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## LETTER FROM EX-PRESIDENT BUCHANAN.

### Review of the Last Four Months of his Administration.

### REPLY TO LIEUT. GENERAL SCOTT.

The National Intelligencer publishes a letter from ex-President Buchanan, wherein he defends his conduct during the last months of his Administration. The letter is in Reply to General Scott's letter recently published. The Intelligencer says:

"In the paper now placed before our readers the venerable ex-President shows that he was not unmindful of the obligations placed upon him by trying events through which he was compelled to pass in the closing months of the administration, and he clearly states the considerations of public duty under which he acted, as also the limits within which he had power to act at all. At the same time he places in a clear light some facts which, from the commanding position he then held at the head of affairs, he is able to present in a collocation that redeems his conduct from certain misapprehensions which may have been entertained at the time by observers less cognizant of all the circumstances which made up 'the situation,' as well civil as military, at the outbreak of secession.

LETTER FROM EX-PRESIDENT BUCHANAN.

*To the Editors of the National Intelligencer:*

—On Wednesday last I received the National Intelligencer containing General Scott's address to the public. This is a throughout an unsparing censure of my conduct during the last months of my administration in regard to the seven Cotton States now in rebellion. From our past relations I was greatly surprised at the appearance of such a paper. In one aspect, however, it was highly gratifying. It has justified me, I may say, it has rendered it absolutely necessary that I should no longer remain silent in respect to charges which have been long vaguely circulating, but are now endorsed by the responsible name of Gen. Scott.

I. The first and most prominent among these charges is my refusal immediately to garrison nine enumerated fortifications scattered over six of the Southern States, according to the recommendation of General Scott in his 'views' addressed to the War Department on the 29th and 30th of October, 1860. And it has even been alleged that if this had been done it might have prevented the civil war.

This refusal is attributed without the least cause to the influence of Governor Floyd.—All my cabinet must bear me witness that I was the President myself, responsible for all the acts of the administration; and I can conscientiously say that during the last six months previous to the 29th of December, 1860, (the day on which he resigned his office, after my request,) he exerted less influence on the administration than any other member of the cabinet. Mr. Holt was immediately thereafter transferred from the Post-office Department to that of War, so that from this time until the 4th of March, 1861, which was by far the most important period of the administration, he performed the duties of Secretary of War to my entire satisfaction.

But why did I not immediately garrison these nine fortifications in such a manner, to use the language of Gen. Scott, as to make any attempt to take any one of them by surprise or coup-de-main ridiculous? There is one answer, both easy and conclusive, even if other valid reasons were wanting. There were no available troops within reach which could be sent to these fortifications. To have attempted a military operation on a scale so extensive by any means within the President's power would have been simply absurd. Of this Gen. Scott himself seems to have been convinced, for on the day after the date of his first 'views,' he addressed (on the 30th of October) supplemental views to the War Department, in which he states: "There is one (regular) company in Boston, one here (at the Narrows,) one at Pittsburg, one at Agusta, Ga., one at Baton Rouge"—in all five companies only within reach to garrison or reinforce the forts mentioned in the 'views.'

Five companies—four hundred men—to occupy and reinforce nine fortifications in six highly excited Southern States!—The force 'within reach' was so entirely inadequate that nothing more need be said on the subject. To have attempted such a military operation with so feeble a force, and the Presidential election impending, would have been an invitation to collision and secession. Indeed if the whole American army, consisting then of only sixteen thousand men, had been 'within reach,' they would have been scarcely sufficient for this purpose.—Such was our want of troops that although Gen. Scott, believing, in opposition to the opinion of the committee raised in the House of Representatives, that the inauguration of Mr. Lincoln might be interrupted by military force, was only able to assemble at Washington, so late as the 4th March, six hundred and fifty-three men, rank and file of the army. And, to make up this army, even the sappers and miners were brought from West Point.

But why was there no greater force within reach? This question could be better answered by General Scott himself than by any other person. Our small regular army, with the exception of a few hundred men, were out of reach, on our remote frontiers, where it had been continuously stationed for years, to protect the inhabitants and the emigrants on their way thither against the attacks of hostile Indians. All were insufficient, and both Gen. Scott and myself had endeavored in vain to prevail upon Congress to raise several additional regiments for this purpose.—In recommending this augmentation of the army, the General states in his report to the War Department of Nov, 1857, that 'it would not more than furnish the reinforcements now greatly needed in Florida, Texas, New Mexico, California, Oregon, Washington, (T.) Kansas, Nebraska, Minnesota, having not a company for Utah." And again, in his report of Nov. 1858, he says:

"This want of troops to give reasonable security to our citizens in distant settlements, including emigrants on the plains, can scarcely be too strongly stated; but I will only add that as often as we have been obliged to withdraw troops from one frontier in order to reinforce another, the weakened points have been instantly attacked or threatened with formidable invasion."

These "views" of General Scott exhibit the crude notions then prevailing even among intelligent and patriotic men on this subject of secession. In the first sentence the general, whilst stating that, "to save time, the right of secession may be conceded," yet immediately says, "this is instantly balanced by the correlative right on the part of the Federal government against an *interior* State or States to reestablish by force, if necessary, its former continuity of territory." (For this he cites 'Paley's Moral and Political Philosophy, last chapter.') It may be there, but I have been unable to find it. Whilst it is difficult to ascertain his precise meaning in this passage, he renders what he did not mean quite clear in his supplementary 'views.' In these he says: "It will be seen that the 'views' only apply to a case of secession that makes a *gap* in the present Union.

The falling off say of Texas, or of all the Atlantic States from the Potomac south, (the very case which had occurred,) was not within the scope of General Scott's 'provisional remedies;' that is to say, to re-establish by force, if necessary, the continuity of our territory. In his 'views' he also states as follows:—"But break the glorious Union by whatever line or lines that political madness may contrive, and there would be no hope of reuniting the fragments except by the laceration and despotism of the sword. To effect such result the intestine wars of our Mexican neighbors would, in comparison with ours, sink into mere child's play." In the General's opinion, "a smaller evil (than these intestine wars) would be to allow the fragments of the great republic to form themselves into new confederacies, probably four."

He then points out what ought to be the boundaries between the new Unions, and at the end of each gives a figure to indicate the cities which ought to be the capitals of the three first on this side of the Rocky Mountains, to wit: "Columbia, South Carolina,' 'Alton, or Quincy, Ill.,' and 'Albany, New York,' excluding Washington city altogether. This indication of capitals contained in the original, now in my possession, is curiously omitted in the versions published in the National Intelligencer. He designates no capital for the fourth Union on the Pacific. The reader will judge what encouragement these views, proceeding from so distinguished a source, must have afforded to secessionists of the cotton States.

I trust I have said enough and more than enough, to convince every mind why I did not, with a force of five companies, attempt to reinforce Forts Jackson and St. Philip on the Mississippi; Fort Morgan, below Mobile; Forts Pickens and McRea, in Pensacola harbor; Fort Pulaski, below Savannah; Forts Moultrie and Sumter, Charleston harbor and Fort Monroe, in Virginia.

These 'views,' both original and supplementary, were published by General Scott in the National Intelligencer of January 18th, 1861, at the most important and critical period of the administration. Their publication at that time could do no possible good, and might do much harm. To have published them without the President's knowledge and consent, was as much in violation of the social confidence which ought to prevail between the Commanding General of the Army and the Commander in Chief, as it would have been for the Secretary of War to publish the same documents without his authority. What is of more importance, their publication was calculated injuriously to affect the compromise measures then pending before Congress and the country, and to encourage the secessionists in their mad and wicked attempt to shatter the Union into fragments.—From the great respect which I then entertained for the General, I passed it over in silence.

It is worthy of remark, that soon after the Presidential election, representations of what these 'views' contained, of more or less correctness, were unfortunately circulated, especially throughout the South. The editors of the National Intelligencer, in assigning a reason for the publication, state that both in public prints and public speeches allusions had been made to them, and some misapprehensions of their character had got abroad.

II. and III. Gen Scott states that he arrived in Washington on the 12th, and, accompanied by the Secretary of War, held a conversation with the President on the 15th of December. Whilst I have no recollection whatever of this conversation, he doubtlessly states correctly that I did refuse to send three hundred men to reinforce Major Anderson at Fort Moultrie, who had not then removed to Fort Sumter. The reason for this refusal is manifest to all who recollect the history of the time. But twelve days before, in the annual message of the 3d of December, I had urged upon Congress the adoption of amendments to the constitution of the same character with those subsequently proposed by Mr. Crittenden, called the 'Crittenden compromise.' At the time high hopes were entertained throughout the country that these would be adopted. Besides, I believed, and this correctly, as the event proved, that Major Anderson was then in no danger of an attack. Indeed, he and his command was then treated with marked kindness by the authorities and people of Charleston. Under these circumstances, to have sent such a force there would have been only to impair the hope of compromise, to provoke collision and disappoint the country.

There are some details of this conversation in regard to which the General's memory must be defective. At present I shall specify only one. I could not have stated that on a future contingent occasion I would telegraph 'Major Anderson at Fort Moultrie, to hold the forts (Moultrie and Sumter) against attack;' because, with prudent precaution, this had already been done several days before through a special messenger sent to Major Anderson for this very purpose. I refer to Major Buell, of the army.

The General's supplementary note of the same day, presenting to me General Jackson's conduct in 1833, during the period of nullification, as an example, requires no special notice. Even if the cases were not entirely different, I had previously determined upon a policy of my own as will appear from my annual message. This was, at every hazard to collect the customs at Charleston, and outside of the port, if need be, in a vessel of war.—Mr. Colcock, the existing collector, as I had anticipated, resigned his office about the end of December, and immediately thereafter I nominated to the Senate, as his successor, a suitable person, prepared at any personal risk to do his duty. That body, however, throughout its entire session, declined to act on this nomination. Thus, without a collector, it was rendered impossible to collect the revenue.

IV. General Scott's statement alleges that 'the Brooklyn, with Captain Vodges' company alone, left the Chesapeake for Fort Pickens about January 22d, and on the 29th President Buchanan, having entered into a quasi armistice with certain leading seceders at Pensacola and elsewhere, caused Secretaries Holt and Toucey to instruct, in a joint note, the commanders of the war vessels off Pensacola and Lieut. Slemmer, commanding Fort Pickens, to commit no act of hostility, and not to land Capt. Vodges' company unless the fort should be attacked.' He afterwards states within brackets, 'That joint note I never saw, but suppose the armistice was consequent upon the meeting of the Peace convention at Washington, and was understood to terminate with it.'

The statements here alleged was a lapse of memory on the part of Gen. Scott. It is scarcely credible that this very joint note, presented in such odious colors, was submitted to General Scott on the day it was prepared, (29th January,) and met his entire approbation. I would not venture to make this assertion if I did not possess conclusive evidence to prove it.—On that day Secretary Holt addressed me a note, from which the following is an extract: *'I have the satisfaction of saying that on submitting the paper to General Scott he expressed himself satisfied with it, saying that there could be no objection to the arrangement in a military point of view or otherwise.'* This requires no comment. That the General had every reason to be satisfied with the arrangement will appear from the following statement:

A revolutionary outbreak had occurred in Florida; the troops of the United States had been expelled from Pensacola and the adjacent navy yard; and Lieutenant Slemmer, of the artillery, with his brave little command, had been forced to take refuge in Fort Pickens, where he was in imminent danger every moment of being captured by a vastly superior force. Owing to the interruption of regular communications, Secretary Holt did not receive information of these events until several days after their occurrence, and then through a letter addressed to a third person. He instantly informed the President of the fact, and reinforcements, provisions and military stores were dispatched by the Brooklyn to Fort Pickens without a moment's unnecessary delay. She left Fortress Monroe on the 24th of January.

Well founded apprehensions were, however, entertained at the time of her departure that the reinforcements, with the vessels of war at no great distance from Fort Pickens, could not arrive in time to defend it against the impending attack.—In this state of suspense, and whilst Lieut. Slemmer was in extreme peril, Senators Slidell, Hunter and Bigler received a telegraphic dispatch from Senator Mallory, of Florida, dated at Pensacola, on the 28th January, with the urgent request that they should lay it before the President.—This dispatch expressed an earnest desire to maintain the peace, as well as the most positive assurance that no attack would be made on Fort Pickens if the present status should be preserved.

This proposal was carefully considered, both with a view to the safety of the fort and to the unhappy effect which an actual collision either at that or any other point might produce on the peace convention, then about to assemble at Washington. The result was that a joint dispatch was carefully prepared by the Secretaries of War and Navy, accepting the proposal, with important modifications, which was transmitted by telegraph on the 29th of January to Lieutenant Slemmer and to the naval commanders near the station. It is too long for transcription; suffice it to say, it was carefully guarded at every point for the security of the fort and its free communication with Washington.

The result was highly fortunate. The Brooklyn had a long passage. Although she left fortress Monroe on the 24th January, she did not arrive at Pensacola until the 6th February. In the meantime Fort Pickens, with Lieut. Slemmer (whose conduct deserves high commendation) and his brave little band, were placed, by virtue of this arrangement, in perfect security until an adequate force had arrived to defend it against any attack. The fort is still in our possession. Well might Gen. Scott have expressed his satisfaction with this arrangement. The General was correct in his supposition that this arrangement was to expire on the termination of the Peace Convention.

V. But we now come to an important period, when there will be essentially necessary to disentangle the statement of Gen. Scott. The South Carolina Commissioners were appointed on the 22d, and arrived in Washington on the 27th December. The day after their arrival it was announced that Major Anderson had removed from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter. This rendered them furious. On the same day they addressed an angry letter to the President demanding the surrender of Fort Sumter. The President answered this letter on the 30th December by a peremptory refusal. This brought forth a reply from the Commissioners on the 2d of January, 1861, of such an insulting character that the President instantly returned it to them with the following endorsement: "This paper, just presented to the President, is of such a character that he declines to receive it." From that time forward all friendly, political and personal intercourse finally ceased between the revolutionary Senators and the President, and he was severely attacked by them in the Senate, and especially by Mr. Jefferson Davis. Indeed, their intercourse had previously been of the coldest character ever since the President's anti-secession message at the commencement of the session of Congress.

Under these changed circumstances Gen. Scott, by note on Sunday, 30th Dec., addressed the following inquiry to the President:

"Will the President permit Gen. Scott, without reference to the War Department, and otherwise as secretly as possible, to send two hundred and fifty recruits from New York harbor to reinforce Fort Sumter, together with some extra muskets or rifles, ammunition and subsistence? It is hoped that a sloop of war and cutter may be ordered for the same purpose to-morrow.'"

The General seems not to have then known that Mr. Floyd was out of office.

Never did a request meet a more prompt compliance. It was received on Sunday evening, December 30th. On Monday morning I gave instructions to the War and Navy Departments, and on Monday evening Gen. Scott came to congratulate me that the secretaries had issued the necessary orders to the army and navy officers, and that they were in his possession. The Brooklyn, with troops, military stores and provisions, was to sail forthwith from Fortress Monroe to Fort Sumter. I am, therefore, utterly at a loss to imagine why the General, in his statement, should have asserted that 'the South Carolina Commissioners had already been many days in Washington and no movement of defense (on the part of the United States) was permitted.' These commissioners arrived in Washington on the 27th December; Gen. Scott's request was made to the President on the 30th. It was complied with on the 31st, and a single day is all that represents the "many days" of the General.

Again, General Scott asserts, in the face of these facts, that the President refused to allow any attempt to be made to reinforce Fort Sumter—because he was holding negotiations with the South Carolina Commissioners. And still again, that 'afterwards Secretary Holt and myself endeavored, in vain, to obtain a ship of war for the purpose, and were finally obliged to employ the passenger steamer "Star of the West."' Will it be believed that the substitution of the "Star of the West" for the powerful war steamer Brooklyn, of which he now complains, was by the advice of Gen. Scott himself? I have never heard this doubted until I read the statement.

At the interview already referred to between the General and myself, on the evening of Monday, the 31st of December, I suggested to him that, although I had not received the South Carolina Commissioners in their official capacity, but merely as private gentlemen, yet it might be considered an improper act to send the Brooklyn with reinforcements to Fort Sumter until I had received an answer from them to my letter of the preceding day; that the delay could not continue more than forty-eight hours. He promptly concurred in this suggestion as gentlemanly and proper, and the orders were not transmitted to the Brooklyn on that evening. My anticipations were correct, for on the morning of the 2d of January I received their insolent note and sent it back to them. In the meantime, however, the General had become convinced, by the representations of a gentleman whom I forbear to name, that the better plan, as the Secretaries of War and the Navy informed me, to secure secrecy and success and reach the fort, would be to send a fast side-wheel mercantile steamer from New York with the reinforcement. Accordingly the "Star of the West" was selected for the duty. The substitution of this mercantile steamer for the Brooklyn, which would have been able to defend herself in case of attack, was reluctantly yielded by me to the high military judgment of General Scott.

The change of programme required a short space of time, but the Star of the West left New York for Charleston on the evening of the 5th January. On the very day, however, when this ill fated steamer left New York, a telegram was despatched by General Scott to Colonel Scott to countermand her departure but it did not reach its destination until after she had gone to sea. The reason for this countermand shall be stated in the language of Secretary Holt, to be found in a letter addressed by him to Mr. Thompson, the late Secretary of the Interior, on the 5th March, 1861, and published in the National Intelligencer. Mr. Holt says:

"The countermand spoken of (by Mr. Thompson) was not more cordially sanctioned by the President than it was by General Scott and myself; not because of any dissent from the order on the part of the President, but because of a letter received that day from Major Anderson, stating, in effect, that he regarded himself secure in his position; and yet more from intelligence which late on Saturday evening (5th January, 1861,) reached the Department that a heavy battery had been erected among the sand hills, at the entrance to Charleston harbor, which would probably destroy any unarmed vessel (and such was the Star of the West) which might attempt to make its way to Fort Sumter. This important information satisfied the government that there was no present necessity for sending reinforcements, and that when sent they should go, not in a vessel of commerce, but of war. Hence the countermand was despatched by telegraph to New York; but the vessel had sailed a short time before it reached the officer (Col. Scott) to whom it was addressed."

A statement of these facts established by dates, proves conclusively that the President was not only willing but anxious at the briefest period to reinforce Fort Sumter.

On the 4th of January, the day before the departure of the Star of the West from New York, as Gen. Scott in his statement admits, succor was sent to Fort Taylor, Key West, and to Fort Jefferson, Tortugas Island, which rendered these points in time for their security. He nevertheless speculates on the consequences which might have followed had the reinforcements not reached their destination in due time; and even suggests the extraordinary opinion that with the possession of these forts "the rebels might have purchased an early recognition."

I shall next advert to the statement that the expedition under Captain Ward, 'of three or four small steamers belonging to the coast survey, was kept back by something like a truce or armistice (made here,) embracing Charleston and Pensacola harbors, agreed upon between the President and certain principal seceders of South Carolina, Florida, Louisiana &c.—And this truce lasted to the end of the administration.' Things altogether distinct in their nature are often so blended in this statement that it is difficult to separate them. Such is eminently the case in connecting Charleston with Pensacola.

Having already treated of the charge of having kept back reinforcements from Pensacola, I shall now say something of the charge of having also kept them back from Charleston. Neither a truce, nor quasi truce, nor anything like it, was ever concluded between the President and any human authority concerning Charleston. On the contrary, the South Carolina Commissioners, first and last, and all the time, were informed that the President could never surrender Fort Sumter, nor deprive himself of the most entire liberty to send reinforcements to it whenever it was believed to be in danger, or requested by Major Anderson. It is strange that Gen. Scott was not apprised of this well known fact. It was then, with some astonishment that I learned from the statement of the General that he had, on the 12th of March, 1861, advised that Major Anderson should be instructed to evacuate the fort as soon as suitable transportation could be procured to carry himself and his command to New York. A military necessity for a capitulation may have existed in case there should be an attack upon the fort or a demand for its surrender, but surely none such could have existed for its voluntary surrender and abandonment.

Probably that to which the General meant to refer was not the same but the actual truce of arms concluded at Charleston on the 11th of January, 1861, between Gov. Pickens and Major Anderson, without the knowledge of the President. It was on the 9th of January that the Star of the West, under the American flag, was fired upon in the harbor of Charleston by order of Gov. Pickens. Immediately after this outrage Major Anderson sent a flag to the Governor stating that he presumed the act had been unauthorized, and for that reason he had not opened fire from Fort Sumter on the adjacent batteries; but demanding its disavowal, and, if this were not given in a reasonable time he would consider it war, and fire on any vessels that attempted to leave the harbor.

Two days after this occurrence, on the 11th January, Governor Pickens had the audacity to demand of Major Anderson the surrender of the fort. In his answer of the same date the Major made the following proposition: "Should your Excellency deem fit, previous to a resort to arms, to refer this matter to Washington, it would afford me the sincerest pleasure to depute one of my officers to accompany any messenger you may deem proper to be the bearer of your demand." This proposition was promptly accepted by the Governor and, in pursuance thereof, he sent on his part Hon. J. W. Hayne, the Attorney General of South Carolina, to Washington, whilst Major Anderson deputed Lieut. Hall, of the United States army, to accompany him. These gentlemen arrived together in Washington on the evening of the 13th of January, when the President obtained the first knowledge of the transaction. But it will be recollected that no time intervened between the return of the Star of the West to New York and the arrival of the messenger bearing a copy of the truce at Washington within which it would have been possible to send reinforcements to Fort Sumter.—Both events occurred about the same time.

Thus a truce, or suspension of arms, was concluded between the parties, to continue until the question of the surrender of the fort should be decided by the President. Until this decision Major Anderson had placed it out of his own power to ask for reinforcements, and equally out of the power of the government to send them without a violation of public faith. This was what writers on public law denominate "a partial truce under which hostilities are suspended only in certain places, as between a town and the army besieging it."

It is possible that the President, under the laws of war, might have annulled this truce upon due notice to the opposite party; but neither General Scott nor any other person ever suggested this expedient. This would have been to cast a reflection on Major Anderson, who, beyond question, acted from the highest and purest motives. Did General Scott ever propose to violate this truce during its existence? If he did, I am not now, and never was, aware of the fact. Indeed, I think he would have been one of the last men in the world to propose such a measure.

Colonel Hayne did not deliver the letter which he bore from Governor Pickens, demanding the surrender of the fort, to the President until the 31st of January. The documents containing the reasons for this worrying delay, were communicated to Congress in a special message on the 8th of February, to which I refer the reader. On the 6th of February, the Secretary of War, under the instructions of the President, gave a peremptory refusal to this demand in an able and comprehensive letter, reviewing the whole subject, explaining and justifying the conduct of the President throughout. Its concluding sentence is both eloquent and emphatic:

"If (says Mr. Holt) with all the multiplied proofs which exist of the President's anxiety for peace, and of the earnestness with which he has pursued it, the authorities of that State shall assault Fort Sumter and imperil the lives of the handful of brave and loyal men shut up within its walls, and thus plunge our country into the horrors of civil war, then upon them, and those they represent, must rest the responsibility."

The truce was then ended, and General Scott is incorrect in stating "that it lasted to the end of that administration."

An expedition was quietly fitted out at New York, under the supervision of Gen. Scott, to be ready for any contingency.—He arranged its details, and regarded the reinforcements thus provided as sufficient. This was ready to sail for Fort Sumter on five hours' notice. It is of this [illegible]

"At that time, when it (the truce) had passed away, Secretaries Holt and Toucey, Capt. Ward of the navy, and myself, with the knowledge of the President, settled upon the employment, under the Captain, of three or four steamers belonging to the Coast Survey, but he was kept back by the truce."

A strange inconsistency. The truce had expired with Mr. Holt's letter to Colonel Hayne on the 5th of February, and Gen. Scott, in his statement says, "it would have been easy to reinforce this fort down to about the 12th of February." Why, then, did not the reinforcements proceed? This was simply because of communications from Major Anderson. It was most fortunate that they did not proceed; because the three or four small steamers which were to bear them would never have reached the fort, and in the attempt must have been captured or destroyed. The vast inadequacy of the force provided to accomplish the object was demonstrated by information received from Major Anderson at the War department on the last day of the administration.

I purposely forbear at present to say more on this subject, lest I might, however unintentionally, do injustice to one or more of the parties concerned, in consequence of the brevity required by the nature of this communication. The fact relating to it, with the appropriate accompaniments, have been fully presented in a historical review, prepared a year ago, which will ere long be published. This review contains a sketch of the last four months of my administration. It is impartial; at least such is my honest conviction. That it has not yet been published has arisen solely from an apprehension, no longer entertained, that something therein might be perverted into an interference with the government in a vigorous prosecution of the war for the maintenance of the constitution and the restoration of the Union, which was far, very far, from my intention.

After a careful retrospect, I can solemnly declare, before my God and my country, that I cannot reproach myself with any act of omission or commission since the existing troubles commenced. I have never doubted that my countrymen would yet do me justice. In my special message of the 8th of January, 1861, I presented a full and fair exposition of the alarming condition of the country, and urged Congress either to adopt measures of compromise, or, failing in this, to prepare for the last alternative. In both respects my recommendation was disregarded. I shall close this document with a quotation of the last sentences of that message, as follows:

"In conclusion, it may be permitted me to remark that I have often warned my countrymen of the dangers which now surround us. This may be the last time I shall refer to the subject officially. I feel that my duty has been faithfully, though it may be imperfectly, performed, and whatever the result may be, I shall carry to my grave the consciousness that I at least meant well for my country."

Your obedient servant,

JAMES BUCHANAN.

Wheatland, near Lancaster, Oct. 24, '62.

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☞If I was to think daily and hourly, and think of nothing else for a thousand years but to cleanse my heart, or root one vice out of it in my own strength, I should be no nearer to it in the end than I was at the beginning.