, that is before the accession of the Emperor. Would it not be well to send me at once, new papers, with proper dates? I will probably be detained here, a sufficient time, in accordance with the intention expressed in my last despatch, to enable you to send them forward.

I have the honor to remain

Your obdt svt

W. Preston

Brig Genl C. S. A.

Env &-Ex-Min Plenipo

Hon J P. Benjamin
Secretary of State
Richmond Va.

Sent by Lieut Stanand
Via Nassau May 7th 1864

Havana May 6th 1864

Sir

Letter to
Mr. Slidell

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th March, and your note of the 29th of the same month, by the English Steamer which arrived on the 23d ultimo at this port.

I concur with you in the general views expressed as to the inclinations of the Archduke to recognize the Confederacy, and the causes that prevented you from receiving an audience while he was at Paris. The opinion is corroborated by information derived from other sources.

The action of the Federal House of Representatives in the passage of the resolution declaring unanimously, in effect, that the Mexican Empire would not be recognized by the United States was not known in Paris when the audience was refused, or doubtless you would have been received with courtesy. The general endorsement of the Monroe doctrine by the House, and by the public press, will be followed by the people, and announced in their party platforms. President Lincoln and Mr. Seward may beguile the Emperor of France and the Archduke by false promises, but public opinion in the United States will probably not permit them to be fulfilled. The people, the press, and all parties in the United States openly avow their intention to resist or destroy the Empire, as soon as an opportunity exists.

I request that you will give me your views in detail, as to the effect produced at Paris by the resolution of Congress and the tone of the Federal press towards France and Mexico.

I have made the necessary arrangements to hear from Mexico, through an able and intelligent observer, who will have easy access to the highest political circles, and no doubt with the future Emperor himself.

For the present, in accordance with your suggestion, and my own opinion I will not go forward to Mexico. The U.S. cannot, at this time, send a minister, or venture to recognize the new Emperor. This will give me an opportunity for observation and intelligence. Neither can it be supposed that Maximilian could take up the matter involved in my mission, until he had had sufficient time at the Capital to organize his own government.

The European news is to the 17th of April, and contains full information of the accession of Maximilian, the proceedings at Miramar, on the 10th of April and of the temporary illness of the Emperor, delaying for the present his departure for Vera Cruz.

Sent by Mr. Macaulay via St Thomas
May 8th 1864

The news of the brilliant victory in Louisiana by Kirby Smith over General Banks shakes fatally the Federal power in the Southwest. Our troops are in better heart than ever. We expect daily the defeat of Grant by Lee; the Northern finances are trembling into bankruptcy; and I feel that an armistice, if not a treaty, is not remote if we have a prosperous campaign in Virginia.

I have the honor to remain

Your obdt svt

W. Preston
Env Ex and Min Plenip

Hon John Slidell
Paris.

Havana 2 June 1864

Private

My dear Sir

Private letter
to
President Davis

I send forward to-day a despatch stating the present situation of affairs, and indicating some views as to the proper policy to be pursued, under existing circumstances, to accomplish, if possible, the object of my mission.

The long delay of Maximilian in accepting the throne and leaving Trieste has covered such an interval of time that the situation is materially changed by the occurrence of important events since I left Richmond and received the instructions of the Department. The news from Mr. Slidell, corroborated from many other sources, induce me to believe that the present is not a propitious moment for me to visit Mexico. The despatch contains my reasons at length, and the object of this note is to ask you, if you can spare sufficient time, to glance at it and express to me your views. I know the magnitude of your duties, and the transcendent interest of the events around you, but, if you could spare a short time, for the expression of your opinion, it would be of great value to me.

I have merely to say in this connexion, that, in my judgment, I will be compelled to await the action of the North. Were I to go forward, now, they would only pay more deferential court to Maximilian, and indulge in more liberal promises to foil my reception and the recognition of the Confederacy. If I am absent they will be more indifferent or haughty in responding to the circular he will issue to the powers with whom he desires to establish friendly relations, when he announces his accession to the Empire. My mission is universally known. After the rejection of Mr. Slidell's application for audience, I think that it would better comport with the dignity of the Confederacy, not to be too expressée in attempting to establish friendly relations, and, that my absence and that of Mr. Corwin, at the same time would create a solicitude lest his course might estrange and probably alienate permanently both the United States and the Confederate States. I think to inspire such a doubt, without creating any breach, would be beneficial with both Emperors.

If the time to proceed is reposed in my discretion, unrestricted by instructions, it must be governed by the nature of future events. I desire neither to manifest hastenor impatience, but will, in such a case, use every endeavour to avail myself of the first opportune moment to effect your wishes.

The news of the great struggle between Grant and Lee, absorbs all minds here. I have an unshaken confidence not only in the superior skill of the general, but in the patriotism and valor of our troops. Grant says he proposes to fight it out, if it takes all summer. He only proposes to do what his unfortunate predecessors have already done for the past three years.

Permit me Sir to assure you of my profound sympathy for the great trials to which you have been subjected, and to express a fervent hope for your welfare, and the triumph of our country.

I remain

Very truly

Your obdt. svt.

W. Preston

President Davis
Richmond

Memorandum

Sent with despatch of this date, by Captain Godfrey of the Denbigh which left Havana 2 June 1864

W.P.

Havana 4th June 1864

Sir

Instructions
to
A.M.T. Beauregard

It has been necessary for me in the execution of the public duties confided to me by the Government to send an Agent to the city of Mexico. Your familiarity with the French and Spanish languages, & your acquaintance with certain parties in that Capital induce me to believe that you can render the information I need.

You will proceed to Mexico and put yourself in communication with Capt Ford, who is already there. You will seem to have no connection with him or me of an official character. You are already acquainted, verbally, as to my wishes & the object for which you are sent. In case of any doubt you will consult with Capt Ford. You will render any service in your power to him or in the acquirement of any information (& report to him while you are in my employment) which may be useful to me. You will avail yourself of the letters you bear and enter as much as possible into the political society of the Capital, and will communicate to me at least twice a week any facts or intelligence which you should deem of importance.

The communication of my views to you, verbally, which has already taken place and consultation with Capt Ford will relieve you from the necessity of minute written instructions.

You will endeavor to be in the city of Mexico by the 23d of June and remain there about one month. You will return to Havana and communicate what information you possess to me in person or to Capt W. Fearn, in the event of my absence; or if both are absent, you will confer freely and unreservedly with Maj. C. J. Helm at this place, and take such measures as may be necessary to ensure your information reaching me at whatever point I may then be.

You will consider your employment as terminated on the 7th of August unless otherwise specially ordered in writing by me. You are herewith furnished with the sum of Four hundred Dollars, in full compensation of all demands, including the travelling expenses and all extra charges and for your services during said period.

Very Respdy your obt svt

W.P.

A.M.T. Beauregard Esq)
Havana Cuba)

Private &
Confidential

Havana 6 June 1864

General

Letter to
General
Almonte

I trust you will permit me to avail myself of our former acquaintance at Madrid, when you were the Envoy of Mexico, and I, the Minister of the United States, to address you in relation to some matters of much interest to me personally and officially.

The civil war between the Northern and Southern States, terminated my mission to Spain, and returning to America, I entered the service of the Confederacy to which I was inseparately allied by my birth, my education, and my convictions of justice. After having served in the army from the beginning of the struggle, almost three years having elapsed, the President requested me to undertake a Mission to Mexico, for the purpose of meeting the future Emperor and of establishing friendly relations between your country and the Confederate States. I will remark, in this connexion, that the Government of the Confederate States was informed that such a step would not be disagreeable to the Eminent persons who are moulding the policy of Mexico, nor to the Monarch who was then about to ascend the throne.

It was believed by the President of the Confederate States, that measures might be adopted and arrangements made, which would give greater stability to the affairs of both governments, and might guard us against the formidable power that now wages a fierce war against the Confederacy, and avows its determination to avail itself of the first propitious moment to overthrow the Empire of Maximilian.

As Mexico and the Confederate States are, therefore, in our conception, united by a community of danger and interest, His Excellency, the President, devolved upon me the duty of ascertaining the inclinations of the Emperor and the policy it was proposed to pursue towards the Confederate States.

I came thus far on my way to the Capital of your country, supposing the Emperor would reach there in February last, but the delays at Miramar have caused me to remain here until the arrival of the Emperor in Mexico is officially announced, and until after his government shall be permanently organized.

A short time since I learned from Mr. Slidell, our Commissioner at Paris, that he had applied for an audience to the Archduke through Mr. Guttierrez de Estrada, the Chief of the Mexican deputation, who informed him that it would be accorded and that he would receive a note from the Archduke's Secretary designating the hour - Not receiving the Expected communication, Mr. Slidell enclosed to the Baron du Pont the note of Señor de Estrada, but the Archduke left Paris immediately without granting the audience, or answering the note.

This and some other circumstances have led me to doubt if the information upon which my government acted was accurate, or if there were not a misapprehension, as to the inclinations of Maximilian.

Considering, however, the unanimous declaration of the United States House of Representatives in adopting the resolution of Mr. Henry Winter Davis against the recognition of the Empire by the United States, and the general approval of the act by the press and people, it is to be presumed that the Emperor cannot regard with indifference the manifestation of such hostility in advance. It cannot well be supposed that a high spirited prince, could regard with feelings of friendship a government which greets him with a menace, if not a declaration of unappeasable and deliberate enmity. There may be an attempt to explain the resolution by the President and his Secretary of State, under the emergencies of the moment, but all persons well informed in American affairs know how deeply the Monroe doctrine, dedicating the Western World to democratic government, is engrafted in the minds, and fastened in the passions of the people of the United States. The resolution of the House of Representatives faithfully utters the thoughts of the people, but time will reveal the truth, in spite of diplomacy, that the United States if they can crush or subdue the Confederate States, will afterwards assist the anarchists in Mexico to overthrow the Empire; or, failing in that, as they will do, will be anxious to enter into a peace on the basis of the maintenance of the Monroe doctrine, as one of the stipulations.

I write these views to you, General, frankly, in order to obtain such information as may be useful to me, in regulating my own course. I am profoundly convinced that time and his own reflections will demonstrate to the Emperor, the power of the Confederate States, and the advantages of their friendship, as a barrier against the North; and prove to him the covert, but formidable hostility of the United States to Mexico. I feel assured of our future, and that the present is the last of a bloody series of vast and costly, but inglorious and unsuccessful campaigns against the South. I feel that by the rules of public law and the usages of nations, we are entitled to recognition, but though thus convinced, I state to you with sincerity that it is not the desire of the Government I represent, nor my own, to embarrass the Emperor, by presenting to him the questions of our future relations, if it would be distasteful to him, or if our friendly overtures were to be regarded with indifference, or aversion. We feel that with no aid but our own valor and the favor of God, we have laid the enduring foundations of a mighty State, that the wrath of man cannot subvert, and we desire only to be fairly heard by other nations as to the evidences upon which we rest our claims to independence.

I will not, however, dwell further, upon these topics. I have presented to you, unreservedly, the subjects involved in my mission. I believe a golden opportunity occurs that may not perhaps always exist for cementing the mutual interests of Mexico and the

Confederate States, without involving the former in any manner with the United States, according to it's own acknowledged and customary rules of action. Under that belief, I have presented my views for the purpose of asking if, in your judgment the Emperor is disinclined to receive me, or if it would be advisable for me to visit Mexico. I would like to know the condition of affairs, fully, from a source so eminent and intelligent so as to regulate my own course and that of my government. If however the request I now make, should be in the slightest degree distasteful or embarrassing, I must ask you to deal with me, with all the sincerity of a former colleague, and that you will not hesitate to decline my request.

I entrust this to an officer of my staff, Captain R. T. Ford, aide-de-camp, who will deliver it in person, and whom I beg to present to your acquaintance.

Believe me General, with assurances of esteem and respect.

Your obt svt

W. Preston

His Excellency
Genl Almonte
x x x x
Mexico

No 7

Havana 2nd June 1864

Despatch
to
Mr. Benjamin

The most recent news from Mexico was brought by the steamer which arrived on the 24th instant at this place from Vera Cruz. The European journals bring the intelligence that the Emperor was at Madeira on the 27th of April, and those from Vera Cruz that he had not reached Mexico, at the date of the departure of the steamer.

Departure of
Maximilian

The Emperor sailed from Miramar on the 14th of April. The official papers at Vienna, published his unconditional renunciation of all contingent or collateral rights of succession to the throne of Austria, contradicting the statement of the Memorial Diplomatique, that it was a qualified renunciation giving him the right of election

Convention of
France &
Mexico

for six years. The parting of Maximilian and Francis Joseph is said to have been cold and significant of estrangement. The Convention between France and Mexico of April 10th 1864 has been published. It provides for the reduction of the French troops in Mexico to 25,000 men, and for their being withdrawn as fast as ~~fast~~ as they can be replaced by Mexican troops: Military Expeditions where French troops are employed, are to be determined by agreement between the Emperor and French commanders in chief: French commanders shall not intervene in Mexican administration: The French Expenses are -- liquidated at \$270,000,000 francs, up to 1 July 1864 for which France is to be reimbursed with 3 per cent interest. From that time all the expenses of the French army are to be paid by Mexico, at the rate of 1000 francs, per man, annually; and a mixed commission is to settle and adjust the French private claims for which Mexico promises indemnity to French subjects.

Such are the principal provisions of the Convention, the text of which is forwarded to the department with this despatch.

I requested Mr. Slidell to give me any intelligence of importance or interest with which he might become acquainted, and I have letters from him to the 30th of April.

Mr. Slidell as
to views of
Maximilian

I am informed through him and Mr. Eustis in a note to Captain Fearn that the present views of Maximilian had been communicated through M. Debranz de Saldapena an Austrian agent in whose statements reliance may be placed. This gentleman is one of the most active partisans of the Emperor, and had been summoned to Miramar from whence he had just returned to Paris. The gentleman to whom I allude stated, that Maximilian, on his arrival at the Capitol, will issue the customary letters announcing his accession to the throne, to the governments with which he desires to cultivate friendly relations, and among others to the United States. Should that government fail to respond in a satisfactory manner to the overture, the Emperor will feel himself at liberty to enter into negotiations with the Confederate States.

The gentleman is under the impression that the Emperor will not accredit me at present, though his sympathies are entirely with the Southern cause; but he is satisfied that the Lincoln Government cannot respond in a satisfactory manner to the overtures of Maximilian, and that as soon as that contingency occurs, there will be a fair prospect of being able to negotiate.

The agent thinks that the Confederate States should be ready to avail themselves of the situation the moment it is created.

Opinion as to
the disposition
of the Emperor

I do not doubt from all the information received, corroborated as it is from many sources, that Maximilian deems the speedy recognition of the Confederate States, and the establishment of friendly relations with them, as essential to the safety and stability of Mexico. The information that led to my being sent upon this mission: the unofficial invitation of the Regency to the Confederate States to

send a Minister; the letters that the Emperor caused to be written from Miramar to Mr. Slidell; and other circumstances convince me of his friendly inclinations --

The reason for declining to receive Mr. Slidell at Paris, after previously assenting to his request for an audience, was evidently caused by the Emperor of France. There can be little doubt but that Mr. Dayton and M. Mercier have given the most eager assurances to Louis Napoleon of the speedy recognition of Maximilian by the United States. The United States minister, Mr. King was punctually present at the interview--between the Pope and the Emperor, at Rome.

The resolution
of the H R of
the U.S.

The action of the House of Representatives, in unanimously refusing to recognize the Empire caused a strong excitement in Paris, but the Moniteur announces that the Minister of the United States has given ample and satisfactory explanations to the Emperor -- the threats of the Congress and apologies of the President of the United States are in the same vein that marked their arrogance subsequently and subsequent humility in the Trent affair.

I think the government at Washington will be greatly embarrassed by the situation of affairs in Mexico. It is evident, as you anticipated in your original instructions, that it will halt at nothing in the way of promises to prevent the recognition of the Confederate States, and to sustain its policy of one war at a time. On the other hand, those insincere promises must soon be falsified. The maintenance of the Monroe doctrine is deeply engrafted in the mind of the people, the resolution of the House of Representatives gave to the popular thought faithful utterance. The press is unanimous & and vehement, in its approval. The Fremont party had already engrafted hostility to the Mexican Empire in their platform; there is little doubt that the Democratic Convention will make similar declarations in equally strong terms. The Republicans will do the same or remain ominously silent; the party heats (?) will increase as the elections approach, and Mr. Lincoln will not dare to send a Minister to Mexico or recognize the Emperor, while the Presidential election is pending.

Mr. Corwin

In confirmation with this view, Mr. Corwin passed through here a fortnight since on his way to the United States. He is permitted or ordered to withdraw from Mexico so that he will be absent when the Emperor arrives, and relieve the government of the United States from the dilemma in which it would be placed, by his presence at such a time. Had he remained and asked an audience, or assisted in the Court ceremonials, his party would have been compromised and assailed by the opposition for the avowed or implied recognition of the Empire.

Inopportune
moment to
proceed

He expressed himself while here very freely. He was disheartened and gloomy and spoke openly in favour of having peace with the Confederate States, on the basis of final separation. ~~It~~ Considering the situation of affairs, I am of opinion that the present moment is inopportune for me to proceed upon my mission.

As I have ample time, however, to communicate with you, and to take the Presidents orders as to my course, or to receive his unrestricted permission to be governed by my own views, I have thought it advisable to submit the matter to the opinion of the Department-- If left to pursue my own course, I will wait untill the circular form from Maximilian shall have been issued and untill the United States shall have omitted to make any friendly response, or refused or neglected to recognize the Empire--If my information then is of a flattering character, I will proceed upon the Mission, but if it is not I will communicate the facts to the Department.

I am of the opinion that every hour will demonstrate to Maximilian the necessity of friendly relations with the Confederate States and reveal the hollow promises and future hostility of the North. Such convictions must accumulate upon him daily, and after a short while fix his resolutions firmly. He will discern that he has only a truce and not peace with the North, and he will urge the action of his powerful ally to secure our friendship and keep us as an impregnable and eternal barrier, against Northern hostility and aggression. A short observation will effect this, and I do not think the question of recognition should be pressed categorically on an embarrassed and partially dependant monarch at the very instant of his installation.

Campaign of
Grant

It should also be observed that the present critical condition of the great campaign in which we are engaged would give Maximilian plausible grounds in accordance with public precedents and international usage for not receiving me or recognizing the Confederacy in this moment of Supreme Struggle.

Reasons for
delay

Another consideration weighs with me, and that is, I do not think an eagerness too complimentary should be shown by the Confederate States, after the neglect of Mr. Slidell's application for audience, though the inclinations of the Emperor may at heart be friendly to the recognition of the Confederate States. There is no resentment mingling in the opinion, conscious as I am that we have sustained the shock of the most powerful army in the world from a time when Maximilian's government was not even contemplated and that a single corps of our army might maintain or destroy his government if deprived of the aid of France. The fact of his weakness as well as his embarrassments should render us less susceptible in taking offence or in imagining a discourtesy than if the refusal to grant the desired audience, were the act of his protector and powerful ally, the Emperor of France,--The youthful monarch is surrounded by the most

formidable difficulties. The fierce passions which for half a century have distracted Mexico are not yet subdued, and the bayonets of France are yet indispensable to the security of his throne. It occurs to me therefore, that there is no monarch who can with more reason ask our forbearance from pressing upon him the immediate consideration and decision of our right to recognition indisputable as I conceive it to be, by the usage of nations, and that justice and generosity alike require, that we should not be more exacting with a new, feeble and embarrassed neighbour, than with old powerful and established states.

I have thus presented my views to the Department, imperfect as they are from the fact that I have not had it in my power to visit Mexico in person, and observe the state of affairs. I repeat my strong conviction that this is not the proper time for me to go forward and press the subjects of my mission upon the Emperor. I have remained here, however, for a long while merely to execute with rapidity the orders of the government, and I write this note so that the President or yourself may correct, if they do not approve my views, while ample time will be afforded for the Government to consider and determine the question. If I should not be ordered forward at once, in the event that discretion be lodged with me, I will proceed at the moment I conceive most propitious to my mission, and in the meantime will continue to secure the most accurate information that can be obtained, as to the means for accomplishing its objects.

Captain Ford

I have sent forward Captain Ford who is now in Mexico, and will keep me informed of all events of interest. I hope in a day or two to make further provision for accurate intelligence.

Despatch received

I have only received one despatch since my departure being your No 4. of March 15th which came to hand on the 13th of April

I have the honour etc

W. Preston
B General C.S.A.
Env Ext & Min Pleni

The Hon
J. P. Benjamin
Secretary of State
Richmond

Mem. Original sent by Steamer "Denbigh"
via Mobile June 3 duplicate by the
Corsica via Nassau June 4th 1864 with
original copy and private letter to the
President

Private & Confidential

Havana 8 June 1864

My dear Marquis De Montholon

Letter to
Marquis de
Montholon

I am induced by our former acquaintance, and the kind inclinations I have heard you bear to my country, to address you freely in regard to matters of moment, which must hereafter have an important effect on the relations between Mexico and the Confederate States.

During last winter President Davis received information that a strong wish was entertained in Mexico for the establishment of friendly relations with the Confederate States, which was corroborated by subsequent intelligence from abroad; and it was desirable that a mission should be sent forward for the fulfillment of the object, as soon as the Emperor Maximilian should arrive. Under this impression the President requested me to take charge of the mission and I came to Havana. The events at Miramar, the visit of the Archduke to Paris, and other events caused me to be delayed here. It was my purpose to reach Mexico in sixty or ninety days after Maximilian arrived. The last steamer brought the news that he had reached Vera Cruz and will be in the City on the 10th of June.

Since the period at which I left the Confederacy, important changes have occurred. Still greater are on the verge of happening. The house of Representatives of the United States have declared unanimously that the Empire should not be recognized. The Executive branch of the government has probably been as profuse in apologies to the Emperor of France, as the Congress have been emphatic in menaces. The correspondence between Mr. Dayton and M. Drouyn de l'Huys has been published. It temporizes for the present, but still there is a clear intention manifested to suspend hostility only for the moment, and an avowal of the fixed aversion of the people to Monarchy in Mexico. It admits that the resolution of the house of Representatives expresses the universal sentiment of the nation, and we know in such a democracy that there is but little interval between the will of the people and the unscrupulous obedience of the government. The press unanimously applaud Congress.-- The people will do the same. The Cleveland Convention has just nominated Fremont and Cochrane. General Cochrane in accepting the nomination declares that the Monroe Doctrine has become the recognized principle and that the establishment of any Monarchical government on this continent will not be tolerated. The party platform announces the view, in clear and decisive terms, and the avowal is distinctly--made that they only wait for the cessation of the Civil War to destroy the Empire and drive Maximilian and the French from Mexico. Be assured that the Democratic Convention will follow in the same vein, and that the party of Mr. Lincoln will do the like, or remain silent, but with the same unexpressed determination to the future.

Such then is the present attitude of the U.S. to the Emperor, while they frantically fly from bankruptcy at home, and rush forward towards Richmond. There they are doomed to meet with the same inglorious defeats that have marked their efforts for the last three years. But even if they were to take Richmond it would not terminate the war. The North would only - stand aghast after its capture, at the magnitude of the enterprise before them, and after the first flush of victory would despair of the end.

I will not dwell on this theme, but will state my own unshaken belief that the Confederate States long since without human aid have established their independence acquired and will hereafter maintain their existence as a great and respected state.

To lay before the Emperor the evidences of our right to recognition and to establish such relations as would be for the advantage of both governments and to interpose the Confederate States as an impregnable barrier forever between Mexico and the North is the object of my mission.

Before going forward to the City, I desire if possible to ascertain the probabilities of a successful result to my mission. It is far from the wish of my government, or my own to offer any embarrassments to the Emperor. I feel convinced that an opportunity now exists for establishing relations of the Confederate States and Mexico, on a most advantageous footing for the future security and prosperity of both nations and without the peril of war to Mexico. I believe if it be pretermitted, that it may be lost, or sacrificed to exigencies of State or political necessities hereafter in the event that we are unfortunate in arms, or alienated by events.

The eminent position you hold as the Ambassador of France, the intimate alliance that exists between your Sovereign and the Emperor of Mexico, and the duties reposed in me by the Confederate States have led me to write to you unreservedly and to ask your opinion as to the state or situation of affairs, and my reception by the Emperor- I think that a frank expression of views would be approved and appreciated by our respective governments, and enable me to proceed advisedly and in a manner more agreeable to the government to which I am sent.

If you should esteem the request as imposing the slightest embarrassment you will decline giving me any response and attribute it to the desire I feel to avoid any measure that might be unwelcome or might tend to estrangement.

My aide-de-camp, Captain Ford will present this letter. It is needless to say that I make the request simply as the private communication of one gentleman to another

I have the honour to remain with assurances of esteem

Your obedient Servant

W. Preston

Mem. The letters to General Almonte and the Marquis de Montholon were sent June 8th by Capt. Beauregard to Captain Ford, with suggestions to present them as soon as Grant should be repulsed or should withdraw from before Richmond, or in the event of his beating Lee, which is not to be anticipated, he is to withhold them; but leaving the appropriate moment for presenting them to Captain Ford's own judgement.

see post.150 *

The Confederate States of America

To William Preston Envoy Extraordinary etc to Mexico for Contingent Expenses of Legation for Quarter commencing 7th January and ending 7th April 1864

Contingent
Account

	Voucher	\$	Cts
To amount paid Edward H. Farrar bearer of despatches	1	586	00
<hr/>			
To Cash paid Thos. Sommerville	2	139	00
<hr/>			
To Cash paid Captain W. Fearn Secy Legation, Stationery etc books etc	3	53	40
<hr/>			
To amount paid Thos. W. Wilson Maps, Stationery etc	4	10	75
<hr/>			
To Seals, Stationery etc		17	00
<hr/>			
Contra			
By cash received from Honbl. J. P. Benjamin Secy of State for contingent fund 7th January 1864		4,200	00
<hr/>			
Debits		806	15
<hr/>			
Balance 7th April 1864		\$ 3,393.	85

W. Preston, B.General, C.S.A.
Env. Ext & Min Plenipo."

*Refer to Page 69 - Transcription.

Havana 23 June 1864

My dear Ford

Let me introduce to you an old and valued friend Dr. Gwin, formerly Senator from California, with whom I served in Congress. He is doubtless known to you from his public eminence in the country, but as he was casually passing from France to Mexico, he met me here last night, and expressed such deep interest, in regard to the solution of the questions entrusted to my charge, that he desires to make your acquaintance and has requested this note.

There is nothing new, or important since you left. Notes from Mr. Mason & Mr. Slidell offer no encouragement for me to proceed to Mexico. I have written home and informed the government of the state of arrairs. From other sources I have learned that the suppliant course of Mr. Seward & Mr. Dayton at Paris had averted the discontent, if it had not dissipated the distrust of the Emperor, and that the Confederacy, or its representative, would be met with insuperable obstacles. This has caused me to delay here, and I have been meditating the propriety of returning, without pressing matters further in unfriendly or hostile ears.

Dr. Gwin takes a very different view of matters. He regards the impediments as merely temporary, and that the permanency and stability of Mexico, require friendly relations to be promptly established. He thinks the real strength and power of the South will be made manifest by this terrible campaign, and that the Emperor will appreciate the value of our friendship and detect the transient and perfidious friendship forced for the moment from the North, by the exigencies of the situation.

You may confer freely with Dr. Gwin, in whose friendship to the South, and intelligence and energy you may confide.

It was my intention to recall you, but you will remain for the present, until further orders.

Yours truly

W. Preston

Capt. Ford
A.D.C.

Havana 23rd June 1864

My dear Ford

I received letters from Will Johnston giving me all the war news and but little else. He has written to you on private affairs.--

The great campaign continues. Grant gasps at the Chickahominy & has lost 50 to 60.000 men or half of his army. Will J_n writes me we lost prior to the 23rd twenty generals, killed & wounded and 20.000 men, mostly but slightly hurt. All was defiant, prayerful & in good heart at Richmond.

Breckenridge beat Sigel with 20.000 men very badly with 8 or 10.000, at most. Buckner & Staff Bob Wooley included have gone to the Trans mississippi Dept. Owen distinguished himself. All goes well.

I think Grant will be suspended after he is vanquished by Lee.

I have given Dr. Gwin a letter to you. He will explain all--

I will probably leave here for Halifax with Fearn on the next steamer,- Say the 6th of July. You will hear of my whereabouts through Helm, or at S.A. White & Co. Halifax, if I go there as I expect --I wish you to remain in Mexico untill Dr. Gwin gives you definite information on the questions presented in my letters to the Marquis de Montholon & General Almonte--you will then join me as rapidly as possible, wherever I may be. I feel great solicitude about a successful issue, and a favourable result to your reconnaissance, not only on my own account but yours. Bring every energy to bear, and with a resolute purpose and vigilant patience, I expect to hear a good report from you when we meet.

The news from home tells me that my family & yours are well; Mrs. F-- expects to meet you in Canada soon, my daughter writes, but I have written that you will not be able to be there immediately.

With the best wishes believe me

Yours truly

W. Preston

The Hewitts' are here & sail for Europe in a day or two, Belle Key & child with them--They are travel stained & from Mexico & Texas & go to England.

Havana 26th June 1864

Memorandum

Doctor W. M. Gwin, Ex Senator from California, arrived at this place on the Trent directly from Europe, bringing me letters from Mr. Mason and Mr. Slidell, to the 30th of May.

Doctor Gwin informed me that he had determined to identify himself with the fortunes of Maximilian and the Empire and was proceeding to the Capital to undertake the Colonization of Sonora.

It seems from his account to me that the Emperor of France, Maximilian, himself and many others, believe that there are vast undeveloped mines of Gold and Silver in the mountainous country near Arispe east of the port of Guaymas in Sonora. All the narratives of the Spaniards and the traditions of the country confirm the idea that the Sonora river is richer in the precious metals than any of the streams of California. Both of the Emperors fully aware of this fact, and of the present export from Guayamas of Silver and Gold employed themselves in considering the best means of settling the country, and developing its wealth, by proper colonization. The plan suggested by M. Fould, the Minister of Finance was through joint stock companies, with large grants, great capital, and still greater privileges. The Emperor sent for Doctor Gwin, as familiar with the history & facts in connection with the settlement of California, to consult with him in reference to the subject.-- Doctor Gwin objected to the principles of the project mentioned to him by the Emperor, without knowing the author, as unwise in theory, and as certain to fail, in the event of an attempt to put them in practice. He considered that any attempt to monopolize the mines by private companies would paralyse colonization and check immigration to Sonora. He drew up a plan expressive of his views and submitted it to the Emperor. It gave head rights of quarter sections, to all miners and actual settlers and allowed the property to vest in fee, for agricultural purposes, and permitted the mines to be denounced, and to become the subjects of appropriation in private hands, according to the principles of the old Spanish law, subject only to the royalties exacted under that system--It based colonisation upon individual hopes and enterprise, instead of Corporate wealth and privileges, and holds out large inducements to actual colonists. There, experienced in mining, and in the settlement of new & unpeopled mining districts Doctor Gwin expects to obtain in large numbers, among the men of Southern birth, in California, who are now restless and--persecuted under the fierce social and political proscriptions of the Civil War.

The principal cause of the neglect to work these rich mines, is the neighbourhood of predatory tribes of Apaches who have for a hundred years ravaged the country. Doctor Gwin asked a thousand French light cavalry to clear the country of the hordes who infest it, until the infant settlements become strong enough for self defence, and the Colony is somewhat settled.

The Doctor told me that the Emperor after considering the plan approved it fully and gave him an autograph letter to M. Fould to confer with him about it. He visited M. Fould and delivered the letter. The Minister received him almost rudely and showed evident signs of vexation, crushing the envelope of the Emperor's letter and throwing it away pettishly. In an interview with the Archduke Maximilian subsequently, the Doctor was very graciously received, & he entered warmly into the views he expressed. The colonization is to be entrusted to a Superintendent, and Doctor Gwin is promised the appointment by Maximilian on his arriving in the City of Mexico. The Emperor Louis Napoleon gave him an autographic letter of some length, strongly recommending the support of his views to the French Military commandant in Mexico. The Emperor Maximilian has signed an imperial decree, which Doctor Gwin drew up, establishing the rules and regulations for the Colony and the mining districts. The military force, assay offices, a commission to decide on mining titles, and a Superintendent, constitute the chief features of administration and government.

Such then are the auspices under which Doctor Gwin visits the country and such his plans and purposes. He is very sanguine and confident. Mr. Slidell and Mr. Mason expressed great surprise at his interview with Louis Napoleon, and the rapidity and success that attended his project.

He was very anxious to see me saying he feared I had returned on account of the treatment of Mr. Slidell by the Emperor at Paris, and as he considered the establishment of friendly relations between Mexico and the Confederate States as indispensable to his plan of settling Sonora. In the event of any hostile or unfriendly attitude, it would be impossible for him ever to induce the Southern men in California, with whom he is associated, to colonize Sonora or emigrate to Mexico.

Finding the Doctor in this frame of mind I thought it would be well to secure his services in obtaining intelligence as to the objects of my mission to Maximilian. Without explaining any details of my instructions I mentioned to him my wish to ascertain the inclinations of the Emperor, before I went forward to Mexico, and stated to him that I had taken measures already to learn the policy he would adopt, and if he should be unwilling to recognize the Confederate States, or cultivate friendly relations at the earliest possible moment, it was my purpose not to go to Mexico at all, but to advise the government to recall me, and adopt a different policy. While he did not combat my view, or deny its propriety, he eagerly urged that it ought not to be prematurely adopted, and volunteered to use all his endeavours to secure the Emperor's agreement to receive me so as to open negotiations, or an invitation from Maximilian to me to visit Mexico--this he felt confident he could accomplish in three months. I agreed to await the result of his efforts. As he is the only person attached to the Southern cause, and sufficiently intelligent bold and dexterous in such affairs, who has had audiences with

both Emperors, and will have access to Maximilian I deemed it better to let the Doctor take the matter in hand, and to secure me if possible an invitation to go to Mexico.

The plan formed and which it was agreed the Doctor should carry out, was nearly as follows, and to prevent misapprehension and keep it in my memory, I make this memorandum.

He was to secure in a natural way, and as if in connexion with his colony a discussion of the subject with the Emperor, General Almonte, and the Marquis de Montholon, saying he had found me here at Havana, and should give the general tenor of my views verbally and to say he thought that there was a great opportunity now for the Emperor to secure advantages that would never again be presented. That I had told him I had halted here, after learning the rudeness to Mr. Slidell, and contemplated the possibility if not probability of abandoning the mission. That I had informed him I had sent Captain Ford forward to Mexico, with the private letters to the Marquis de Montholon and General Almonte, and had instructed him, if, in his judgment, expedient, that he would deliver the letters, and obtain a reply, but if the situation of affairs was not promising, that he would withhold the letters and return to Havana.

Doctor Gwin was then to urge by very argument in his power the necessity of establishing friendly relations at once, and that I should be invited to Mexico.

He was to state that I would not go-forward except under such an assurance.

He was to state that filled with the conviction of the necessity of receiving me at once, in a friendly manner, that he had asked me to give him a letter to Captain Ford, so that, if he found the dispositions favourable, that he would request him to deliver the letters to the Marquis de Montholon, and General Almonte, and that if such should be the determination, that he would request Cap. Ford to deliver the letters, so that a suitable reply might be framed and sent to me by them. It was thought that nothing could be done or should be attempted in case Richmond was captured, but I had no belief that such would be the case, and I directed that at the first favourable event to our arms, such as the rout or withdrawal of Grant, or his removal from command, one of which events I anticipated, then that the letters should be presented, the views urged and the reply obtained.

While in Paris Robert McLane, Rich^d Merrick, and others of the Northern men, anxious for peace and the recognition of the South, urged violently the maintenance of the Monroe Doctrine as essential to the future arrangement--Doctor Gwin was to press these ideas, and their adoption as ruinous to Mexico and to impress upon the Emperor the danger of dallying or waiting

I was to go to Halifax and Canada and on his learning the news it was to give color to suspicion, of the formation of an understanding for a future peace that would finish the Empire in Mexico-- I determined to employ my time in going to Europe, in the interval, and in returning by Canada, as I could do nothing in Havana, the Steamers being withdrawn till September and the news cut off, so that Doctor Gwin, might make use of every means to secure a favourable answer, by the 6th of Sept or 6th of October, when I expect his reply by the English Steamer.

Captain Fearn is cognizant of the facts, and this memorandum is made by me as an aide-memoire for the plan to be pursued.

Doctor Gwin gives a different version of the reason why the Archduke did not receive Mr. Slidell from any I have heard.

He says, that apart from reasons of State, and the assurances of Mr. Dayton, it bore a personal character.

He states that De Havilland obtained interviews with the Archduke at Miramar and informed Mr. Slidell of the feelings he entertained in regard to American affairs, and the inclinations of his mind to the Confederate cause, that among other things in January and February last he informed him that the Archduke would not accept the Empire. Louis Napoleon, at the time, was perplexed and annoyed about the Mexican Question. Mr. Slidell gave currency to the rumour, and its authenticity being denied exhibited the letter. The Archduke was informed of the fact, and of the disagreeable character of such reports at such a time, and replied that they were incorrect or misrepresentations. The part therefore of Mr. Slidell was considered disagreeable and officious, and Gutierrez de Estrada, ignorant of the feeling, promised the interview, which the Archduke, from personal reasons, in addition to others refused or neglected to grant.

Havana 28th June 1864

Private

Letter to
President Davis

My dear Sir

I am very well assured by Mr. Mason of the kindly inclinations of the Emperor Maximilian, and the perplexities he encountered at Paris in his consultations with the Emperor of France, from the promises made by the Lincoln Administration. I am also convinced that it is impossible for him to act at this moment, considering the military situation, and the views of Louis Napoleon, favourably and promptly on the recognition

N. Sent with Nos 8, 9, & 10,
July 2

of the Confederacy. He must be indulged with breathing time, or forced to act against his wishes and opinions. All the world hang with breathless anxiety upon the event of the struggle at Richmond, and the Emperor of all other rulers is in the most precarious condition I cannot press the question, now, in person and categorically without meeting with a refusal, and therefore I intend to evade any direct issue untill a more propitious hour. That hour I feel is not distant.

In the meantime I have put on foot the best plans I could devise to avail myself of every opportunity, and secure an invitation to visit Mexico. This I hope after some effort to accomplish- My despatches to Mr Benjamin shew the measures I have adopted, but I write this private note in addition, as it enables me to explain myself with more freedom than a despatch appropriately permits.

Doctor Gwin brought me the letters from Mr Mason. He has identified himself with the new Empire, and has just gone on to Sonora to undertake its colonization, under flattering auspices. The country back of Guaymas is reputed to be richer in gold & Silver than California. Both Emperors were aware of the fact and M. Fould proposed large mining monopolies to great French corporations for their development and the colonization of the country. Doctor Gwin combated his views, and was consulted by the Emperor Napoleon, who adopted his plans, the basis being our system, with some modifications, and founding colonization upon individual hopes and enterprize, instead of corporate wealth and privileges. It is expected that fifteen or twenty thousand colonists thoroughly acquainted with mining, can be procured from Southern men in California.

The plan was fully approved by Louis Napoleon, to the annoyance of M. Fould. The Archduke also heartily approved it, and the Doctor is to be appointed superintendent or Governor of the districts. The Emperor Napoleon gave him an autographic letter to the commandant of the French forces to assure the military protection of the inhabitants, and the expulsion of the Apaches. Under this encouragement he is going forward to the Capital.

I found Doctor Gwin very anxious to secure friendly relations between Mexico and the Confederacy, as the success of his scheme will depend upon the immigration of Southern men from California-- He was afraid from what he heard in Paris, that all attempts to establish intercourse would be abandoned by me, and he is very earnest in urging the necessity of action and recognition, at once, by Maximilian.

Finding the Doctor in this State of mind, I thought it would be well to employ him to secure an invitation for me to go to Mexico. This he is confident he can accomplish in a reasonable time. He is to urge the general arguments with all the force he can command, and secure the opportune delivery of certain letters I have written to the Marquis de Montholon & General Almonte, privately. I am to withdraw from Havana for a time, so that the danger of other arrangements

or the possibility of engrafting the Monroe Doctrine in a Treaty of Peace, in case of rebuff, may awaken the Emperor to the rights of the Confederacy, and the dangers of delay. I will then return here in time to receive his reply, which he hopes to send me by the English Steamer on the 6th September or October with an invitation to visit Mexico. Dr. Gwin tells me that the refusal of Maximilian wore somewhat of a personal character in regard to Mr. Slidell.

He states that Mr. De Havilland obtained interviews with the Archduke at Miramar, in regard to American affairs, and corresponded with Mr. Slidell. among other things he wrote to him that the Archduke would not accept the Empire. Mr. Slidell gave currency to the rumour and its exact truth being questioned exhibited Mr. De Havilland's letter. The Emperor of France, at the time, was greatly perplexed about the Mexican question. The Archduke was informed of the disagreeable character of such reports at such a time and Maximilian declared that the report was incorrect, and misrepresented the facts of the interview. The course of Mr. Slidell was disagreeable to the Archduke, and Gutierrez de Estradas, ignorant of the feeling, promised an audience, without consulting Maximilian, which he would not grant from the personal annoyance and feeling created. Such is Doctor Gwin's version of the matter.

I have thus given some account of matters I could not well put in an official despatch, not of much if any importance in themselves, but so as to put you in more complete possession of the measures taken by me to obtain an invitation, or at least an appearance of welcome before going forward to Mexico.--

I am surrounded by many embarrassments, but will steadily endeavour to accomplish your wishes. I think we will obtain recognition at Mexico as soon or sooner than at any other court. The mighty contest at Richmond, more filled with great results upon mankind, than any of the present century, or perhaps the past, will decide everything. The dreadful repulses of Grant will end in rout, or at most, an inglorious and weary siege. I wait for, and believe in a triumph for our arms so dazzling, that all governments and monarchs will throw open their courts for our welcome.

My situation here for the last four months has been exceedingly disagreeable. The Captain General, though professing sympathy for the Confederacy is really afraid of the North. The recent outrage in the extradition of Colonel Arguelles by the Lincoln government, render him still more supple. I cannot expect in the slowness of Mexican communication any definite information before September and for the reasons I have stated, I will go to Europe on the steamer sailing direct to Liverpool tomorrow, and return in time to get Doctor Gwin's and Captain Ford's intelligence, and replies from the Marquis de Monthollon and General Almonte for

my guidance. I will see Mr. Mason and Mr. Slidell, and be in Europe a fortnight-

With the warmest wishes for your own prosperity and health, and the continued success of our arms, I remain your Excellency's obedient Servant and friend

(Signed) W. Preston

His Excellency
President Davis

Havana 24 June 1864

No. 8.

Sir

Mr. La Sere arrived here yesterday bringing me your despatch No 5. dated the 1st of June. He will proceed in the next steamer to Vera Cruz.

The Emperor Maximilian arrived in the City of Mexico about the 15th Instant. A French transport brings the intelligence, but no letters or mails have yet been received. It is said, that the reception of the Emperor was not so enthusiastic, as was anticipated.

I have letters from Mr. Mason and Mr. Slidell of the 30th of May by Doctor Gwin who came directly from Europe. Mr. Mason states that, without doubt, Maximilian, before arriving at Paris, contemplated establishing relations with the Confederate States at once; and sought to know if there was any authority in Europe competent to send a Confederate Minister to Mexico contemporaneously with his departure, and was informed there was not. He then relates facts fully confirming my conjectures expressed in former despatches, as to the causes for the change of policy. In alluding to Mr. Seward's false promises, and attempts to dupe the Emperor of France, he says that he cannot tell "how long the game may be played" before the

N. Sent with Nos. 9, & 10, July 2

Emperor deems it politic "to explode the chest", but that it will depend of course upon the progress of events at the North.

Mr. Slidell's letter contains no additional information but he and Mr Mason express their pleasure at my not having gone forward before ascertaining the inclinations of the Emperor and their supposition that I would not do so before learning the character of the reception that would be accorded.

I have already announced to the department my intentions in my despatch No. 6 and reiterated them in despatch No. 7. which you had not received when your No. 5 was written. Those despatches were not written to invoke new instructions, but the events in Europe in connexion with Mr Slidell and the Emperor put such a different face upon affairs, that I deemed it necessary to set forth the situation in detail, for information, and to await any new directions, if they should be deemed necessary, by the department. I feel gratified at the assurance that my former despatches evince that I have properly appreciated the instructions of the government, and I shall endeavour to give the Department satisfaction, in the end, in their accomplishment, while I must ask its patience and indulgence in view of the embarrassments by which I am surrounded.

In my opinion the situation of affairs has not changed since my last despatches, and the present moment is not propitious for me to go forward to Mexico, for the reasons heretofore stated by me in them. It is not likely that it will be so for the next ninety days. The gigantic struggle at Richmond now undecided would undoubtedly restrain Maximilian from considering the question of recognition until the fate of the campaign is revealed, and delay would be justified by the custom of Nations, and the principles of public law, I have clear faith in our power of resistance, and the failure of the campaign of Grant. In the meantime Mr. Lincoln accepts the nomination with a pledge to maintain the Monroe doctrine, while the factions will burst loose all clamorous against France and Mexico, and the questions ripen. He has exhausted apologies in advance at the French Court, and can be no longer believed. He cannot recognize the Empire or exchange missions while the election is pending.

Under these circumstances I have determined not to go forward, but to employ the interval in ascertaining the reception I will meet at the Court of Maximilian. For this purpose - Captain Ford, my aide de camp, is now in the city with letters to the Marquis de Montholon and General Almonte copies of which are transmitted. Other intelligent agents are also employed to furnish me with accurate information. The letters will be delivered at the first opportune moment that may offer dependent upon decisive military successes. In addition to this I have secured the cooperation of an eminent man of dexterity & ability, who I know has been consulted by both Emperors on the questions involved, an ardent friend of the Confederacy, and who will have very

frequent interviews with the Emperor Maximilian, General Almonte the French Ambassador and other distinguished persons. He will advise Captain Ford when to present my letters, and despatch him to me at the hour he thinks I should come forward, or inform me definitely and clearly of the prospects of the success, or rejection of any overtures. He is confident that nothing can be done for three months and believes that Maximilian will extend an informal invitation requesting me to visit his court, to open negotiations in some shape.

I give to you this statement without venturing to make promises or hold out hopes, that may never be realised, but to put the Department in possession of the state of the case and the measures I have adopted. I believe them infinitely better than if I were in Mexico, and I believe that a Confederate Envoy will be accredited as soon, or sooner in Mexico, and that we have a government there more anxious to recognize us, than in any other country.

I have been so long in Havana, that my further delay here is compromising and disagreeable. Apart from considerations of health and the yellow fever, I do not think I can effect any useful end by waiting at this place, for the expected communications, The steamers are withdrawn from this time till the end of September and there are no further communications possible through Nassau, except at chance intervals by little sailing vessels. The quarantine and the epidemic at this season cut off Havana from the world.

Under these circumstances I have determined to employ the interval of time, by going to Southampton on the Steamer, leaving here the 29th and going direct to Southampton, and after seeing Mr. Mason and Mr Slidell to return here to ascertain the result of affairs in Mexico. The inference to be drawn from my absence, and the probable indifference of the Confederacy, to send a minister to Mexico, will do no harm, and it is thought can be effectively used. I shall not be over a week or fortnight in Europe, and will return in time for the expected intelligence. I will be here in time to reach the City by the period indicated, and the moment I receive sufficient information will decide upon my course and proceed in conformity to instructions.

In the hope that I may have it in my power, on my return to communicate favourable intelligence

I have the honour to remain

Your obedient Servant

Hon J. P. Benjamin
Secty of State

Department of State
Richmond June 1st 1864

Copy of
Dispatch
from
Hon. J. P. Benjamin

"No. 5"

Sir

I avail myself of the departure of Mr. Lasere for Vera Cruz to acknowledge receipt of your Nos 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, the last of which arrived on 20th ulto.

Before this reaches you the new Emperor will have arrived unless prevented by some misfortune at his capital in Mexico, and it is therefore quite impossible to add anything to the instructions you have received and which you have thoroughly appreciated as evinced in your despatches. We await with lively interest the account of your proceedings.

Mr. Lasere will give you full information of the military position, He is a gentleman of the highest character, on whose honour and veracity you may implicitly rely

Your obedient Servant

(Signed) J. P. Benjamin
Secretary of State

Hon. Wm Freston

X- X-
Havana

P.S. Pray accept my best thanks for the beautiful likeness of the President sent me from Havana -- It is quite the best I have seen

Memorandum

Havana 28 June 1864

Dear Sir

You will oblige me by opening all public correspondence from Mexico or Richmond during my absence, and writing to me immediately under cover to H. Hotze, 17 Savile Row, London; and, in duplicate, under cover to S. A. White & Co. Bankers, Halifax, via New York or other opportunity.

My private letters you will forward (from the U.S.) to same address Halifax

Very truly
your friend
W. Preston
Brig General
Conf Army

Major Charles J Helm
Havana.

Havana 28th June 1864

Letter to
Hon W. M. Gwin
Mexico

My dear Sir

I wrote to Richmond expressing the views that governed me in my last interview with you, and the arrangements made. A few hours after I received a despatch from the Secy approving the papers I read to you.

I shall leave here tomorrow on the steamer Saint Thomas for Liverpool and go on to Halifax and Canada immediately. Grant has been terribly defeated in unsuccessful assaults on Petersburg on the 15th-16th-17th & 18th of June. The last was the bloodiest. Gold rose 30 per cent in one day. It is quoted on the 23d at 235 & is really 250. All the great banking houses are closing. Sherman is in extreme peril, and Sturgis has been destroyed by Forrest. The west it is feared will break out into revolution--Kentucky and Indiana are mutinous, & Vallandigham has crossed from Canada into Ohio, & declares there are 186,000 men who will resist any attempt to arrest him. The peace party are bold and defiant, and only want moderate terms. Great events are near at hand. I will be in the neighbourhood. How strange, rapid, & eventful are the changes of the hour! who can predict in these days the policy of a nation for a week!

I should be extremely pleased to hear how affairs progress in Mexico. Capt F. can give you my address if you can find time to write.

Believe me yours truly

Hon. W. M. Gwin
Mexico.

Havana 28th June 1864

My dear Ford

Letter to
Capt. Ford

I sail with Fearn tomorrow direct for Southampton, on the British Steamer the Saint Thomas, and hope to reach England by the 20th of July. I will go to Halifax and reach there I hope by the 10th to the 14 August. I will stay a fortnight and return to Havana by the first Steamer, reaching here in time for the steamer that

leaves here the 23rd at furthest, and if the news brightens will be here by the 1-7 Sept.

I wrote you a short note by Dr. Gwin, and another which he neglected to take that I now enclose.

I have written to Richmond that I will not go to Mexico until I can learn whether I will be received by the Emperor. I have entrusted this delicate matter to you, and have hopes that a favourable response will be obtained--Dr. Gwin has promised to use every exertion & give you all the aid in his power. He can explain the details.

You will deliver the letters borne to you by Capt B. for the M de M & G-A- when he deems the moment opportune, and bring me the reply, if favourable as fast as you can, and wherever I am. If not favourable, you will wait till the middle of September to give time before you return & will then exercise your discretion, and come when you choose, you will hear of me through Helm here, and S. A. White & Co at Halifax, Hewitt & Co Liverpool, and Mr. Slidell Paris. in the first supposed case that you may bring me good news.

I have left your Bill of Exchange for Lb.300. with Helm for you, and a letter.

Grant has been fearfully repulsed again, in four days of assaults on the 15.16.17 & 18 at Petersburg losing ten or fifteen thousand hors de combat. Beauregard, I think did the business. Gold rose 30 per cent on the 23rd and is quoted at 235, but is 250. The bottom is falling out.--Sherman is lassoed in Georgia & Sturgis with a division destroyed by Forrest. Morgan at Cynthiana, and Kentucky trembling into revolution. Guthrie (I suspect) ready for it.

My time is pressing. I wish you to be patient and manage the matter you have in hand with great zeal and address as to succeed. Confide in Dr. Gwin. I am never disheartened with hard tasks, and hope you will not be.

I heard nothing later from home. Your family I have requested my correspondents to inform of your whereabouts & employment.

With kind wishes

I remain

Yours truly

Captain Ford A. D. C.
Mexico

Havana 29 June 1864

Special orders
to
Capt Fearn

Sir

During my temporary absence in going to Europe, you will take charge of affairs at this place, and open and conduct all necessary correspondence in relation to the mission with which I am intrusted.

Private Sommerville 55th Georgia Regiment will report to you for orders.

You will communicate with me as rapidly and frequently as you can according to the directions left with you.

You will give all necessary directions to agents and friends in the City of Mexico.

You will remain in Cuba, unless affairs render it necessary for you to leave: in that event you will exercise your own discretion.

Respectfully

Signed -- W. Preston
Brig Gen. P.A.C.S.
Envoy Extra. & --

To Walker Fearn
Capt. & A.A.G.
Sec. Legation

Havana 29 June 1864

No 9

Sir

I have just received from Mexico, letters of an encouraging character, but only confirming my former views. Xaa-Vwgiteb-ke-Jojuwshj, who is very kindly disposed, advises me not to come on now, and Captain Fearn who remains here in charge, will give you the report of an agent whose statements may be relied upon implicitly.

Captain Fearn will write to you fully as I am on the eve of departure.

I have the honour to remain

Very Respectfully
Your obedient St

(Signed) W. Preston
B. Gen P.A.C.S.
Envy Extr etc
By Walker Fearn
Secy

Hon. J. P. Benjamin

X

X

X

X

N. Sent with No. 10, July 2

Havana 30th June 1864

No. 10.

Sir

Despatch from
Capt. Fearn

General Preston sailed yesterday in the St Thomas, direct for Liverpool, intending to return in September next. Our letters from Mexico confirm the previous impression that his actual presence there would be premature and that it was scarcely advisable for him to remain here.

The general news, to the 23d instant, is not without significance. The progress of the Emperor to the Capital, was attended with an enthusiasm on the part of the aboriginal population which does not seem to have extended to the whites. The Imperial pair made their solemn entrance into the City of Mexico on the 12th instant mid the usual pomp and ceremony, and were accompanied by General Bazaine and General Baron Neigre Military Commandant of the metropolitan district. Captain Ford had arrived several days before, but being confined to his room by illness, did not witness the reception. He writes, however, on the 19th instant from Tacubaya, that the Emperor and Empress seem to have made a decidedly favourable impression "judging from the limited and somewhat partial sources of information" then accessible to him. The Court was about to move out to the Castle of Chapultepec.

The idea published in some quarters that the intestine difficulties of Mexico would cease upon the appearance of the Emperor, does not promise to be speedily realized,--indeed, it is evident that the task of organizing his government and pacifying his Empire, must be arduous, painful, and engrossing. In the neighbouring province of Guerrero, collisions were frequent between the French troops and Mexican guerillas. The rich and populous state of Oajaca still acknowledged no ruler but Juarez. From Sisal, a correspondent who is thoroughly trustworthy, writes that the people of Yucatan are disaffected and indignant at the presence in Mexico of French troops which he says they regard as "un soufflet gratuitement donné à la masse du peuple" In the North, Juarez still has sway, but his right will be fiercely contested by Viduarri who was expected to return shortly from Texas, and whose influence in the Northern provinces is very great. It is reported that this Chieftain favours the Empire, but, though probable, I have yet seen no confirmation of it. At Saltillo the Imperialists were put down by the Juarist general Negrete, and their leaders shot.

Notwithstanding this unpromising state of affairs, the Emperor Maximilian has a support, so powerful, that if he rules wisely, it would seem he must eventually strengthen and confirm his throne.

N. Sent via Nassau 2 July
" " Mobile 7

I enclose extract of a letter from a confidential agent in Mexico, with slips from the Havana and Mexican papers

and have the honour to be

Yours very respectfully

(signed) Walker Fearn

Hon. J. P. Benjamin

x x x

Mexico June 18th 1864

Extract of
letter from Capt.
Beauregard-
enclosed with
preceeding

"Brig Gen. W. Preston C.S.A. Havana

General, The 'Str. Barcelona' returning sooner than was expected, I send the important communication I was requested to transmit, without anything of interest to be added, having only been a few hours in the City, & must beg to be excused for this short & hurried note.

The reception I met with, thro' Lieut Lefort's letter letter of introduction, was all I could have wished, and I was told to say: Tell Genl Preston, that he must not think of coming here at present; certain combinations are taking place which make it preferable that he should not place himself in a false or undefined position but that as soon as the favourable moment arrives, he shall be notified. The presence of other persons in the room, prevented me from obtaining at a first interview, any information as to the "complications", or the probable length of time alluded to. I was told that "les affaires marchaient bien, cependant" as yet my mission is unknown to him. The French are (or expected to be) in Acapulco in route for the possession of Sonora, said to be threatened by Yankee sympathisers from California. The Pacific coast is to be occupied before any attempt be made against Matamoras. In connection with this the reoccupation of Brownsville is thought to be a very desirable in the present emergency."

Havana 2 July 1864

Letter from
 Capt. Fearn
 to
 Genl. Preston

Dear General

By the British Steamer closed mail leaving here to day and arriving via New York probably about the same time that you do, I write to say that I have determined to join you in England by the Steamer leaving here on the 7th and due at Southampton the 29th.

I think the tenour of our letters indicating the inexpediency of your remaining longer almost at the portal of Mexico, is equally applicable to me, and debarred, as I am, from returning to the Confederacy, I confess that the idea of staying here throughout the summer, alone and inactive, is exceedingly irksome, but I would not venture upon this step were I not confident that it would meet your approval. I need hardly say that this determination is subject to the intelligence to be brought by the Steamer from Vera Cruz.

Our despatches will be sent to Nassau by the Corsica today. I have written to the department,--will write again on getting the Mexican news and bring the record book with me.

The Steamer that was to have taken despatches to Mobile has been detained and will not probably leave till something is heard from that port.

It is rumoured from Key West that two steamers have been captured coming out and we hear that there is a perfect armada before Morgan including 4 of Porters iron clads. It is now more than a month since any vessel has arrived thence and this channel of communication seems as uncertain as Wilmington & Nassau.

I saw M. Sabourin last night.--He had received no intelligence of importance from M.M but agreed with me that the present state of Mexico was gloomy and unpromising and that the youthful Emperor has need of singular wisdom to conquer the difficulties in the way of creating a genuine Empire. The old gentleman spoke with great warmth of our recent successes in Virginia, expressing the highest admiration for "a grand genie militaire, le General Lee, et son armee de heros". He admitted that Maximilian had more need of us than we of him-- "a plus besoin de vous, que vous n'en avez de lui" - but "qu'il etait dans la necessite d'ayer selon les conseils de son chef". He hoped you would not abandon your mission and felt sure something could be effected after the conclusion of the fall campaign

Major Helm will take charge during our absence as originally instructed by you, and Sommerville will remain with him. _____

I have no doubt your voyage was a charming one, in spite of "many discomfitures" as one of the fair passengers expressed it to me. I confess I often wish myself on board and try to draw consolation from the reflection that to remain was the part of prudence - if not of duty. But it is dreary comfort that's extracted from the contemplation of the milder virtues and I feel the truth of La Rochefaucauld's witty maxim:--C'est une grande folie de vouloir être sage - tout seul.

I am, dear General,

Yours very faithfully

Walker Fearn

Brig. Gen. Preston

x x

Havana 2 July 1864

Gentlemen

Gen. Preston left here in company with Mr. Hewitt and family on the 29th ult. in the Stmr. "St. Thomas" direct for Liverpool. Should this reach you in time, I beg you will deliver the enclosed letter before he leaves Liverpool for London,

I am, Gentlemen,

Your very obt. svt.

Walker Fearn

Messrs. James Hewitt & Co.
Liverpool

Havana 6 July 1864

No 11

Sir

Despatch
from
Captain Fearn

Our letters and the general intelligence brought by the British Steamer from Vera Cruz, leave little to be added to my last despatch.

A distinguished personage to whom allusion has been already made, and whom you know as an earnest advocate of our cause, repeats through----Captain Ford, the assurance that General Preston should not now come to Mexico. This opinion seems universal among our friends there.

As my services here are not required for the present, I shall rejoin General Preston in England by the Steamer leaving tomorrow, and return with him.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Very Respectfully

Your obedient servt.

(Signed) Walker Fearn

Hon. J. P. Benjamin

x x x

Havana 6th July 1864

Dear Ford

Letter from
Cap.ⁿ Fearn
to
Cap.ⁿ Ford

The British Steamer came in today with your letters of the 28th Ult. We had previously received those of the 15th and 19th from Tacubaya. Genl. Preston left on the 29th in the Steamer St. Thomas direct for Liverpool & expects to be back in September though as he returns via Halifax I think it will be difficult for him to reach here before October. As your letters and those of Beauregard clearly indicate that I can effect nothing by staying here, I leave here tomorrow on the Trent & join the General in England. I think you had better say to Dr. Gwin that he left here with somewhat abated

Sent via Mobile 7 June
" " Nassau ----

enthusiasm in regard to Mexico, thinking perhaps that a nation which has displayed such vitality and power as the Confederacy has, should rather be solicited than solicit. The General wishes you to inform Captain Beuregard that he desires him to remain in Mexico as much beyond the time originally fixed as you, or he may deem expedient.

I send all your letters that have reached here to the present time by Mr La Sere, of Louisiana, who has been appointed Government Agent at Vera Cruz. You need not be surprized if you get none by the next packet to Mexico as there is no Steamer due here from New York for more than a month. I have left full directions with Vignier Robertson & Co about your letters & have requested Ramsey to place with them \$100.00 for your incidental expenses as you desire in your letter to Genl. Preston. Enclosed you will find their letter of credit for the Lb. 300. of which they are to send a duplicate by the next mail. As I have not the time, Ramsey promises to attend to the photographs. He is very obliging and accurate and you may freely count upon his services.

I cannot go into the details of our recent brilliant successes in Virginia & Georgia, but refer you to the packages of papers I send by Mr. La Sere from whom you may learn much, as he is quite recently from Richmond.

I hope you will make a convert of my friend Yturbide. He is certainly a hideous little creature to look at, but is decidedly intelligent, and gentlemanlike, never seeming to forget that he is an Emperor's son & born in the purple. His initial "A" stands for Angel, & as he often -- attributed his supreme ugliness to a fall in his infancy he was wittily called the fallen Angel-- el Angel caido.--His wife was very pretty & charming when I knew her & I hope is so still. Ecco! io ti vedo!--You're found out, for I see the hot fit of enthusiasm is upon you and that you are already a lover of beautiful Mexico. I had hardly hoped that even that wondrous "opal aureola" would do the business & am delighted that my pet volcano made some impression on your imperturbable phlegm. As for the Valley of Mexico, the snow mountains and their unearthly sunsets, I did not expect you would resist that. I am glad you met so good a friend as Colonel Talcott & hope you are thoroughly well

Faithfully Yours

(Signed) Walker F.

P.S. I hope you'll write often. I miss you very much. Sommerville remains here with Helm.

Havana 6 July 1864

Letter to
Capt. Beauregard
from
Capt. Fearn

Dear Captain Beauregard

You will learn through Captain Ford that Gen. Preston has gone to Europe where I expect to rejoin him by the Steam leaving tomorrow. We shall probably return in September or October.

Your letters from off Sisal, and the City of Mexico reached us before the General left and were read with much interest. The three brought by the Trent, I will take with me.

I send this by Mr. La Sere who will give you all the late news.

Your brother has added to his brilliant renown by his successful defence of Petersburg.

Believe me

Yours very truly

(Signed) Walker Fearn

Capt. A. M. Tontant Beauregard

x x x

Havana 6 July 1864

Special Order)
)
)

Private Thomas Sommerville 55th Regt Georgia Vols will report for duty to Major J. Helm, until the return of Brig. Gen. Preston or during my absence

(Signed)

Walker Fearn
Capt. & A.A.G.
C.A.

London 18 August 1864

No. 12

Despatch
to
Mr. Benjamin

Sir

Mr. Eustis gave me day before yesterday at Paris a copy of the copy of your No. 6 dated the 20th June in reply to my No. 7 of the 2d June, and addressed to me, which had been forwarded to Mr. Slidell at Baden Baden.

No. 6 Revd.

Instructions
to
Capt. Ford

I had already anticipated the instructions substantially in directions given to Capt. Ford, and in private letters to the Marquis de Montholon and Gen. Almonte, copies of which were transmitted in duplicate to the Department with my despatch No. 8, of the 24th June 1864 which I presume you have received. Sufficient time has not yet elapsed for me to receive answers from Capt. Ford and the Hon. Wm. M. Gwin. I expect letters from them by the regular monthly Steamer which will arrive on the 28th inst. at Southampton.

Note from
Gen. Almonte

I have received a short private note from Gen. Almonte acknowledging the reception of my letter to him, and stating that he had just laid the matter before the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Message
from
Montholon

Capt. Fearn has already informed the Department that a private confidential agent advised me on the 18th June that the Marquis de Montholon directed him to say to me, that I must not think of going to Mexico then, that certain combinations were taking place which made it preferable that I should not place myself in a false or undefined position, but that as soon as the favourable moment arrived I should be notified. This was at a first interview, but the Ambassador did not explain what the complications were, other persons being present. My informant was told, however, that "les affaires marchaient bien, cependant" in reference to our affairs.

I am convinced of the friendship of the Marquis de Montholon to the Confederacy, from many sources, but do not know the character of the complications nor the favourable moment he is expecting for my notification.

In examining your instructions, the only differences I can discover between them and the course already proposed to me, is that Capt. Ford is directed to seek a private interview with the Emperor's Minister for Foreign Affairs, or Private Secretary; and, in the event of an unfavourable reply, should express in conversation, that if I returned to the Confederacy, no further overture would be made by my Government to that of the Emperor. I will prepare, immediately and send by the first steamer a private letter embracing these points, and will transmit a copy of your instructions so that Capt. Ford may carry them into effect at once.

Captain Ford was selected by me for his intelligence and on account of his un-official connection with the Legation. After the course of the Emperor Maximilian to Mr. Slidell, I did not deem it proper to have any member of the Legation near his Court until previously satisfied of a proper welcome. The instructions seem to be drawn with a similar view.

Rendezvous
at
Bermuda

Under these circumstances, I will direct Capt. Ford, after obtaining the reply of the Government of Mexico, to meet me at Bermuda, as it is the best point to enable me to proceed upon my mission without delay, if the response should be favourable, or to return to the Confederacy if it should be adverse.

Arrival
in
England

I arrived in England on the 22d July, and Captain Fearn joined me a week later by the Southampton boat. He exercised the discretion reposed in him by me, as he deemed it inexpedient to remain longer almost at the portal of Mexico while the question of reception was pending, and Havana, during the summer had no peculiar facilities for information. I mention this simply to say that his course meets my approval.

Disposition
of
Maximilian
towards the
Confederacy

I felt convinced, before arriving in England, that the Emperor Maximilian entertained the most friendly sentiments to the Confederacy. My interviews with Mr. Mason and Mr. Slidell, and other facts, place the matter beyond doubt. I have read original letters from the Emperor's Secretary, the Baron du Pont, written by his order, expressing in the most direct and emphatic manner, his desire for our immediate recognition, and the establish- of friendly intercourse at once. The only impediments are at Paris. Every effort should be directed to remove or obviate these obstacles, instead of essaying it at Mexico where none exist except the inhibition of the Emperor of France.

I cannot now go into details as it is necessary to forward this by the boat that leaves for Bermuda tomorrow, but will do so in a subsequent despatch. All I have learned here, merely confirms the conjectures expressed from Havana.

Interview
with
Sr. Hidalgo

Mr. Eustis showed me a despatch from Mr. Slidell, after his departure to Baden, alluding to an interview I had with Señor Hidalgo, the Mexican Minister at Paris, which may, from its general terms, convey a wrong impression. As Mr. Eustis was present and Mr. Slidell was not, and it was through Mr. Eustis that Mr. Slidell received his information, I yesterday called the attention of Mr. Eustis to the facts and he concurred with me in my recollection of them.

Marked
Private
in original

I called on Señor Hidalgo and was very kindly and courteously received. He opened the question of our future prospects with strong expressions of sympathy and friendship for the Confederacy, and of admiration for her -leaders and armies,-to which I answered in appropriate terms. The conversation gradually drifted to the question

of recognition. I told him that I felt convinced by my short visit to England, that while the people were in our favour, the Government was not, and after her course to Denmark and Poland, no one could suppose a change of Ministry would alter her policy to the South. In the course of my remarks, I said that since the Trent affair we had entertained no hopes of European intervention in the South, but had made up our minds to rely upon ourselves alone. He then asked if the peace negotiations at Niagara were not a "plaisanterie". I told him I thought not, and went to say that there was a large party for peace in the North that even menaced rebellion against the Lincoln government, and that the negotiations were probably merely to sound, with them, the terms on which peace could be concluded, without either the mediation or intervention of Europe. This seemed to perplex him, and he asked me on what grounds it was probable negotiations could be established. I told him the North desired reconstruction and would give any guarantee to assure it, but that it was impossible, and the South would reject all terms which did not insure a perfect political separation and independence of the North. That the North, however, would probably be anxious to conclude a peace on the basis of free trade, and the maintenance of the Monroe doctrine, as the best it could do, and the South might consider or consent to, concessions, to obtain a peace, into which it would not otherwise willingly enter. He seemed surprised and annoyed, and said it seemed to him, if such a treaty were made, as if two men, engaged in fight, on their own account, were to propose to make peace upon an agreement to attack a third party who was a pacific spectator. I replied that the similitude was not exact, but it was as if two litigants, who were exhausting their estates in useless controversy, who were told by the proper tribunals that they had no justice to expect from them and they declined all jurisdiction, should endeavor to adjust their own differences. He said in reply that were France and England to recognize the South, it would involve them in war with the North, and it was beyond their "compétence". As he spoke in French, I suppose the latter term was used in the sense of jurisdiction. I laughed at the first apprehension of Mr. Seward being able to undertake an additional war, when even now Washington was trembling before our armies in sight of the city, and said that no principle of public law was more universally acknowledged than that recognition- which was all that we desired- could not lead to war. The recognition of Mexico and the South American Republics were adduced as most striking precedents, and I said they had never been urged, even by Spain, as giving her a casus belli against the United States. He asked me how long I would stay in Paris. I told him only a few days. He then asked me if I intended to return to the Confederacy, and I told him not immediately, but that I was going to Canada for the present to await the result of some affairs that were pending. After this we parted, and he called on me next day but I was not at home

Private

I am thus particular in reciting the conversation, because while I wished to suggest certain ideas to him, I did not desire to threaten, directly, an alliance offensive and defensive, as stated

by Mr. Slidell. Mr Eustis, however, told me afterwards, that Señor Hidalgo considered the conversation menacing, though violating no personal courtesy.

I have the honour to be

Very respectfully your obt. Svt.

Hon. J. P. Benjamin

X

X

X

London 20 August 1864
Fenton's Hotel
St. James's

Gen. Preston
to
Capt. Ford

My dear Ford,

I have been nearly a month in Europe but will return on the boat leaving Liverpool for Montreal next Thursday the 25th for the purpose of proceeding to Bermuda. From Bermuda I will return to Richmond and abandon the mission to Mexico unless I receive from you some information that will alter my purpose. I wish you to join me as speedily as you can at Bermuda bringing Sergeant Somerville with you from Havana, so that I may have it in my power to return without delay to the Confederacy. Captain Fearn will be with me at Bermuda.

When I left the Confederacy the Government had received from it's correspondents in Europe assurances, stated to be founded upon the expressions of the Emperor, that the new Government of Mexico was anxious to enter into cordial relations with the Confederacy. Furthermore, an explicit, though informal invitation had been extended by the Regency of Mexico to send a diplomatic agent, with the assurance that the Emperor Maximilian would, at once, recognize the independence of the Government. Desiring to respond properly to these evidences of good will, His Excellency, the President, did not hesitate or delay in sending me forward as the Envoy and Minister Plenipotentiary of the Confederate States to welcome His Imperial Majesty, as a neighbouring sovereign, and to express the friendly sentiments by which His Excellency was animated to the people and government of Mexico.

After my arrival at Havana, on my way to Mexico, information was received from Europe, from credible sources and from parties believed to be in the confidence of the Emperor, that his views had changed and that it was his purpose to make my reception dependent upon the consent or refusal of the United States to establish diplomatic relations with the Mexican Empire. Under these circumstances, I was about to abandon the mission and order you, who being in ill-health I had sent forward to Mexico to escape the climate of Cuba, to rejoin me in Havana and to return myself to the Confederacy. In the meantime I determined to visit Europe in person for a short time, to ascertain the true state of affairs, and what causes, if any existed, for the Emperor's change of views. As I am now about to return, the character of the information you will bring to me at Bermuda will determine me either to proceed to execute the orders of my Government in the prosecution of my mission, or to abandon it at once and return to the Confederacy.

Considering it possible that some misapprehension may exist or that some unknown obstacles are interposed that might be obviated, I do not desire to abandon the mission or return to Richmond without ascertaining clearly the views and inclinations of the Emperor and his Government, in order that my Government may be fully satisfied with my course. For the accomplishment of this purpose, I wish you to seek a private and informal interview with the Emperor's Minister of Foreign Affairs, or, in the event of his refusal to receive you, with the private Secretary of the Emperor. I desire you to relate the exact state of facts connected with my mission, in order that any misapprehension - if any exist - may be corrected. If the Minister or Secretary think proper to give you any intimation of the Emperor's desire that I should continue my voyage to Mexico for the purpose of establishing relations between the two governments as independent powers, I will abandon my purpose of returning to the Confederacy, and proceed, at once, to Mexico; but if you receive no such intimation, you will rejoin me at Bermuda.

You are instructed not to delay your departure beyond two or three days after holding this conversation unless you shall have received in the interval, authority to inform me that my presence in Mexico was desired by the Emperor and that I will be at once received, on arrival, as the accredited Minister of an independent nation.

You are also instructed to express in conversation your opinion that if you return to the Confederacy no further overture will be made by the Government to that of the Emperor and that any future intercourse between the two nations must be inaugurated by a mission from Mexico to the Confederacy.

I have already endeavoured to ascertain through private letters to the Marquis de Montholon and General Almonte, the inclinations of the Emperor. These were sent to you, and delivered. I have received no replies - sufficient time not having elapsed -

Special
Instructions

except a private note from Gen. Almonte acknowledging the reception of the letter. I feel, however, to prevent any misconception in a matter so important - that it is necessary to pursue, in addition, the course I have indicated.

I desire you to discharge this delicate and important trust with perfect courtesy but with decision and clearness. Knowing the importance of establishing a good understanding in the beginning between two adjacent nations having many vast interests in common and which must hereafter augment with their growing wealth and population, I wish as the Envoy of the Confederate States, not to relinquish the mission, with which I am entrusted by my Government to secure our future tranquillity, friendship and mutual welfare, unless under clear evidences that the Emperor has abandoned the enlightened policy which my Government was informed he desired to adopt.

Montreal 30th Sept 1864

Sir

I have received the copy of Dispatch No 7 and of the note from C. J. Helm Esq of 28th July from Havana. The illness of a member of my family who has been at the point of death delayed slightly the reception of your note and the enclosures, I being at a small town on Lake Ontario where my family were.

You will inform General Williams if this note should find you in England that it will not be necessary for him to proceed to Mexico. I will write to him to the same effect more fully.

If you have not yet left Europe, you will proceed to Havana by the most direct route, where you will rejoin me.

I am now enroute for Halifax where I hope to meet you by the Cunard Steamer leaving Liverpool about the 1st of Oct. If we should miss each other you will proceed to Havana by the most direct route.

Very Respectfully

Your obt. servt

W. Preston

To Capt Walker Fearn)
A.A. Genl.)

Montreal 1 Oct 1864

My dear Ford

I have just received dispatches from Richmond via Halifax that I consider will terminate my mission and recall me to the Confederacy immediately I received also from Havana through "our friend" a kind though procrastinating message from the Emperor. Fearn writes to me from London that he has communicated with you and I presume has given you full information. I have ordered Fearn to proceed directly to Havana and I will do the same by the quickest and most certain route. I suppose he will be in Havana the 20th November

I wish you as soon as you can after receiving this note, to return to Havana, where I will meet you.

You will endeavour to ascertain before you leave the city all information of interest or importance to me. You will endeavour to learn from "our friend" whether the Emperor will receive me should I proceed to Mexico as the accredited Envoy of the Confederacy, and is willing to give me an invitation to go forward to his Capitol upon that understanding.

The foregoing information you will not consider yourself authorized to ask officially or semi-officially but only privately from such sources as your discretion may point out or from the friend with whom you have heretofore held communication. Say nothing to General A on the subject involved.

I remain

Very truly
Yours

W. Preston

To R. T. Ford Esq)

P.S.

Your wife and family are here and are well. Your sister is with them.

Learn all you can from G. L. and make a minute of it at the time.

10th October 1864

My dear Ford

I wish you not to halt in Havana and wait for my arrival as directed from Montreal, but to come on as soon as you can to Halifax via Bermuda and to join me here. Bring all the information you can as to the disposition towards us in Mexico, as directed in my letter from Montreal. I will also write to you from Bermuda to care of Thos. E. Taylor. Enquire from him as you come by Bermuda.

Somerville will report to you. I wish you to bring him with you and all papers, baggage trunks etc I expect to return from here or Bermuda to Wilmington. I wish you to defray and pay Somervilles expences, and I will repay you when you arrive here.

I ordered W. F. who is in London to meet me in Havana going out by the Southampton Steamer. I will order him to come to Halifax by the steamer leaving Liverpool the 29th inst if he has not gone. I presume he is yet in Liverpool but if he should by chance go on to Havana shew him this and let him come on immediately here to rejoin me

The capture of the Mobile Ports and the difficulty of returning to the Confederacy from Havana with the probability of my being compelled to return there have decided me not to lose time by the double journey but to go from here or Bermuda to Wilmington

My wife and family are in upper Canada. I left Mrs. F. in Montreal she was going to meet you in Havana on 1st Nov, I will write to her advising her to meet you here by 1st of Nov to 15th of same month with your children. All were well.

Very truly

W. Preston

P. S.

My address here is under cover to S. A. White & Co.

P. S.

I write by this address to Fearn (?) same effect

Memorandum

A similar letter was sent to Capt Fearn to Saint Thomas to the care of A. W. White & Co directing him not to proceed to Havana but to rejoin me here for the purpose of returning to the Confederacy signed W. P. Halifax 10th October 1864 sent by steamer Merlin

Halifax N.S. 10th Nov. 1864

My dear Sir

I received your note and enclosures of the 7th Oct. by the Bermuda Steamer on the 7th inst.

I wrote to Ford on the 10th Oct not to halt at Havana but to come on to Halifax as speedily as he could via St. Thomas where he would enquire of A. W. White & Co. and Bermuda where he would enquire of me through Thos E. Taylor Esq. I wrote to you to same effect at the same time, and in like manner to W. Fearn to the care of White & Co St. Thomas directing Ford and himself with Somerville to join me here. I wrote both by N.Y. and Bermuda.

The information contained in Ford's note of the 28th Sept. is more favourable but like you I regard it with caution. The probabilities are that the E- will adhere to his original policy.

As this is the best point to return to Wilmington directly or through Bermuda in the opinion of Maj. Walker I will remain here until more definite information as the chances greatly preponderate towards my going in that direction.

Say to Mr. Ford. if he is in Havana as I presume he is that if the reply is clear and favourable he will remain at Havana advising me in triplicate through N.Y. and Bermuda. If unfavourable that he will rejoin me here as speedily as possible with Somerville, baggage, papers, etc I await information from him here

I thank you very much for the manner in which you attended to the matters entrusted by me to you

With kindest remembrances believe me

Yours most truly

W. Preston

Col C. J. Helm etc)
Havana)

Halifax 10th November 1864

My dear Fearn

I received letters from Ford in Mexico to the 28th Sept. He had received through Helm instructions under despatch No 6 and brought the matter before the Foreign Secretary He writes me on

the 28th that the reply was in esse, but not delivered, and from information he surmised that all was right and he had very strong hopes of a favourable issue.

I wrote to you on the 10th Oct by the Cunard boat to come to Halifax. I presume you did not receive the letter. I wrote also to K. W. White & Co. St. Thomas enclosing similar letter for you. They write me 26th Oct. that you had not appeared. I suppose you reached St. Thomas on the 7th of Nov and Ford Havana about the same date

I write to Ford by this Steamer and by N.Y. If he brings a favourable and satisfactory answer he is ordered to remain at Havana till further orders if unfavourable to join me here as soon as possible with Somerville, baggage etc to return Confederacy

I wish you on the receipt of this to come on here on the return Steamer and join me

I am not at all sanguine of clear and definite information which will be satisfactory and enable me to proceed. The chances of return preponderate greatly.

If you get clear and definite information that Maximilian will receive me as the accredited envoy of the Confederacy you can join Ford in Havana and I will go forward via Havana meeting you

I expect hourly definite information from Helm or Ford

Very truly

W. Preston

Capt Fearn)
St. Thomas)

Halifax 10th November 1864

My dear Ford

I received on the 7th inst by the Bermuda Steamer your notes of the 19th & 28th Sept. The course pursued by you was countermanded by subsequent orders from the Dept which you did not receive. I however esteem it fortunate they did not advise arrive in time.

I ordered you from Montreal to remain at Havana where I would join you. On my arrival here and after enquiries I found a different state of circumstances from those anticipated and that the C S agents considered I would return more readily from this place via Bermuda than by going to Havana from where I might be compelled to retravel my course to get to Wilmington I therefore on the 10th of Oct wrote to you to join me here via Bermuda bringing Somerville papers baggage &

I will remain here until I receive further information from you. If it is clear and satisfactory you will remain in Havana till further instructions from me. If unsatisfactory you will join me here as soon as you can via Bermuda and will write to me also by duplicate letters through N.Y. & Bermuda mails directed under cover to S. H. White & Co Halifax

Fearn left Southampton on the boat of the 17th I think for Havana I left him some what ill in England I have written to him not to go on to Havana but to join me here. He was (White writes) not at St. Thomas by the boat, that arrived on the 17th Oct. If you meet him inform him.

With kindest regards
I remain very truly
Yours
W. Preston

Mr Ford
Havana

P.S. I wrote and telegraphed to Mrs. Ford, under cover to Corwin advising her of the change of orders made 10th Oct. She had left N.Y. I am informed for Havana

Halifax 10th Novem.^{br} 1864

No 13

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No 7 having previously acknowledged the receipt of No 6 through Mr Eustis

I have information from Mr Ford to the 28th of September (at which time he was in the city of Mexico) received by the West India mail which arrived here on the 7th instant

Mr Ford received orders to carry out the instructions contained in your No. 6. immediately from Havana and necessarily before your No 7 could be received. The orders from Havana were sent forward on the 21. Aug. and the required communication made by Mr Ford to the Foreign Secretary without delay about the 28th Sept. The Emperor was absent in the Northern provinces.

Mr Ford informs me in his last note that the reply had not then been delivered, but that he was informed of its purport and had very strong hopes that I would be requested to proceed at once to Mexico

Mr Ford was to leave Mexico on the next boat on the 22d Oct on his way to Havana with the reply of the Emperor. I expect a definite reply by the next mail which will determine me to proceed to Mexico with proper assurances of official reception by the Emperor or if otherwise that Mr Ford will rejoin me and that I will immediately return to the Confederacy from this point. I may receive advices at any moment through New York mail anticipating the arrival of the English West India Steamer and enabling me to inform you of the result

It was my intention to have gone on to Havana and to return thence to Wilmington but the discouraging character of the news from Mexico up to the 28th August and a procrastinating message from the Emperor led me to believe that no satisfactory answer would be obtained and that the mission might be considered as ended. Mr Weir and Major Walker informed me that if I went to Havana I might be compelled to come back here or to Bermuda involving a long delay in returning to the Confederacy as Mobile was closed and there were no direct boats from Havana to Wilmington and only a monthly boat via Nassau. Mr. Ford is I presume now upon his way here from Havana via Bermuda in conformity with my directions

The Emperor sent me a message through the Marquis de Montholon with which the Department I suppose is already acquainted through Mr Helm

He expressed a great desire to receive me officially but said that the embarrassed position he occupied at the time (about the 1st of July) prompted him to advise me to defer for awhile my visit to Mexico. He said that the expedition to Matamoros was being organized and the happy termination of it together with the expected pacification of the different States of the Empire would place him in a position to act favourably to us. He therefore hoped that I would not by going to Mexico put him to the disagreeable necessity of eluding official intercourse with our government till his own troubles are removed.

I considered the response as equivalent to a refusal to receive me officially and determined to return to the Confederacy. On the 10th of October I wrote to Mr Ford & Mr Helm directing the former

to join me here for that purpose. I suppose he received the order on his arrival in Havana about the 1st November

I regretted to find that the views expressed by me in my letters to the Marquis de Montholon and General Almonte are disapproved and considered in violation of instructions.

By my original instructions I was directed to proceed to Mexico and "to endeavour to ascertain unofficially whether I would be at once received as the Envoy of an independent government" For this purpose I would have gone to Mexico in person but for the affront to Mr Slidell in Paris by the Emperor. Mr Slidell wrote to me and I determined not to prosecute the journey unless assured of a proper official reception. I did not desire to have the slightest official connexion with the Mexican government if a second rebuff were likely to be given to any friendly overtures and for that reason sent forward Mr Ford with private letters to the Marquis de Montholon and General Almonte and made other arrangements to ascertain whether I would be promptly and officially received. The letters were private and confidential and addressed to two eminent men acquaintances in former years and requiring a very delicate service considering their relations to the government. They were written not for the purpose of embodying any official instructions or defining their limits or the terms upon which friendly relations between the two countries would be established but simply to learn whether there was any misapprehension and whether I would be officially received as the Chief of a Mission from the Confederate States

Such is the construction evidently put upon the letters by the Emperor Maximilian. The Marquis de Montholon informed me in the message he sent me that "Maximilian expressed the greatest desire to receive me officially etc". This in itself by the well understood principles of national law is recognition and precisely the sort of recognition that I was instructed and still consider myself instructed to ask

The reception of a diplomatic agent of one State by another is recognition and to send a Minister is to ask recognition. The only difference in my case was the provisional government of Mexico took the initiative by intimating that a Minister should be sent and that is distinctly set forth in my letters. Assuredly I never thought that I was asking solemn formal and express recognition for the Confederate States as contradistinguished from the implied recognition resulting from the reception of a Minister officially, nor do I apprehend that any different view will be taken of it nor has any other yet been taken of it by the Emperor even were the letters considered official

But the letters were not official but on their face "private & confidential" and merely invoking a friendly service. It is assumed that they were shewn to the Emperor's Minister. They were not prepared for such a purpose but to furnish information to the two gentlemen of the general purpose of the Mission and the facts connected with it and to ascertain whether I would or would not be officially received. They

were not written with my official instructions before me or to define the technical features that characterize them.

It seems to be apprehended that they have so complicated the matters that the communication directed by despatch No. 6. may be inapplicable

I have not yet heard details but I confidently hope that they have interposed no embarrassments to the clear and forcible course indicated in that despatch. If otherwise I will deeply regret their effect

I respectfully submit to the Department that it is not usual to consider private letters or any non official communication as violating instructions or creating any pledge or or obligations in such cases

It is assumed that they must of course have been shewn to the Emperor's Minister but I have no reason to think that such is the case. General Almonte wrote to me that he had reported their contents to the government. This is precisely what I expected him to do, and what I presume the Marquis de Montholon has done

I am informed that it would have been preferable to have represented myself as authorized on our part to recognize the New Empire and therefore disposed to continue my voyage

If it be considered that the Emperor had refused to receive Mr Slidell doubtless from fear of implied recognition; and had just refused to include the Confederate States in the customary letters announcing his accession to the throne to the governments with which he claimed desired to cultivate friendly relations it would have put my government in the attitude of proposing to recognize a government which was refusing to recognize it

The Department seems to be under the impression that no provision was made for the execution of its orders when Mr Fearn left Havana but I suppose Mr Helm has informed it that arrangements were made for the immediate transmission of any instructions or orders and that Mr Ford received his instructions as rapidly as the mails permitted

In leaving Havana I did so under the impression that my time might be as profitably employed in visiting Europe and in seeing Mr Slidell and Mr Mason as by remaining there. My family had been forced to leave Kentucky suddenly by the orders of the Federal generals and I trusted it would not be unreasonable if after having been separated from them by three years of constant service, if I should visit them for a few weeks on my return when it involved no delay prejudicial to

the public service. If the answer Mr Ford brings is favourable no greater interval of time will have been lost than that required to transmit the information and for me to reach Havana and if unfavourable I am at the best point to return

I have the honor to remain

Your obt servt. W. Preston
B Genl &
Env Ext etc

Hon J P Benjamin
& &

Original sent by Sidney T. Rogers on Steamer "Old Dominion"
13th Nov 1864

Duplicate sent by George W Henry, Esq on 'Charlotte' for
Wilmington 17 Nov 1864

XXX Received letter from W. Fearn of 12 Nov. 64 from London, advising me he would go to Bermuda on the "Maud Campbell", direct on the 19th, or via Halifax, on the boat leaving Liverpool the 26th for Halifax - 25.Nov/64. W.P.

Halifax 25. Nov. 1864

My dear Sir.

x x x x x x x x x x

If he (Mr Fearn) does not come here I think I will leave here on the next Bermuda Steamer, leaving here on the 10th and reaching there say the 13-14 Dec.

x x x x x Considering the circumstances
you are therefore directed:

If the response be satisfactory, write to me at once to this place, and under cover to Thomas E. Taylor, Bermuda, and A. W. White & Co, S. Thomas, advising me of the fact, and I will go on to Mexico, while you remain in Havana, holding yourself ready to join me, on my arrival, or for further instructions; if the response is unsatisfactory, you will come on to Bermuda, and if you do not hear of me further there, then to this place, bringing Somerville, baggage, papers, etc., so that you can return with me at once to the Confederacy

Believe me

Yours truly

Mr. R. T. Ford.
x x

W. Preston
B. Genl. P.A.C.S.
Envy. Ext etc

Extracts from letter to Mr. R. T. Ford, sent by Capt. Hamilton,
C. S. A. on 'Acadia, 26 Nov. for Nassau & Havana

Halifax 29 Nov. 1864

My dear Helm.

I received yesterday your letters of the 5th Nov from Havana, by the Bermuda Steamer, and was greatly disappointed in not finding Mr Ford, in person, on the boat, or a satisfactory invitation for me to proceed on my journey

I hoped by delaying here from the 10th to the 29th to get a definite answer, more readily than by attempting to go forward, which might and probably would be fruitless and must have involved much delay, and when joined by Mr. Ford & Somerville to return at once from Halifax to Wilmington.

The season is now becoming so far advanced that the boats are shifting to Bermuda for the winter, and I will be compelled to go there to get a passage.

I wrote to you and Mr. Ford on the 10th Nov. assigning my reasons for remaining here sending some directions. I presume you have received the letters by this time.

On the 10th of Nov I directed Mr Ford as follows:

"I will remain here etc. etc. etc. to S. A. White & Co.
Halifax" - see pages 135 136 ante *

I now wish Mr Ford to pursue these directions without delay, and, if the answer is unsatisfactory, to come on at once to Bermuda with Somerville, papers, etc. He will find me and W. Fearn there waiting for him; or further orders ~~for~~ with Major Black or Major Walker, or the C. S. Agent at St. George's. I do not desire him to go to Nassau as he would miss me

I feel reluctant to go forward toward Mexico, or to Havana, and lose time, unless on clear information. Major Walker thinks I would economize time greatly, by pursuing the course I have adopted.

With many thanks for your kind and intelligent attention to my requests and for your promptitude and despatch

Believe me.

truly yours

W. Preston
B General P.A.C.S.
Env. Ext. etc

Charles J Helm Esq
Havana

Tell Mr. Ford to enquire for me:
At S. Thomas of A. W. White & Co.
" Bermuda: of Thos. E. Taylor, S George's, or Maj. Black
" Halifax of B. Wier & Co.
Sent from Bermuda 20 Dec. 64

See ante page 67*

		The Confederate States of America			
		To William Preston, Env. Ext etc. Dr.			
1864					
April	7	To amount paid for contingencies See ante p 67	\$	806	15
		To B May, Stationery		19	80
		To A.N.T. Beauregard		400	00
June	9	To W. Fearn, pay & subsistence of Somerville		82	00
"	9	" " " postage etc		41	15
"	12	To T. Somerville, acct		34	47
1864					
Jany	11	By cash from Hon J. P. Benjamin	4	200	00
Aug ^t	25	By do from Fraser, Trenholm & Co, on Contingent Acct		750	00

*Refer to Page 30 - Transcription.

Bermuda, 14 January 1865

Hon. J. P. Benjamin
Secretary of State

Sir.

Announcing
return to the
Confederacy.-

Mr. R. T. Ford reached this place on the 27th ultimo from Mexico by way of Havana. The absence of the Emperor from his capital, caused the Foreign Secretary to ask that the answer to the communication might be deferred until his return. Having remained a week after the return of the Emperor, without receiving a reply, Mr. Ford left the city, reached Havana on the 5th ultimo and came on by the first steamer. I had come thus far a fortnight before and halted, anticipating the arrival of Mr. Ford, in order to return to the Confederacy.

The attack on Wilmington has prevented vessels from going to that port. I send this by the "Charlotte" and intend to leave here four days hence, via the "Chameleon", Capt. Wilkinson, in which vessel, for certain reasons I have decided to return.

I have the honour to remain

Your obdt. Servt.

Nassau, N. P. 31 January 1865

Sir.

I have to inform you that I left Bermuda on the 19th ultimo and arrived off Wilmington the night of the 22d, but finding both entrances in possession of the enemy, the vessel came here.

Capt. Ford who had been sent on the "Charlotte" a few days before me, has not since been heard from, and I fear he has been captured.

I expect to leave here for Charleston to-morrow on the Chameleon, Capt. Wilkinson.

This is sent forward by the Hon. C. C. Clay who is to leave this evening or to-morrow.

I have the honour to be

Your obedt. Svt.

Almonte, His Excel. Genl. "Letter to" folios 50 to 54 (21 to 23)*
Account of Contingent Expenses for 1st quarter of Legation
folio 67. (27)

Benjamin Hon. J. P. (Despatch from) 91 (42)

* Note: Numbers in parenthesis are Transcription Page Numbers.

Benjamin, Hon J. P.	"Despatch" No 1.	folios 1 to 5	(1 to 2)
Benjamin, Hon. J. P.	"Despatch No 2."	" 13 to 15.	(5)
Benjamin, Hon. J P.	"Despatch No 3."	" 22 & 23.	(8)
Benjamin, Hon. J. P.	"Despatch No 4."	" 29 to 31.	(11 to 12)
Benjamin, Hon. J. P.	"Despatch No 5."	" 32 to 38.	(12 to 15)
Benjamin, Hon. J. P.	"Despatch No. 6."	" 39 to 41.	(16)
Benjamin, Hon. J. P.	"Despatch No 7"	" 55 to 62.	(23 to 27)
Benjamin, Hon J. P.	Despatch No. 8.	" 86 to 90.	(39 to 41)
Benjamin, Hon. J. P.	Despatch No 9	" 98.	(45)
Benjamin, Hon. J. P.	Despatch No 10	" 99.101	(46 to 47)
Benjamin Hon. J. P.	Despatch No 11	" 105.	(50)

Beauregard Esq "Letter of Instructions" folio 48 & 49. (20)
 Beauregard Capt. "Letter to" 109. (52)

Despatch No 1 to Hon. J. P. Benjamin	folio 1 to 5.	(1 to 2)
Despatch No to Hon John Slidell	" 7 to 10.	(3 to 4)
Despatch No 2 to Hon J. P. Benjamin	" 13 to 15.	((5)
Despatch No 3. to " " " "	" 22 & 23.	(8)
Despatch No 4. " " " " "	" 29 to 31.	(11 to 12)
Despatch No 5. " " " " "	" 32 to 38.	(12 to 15)
Despatch No 6. " " " " "	" 39 to 41.	(16)
Despatch No 7. " " " " "	" 55 to 62.	(23 to 27)
Davis President (Private letter to)	" 81 to 91.	(36 to 39)
Despatch No 5 from Hon J. P. Benjamin	91.	(42)

Farrow, E. H. Esq. "Letter to." folio 11 (4)
Fraser, Trenholm & Co. "Letter to" folio 21. (7)
Fraser, Trenholm & Co. "Letter to" " 28 (11)
Ford Capⁿ "Letter to" folio 68. (31)
Ford Capⁿ "Letter to" " 70. (32)
Ford Capⁿ "Letter to" " 94. (43 to 44)
Fearn Capt "order to" " 97. (45)
Ford Capt "Letter to" " 106. (50 to 51)

Hottingeur & Co "Letter to" 19 & 20. (7)
Hottingeur & Co "Letter to" 26. (10)
Hottingeur & Co "Copy of bill of Exchange" 27 (10)

Gwin Hon. W. M. "letter to" folio 93. (43)

Marquis de Montholon. "Letter to" folios 63 to 66 (28 to 29)
Memorandum of instructions given to Dr Gwin 72. (33)

President Davis. "Letter to" folios 45 to 47. (18 to 19)

Quintero John A. "Letter to" folios 24, & 25. (9)

Slidell. Hon. John. "Despatch No" folios 7. to 10. (3 to 4)
Slidell. Hon. John. "Letter to" " 16 to 19. (6)
Slidell. Hon. John. "Letter to" " 42 to 44. (17 to 18)
Special order T. Sommerville to report to Maj J. Helm 110. (52)

1

2