

# Democrat and Sentinel.

THE BLESSINGS OF GOVERNMENT, LIKE THE DEWS OF HEAVEN, SHOULD BE DISTRIBUTED ALIKE, UPON THE HIGH AND THE LOW, THE RICH AND THE POOR.

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## Letter from Ex-President Buchanan.—His Reply to General Scott.—The Beginning of the Rebellion.

[CONCLUDED.]

II and III. General 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 17th of December. Whilst I have no recollection whatever of this conversation, he doubtless states correctly that I did refuse to send three hundred men to reinforce Major Anderson at Fort Mifflin, 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 the annual message of the 3d 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 that time high hopes were entertained throughout the country that these would be adopted. Besides, I believe, and this corroborated as the event proved, that Major Anderson was then in no danger of an attack. He and his command were 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 inaugurate the hope of compromise, to provoke rebellion 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 to Major Anderson, of Fort Mifflin, to hold the Forts (Moultrie and Sumter) against attack; because, with prudent precaution, this had 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 messages. This was, at every hazard to the customs of Charleston and outside the port, if need be, in a vessel of war. Mr. Calhoun, the existing Collector, who had anticipated, resigned his office at the end of December and, immediately thereafter, I nominated to the Senate his successor, a suitable person, present, at any personal risk, to do his duty. That body, however, throughout its only session, declined to act on this nomination. Thus, without a Collector, it was rendered impossible to collect the duty.

General Scott's statement alleges that the "Brooklyn, with Captain Vodge's company alone, left the Chesapeake for Fort Pickens, about January 22d and, on the 24th, President Buchanan having entered into a quasi armistice with leading chiefs at Pensacola and elsewhere, caused Nicholas Holt and Toucy to instruct, in a joint note, the commander of the war vessels of Pensacola and Lieut. Slemmer, commanding Fort Pickens, to commit no act of hostility and not to land Captain Vodge's company unless the Fort should be attacked." He afterward states, with respect to that joint note, "I never saw it, but suppose the armistice was consequent upon the meeting of the Peace Commission at Washington and was understood to terminate with it."

These statements betray a singular want of memory on the part of General Scott. It is scarcely credible that this joint note, presented in such odious terms, was submitted to General Scott on any day it was prepared, (January 22d) and met his entire approbation. I did not make this assertion if I did not possess conclusive evidence to prove it. I state that Secretary Holt addressed me on the 24th, from which the following is an extract: "I have the satisfaction of saying that on submitting the paper to Gen. Scott he expressed himself satisfied with 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:

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 immediately 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, however, were 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 Sibley, 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 January, to Lieut. 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 dates will be essentially necessary to disentangle the statement of Gen. Scott. The South Carolina Commissioners were appointed on the 27th and arrived in Washington on the 22d December. The day after their arrival it was announced that Major Anderson had removed from Fort Mifflin 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 24th 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 coolest 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, the 30th December, 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, 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 known then 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 for 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 at Washington, and no movement of defence (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 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 General 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 3d 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 secrecy and success and reach the fort, would be to send a fast side-wheel merchandise steamer from New York with the reinforcement. Accordingly the Star of the West was selected for this duty. The substitution of this merchantile steamer for the Brooklyn, which would have been able to defend herself in case of attack, was reluctantly yielded to by me to the high military judgment of General Scott.

The change of the programme required a brief space of time; but the Star of the West left for Charleston on the evening of the 4th of January. On the very day, however, when this ill-fated steamer left New York, a telegram was dispatched by Gen. Scott to Col. 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 of 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 Gen. 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 in 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 General Scott in his statement admits, succor was sent to Fort Taylor, Key West, and to Fort Jefferson, Tortugas Island, which reached 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 expresses 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 Capt. 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 harbor, agreed upon between the late 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 the facts relative to Charleston with Pensacola.

Having already treated of the charge of having kept back the reinforcements from Pensacola, I shall now say something of the charge of having 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 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 means to refer was not the quasi, but the actual truce of arms concluded at Charleston on the 11th of January, 1861, between Governor 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 Governor 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 sent in a reasonable time he would consider it war, and fire on any vessel 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 command." 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 Lieutenant Hall, of the United States Army, to accompany him. These gentlemen arrived together in Washington, and 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 out of his own power to ask for reinforcements, and equally

out of the power of Government to send them without violation of public faith. This was what writers on public law denominate "a partial truce under which hostilities are suspended only in certain places, and 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 Gen. Scott nor any other person 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 Gen. 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.

Col. 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 of the 8th 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 which he has pursued it, the authorities of that State shall assault Fort Sumter and imperil the lives of the handful of the 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 quickly 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 for as sufficient. This was ready to sail for Fort Sumter on five hours' notice. It is of this expedition that General Scott thus speaks:

"At that time, when this (the truce) had passed away, Secretaries Holt and Toucy, Captain 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 General Scott, in his statement, says: "It would have been easy to reinforce the 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 past 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 facts 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 four last 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 unjustly prevented 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 God and my country that I cannot reproach myself with any act of commission or omission since the existing trouble 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 alarming condition of the country, and urged

Congress either to adopt measures of compromise, or, failing in these, to prepare for the last alternative. In both aspects my recommendation was disregarded. I shall close this document with a quotation of the last sentence 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 the grave the consciousness that I at least meant well for my country."

Your obedient servant,  
JAMES BUCHANAN.  
Wheatland, near Lancaster, Oct. 28, 1862

HON. ARCHIBALD M'ALLISTER.—We had the pleasure of a short call yesterday from Hon. Archibald M'Allister, member of Congress elect from the Seventeenth district. Mr. M'A. was elected over his Abolition opponent, Mr. Blair, by 772 majority, in a district which the Abolitionists considered certain for them. His sound Democratic principles and personal popularity together carried him safely through; and in the next Congress the Democratic party will have the benefit of his good sense, his integrity, his influence and his vote.—Harrisburg Union.

RIDDEN ON A RAIL.—Substitute brokers appear to be in bad order with the drafted men in camp near Philadelphia. One of them appeared in camp on Wednesday, having two substitutes to dispose of, but as soon as his business became known, a rail was obtained from a neighboring fence, and the broker compelled to take an involuntary ride through camp, followed by a shouting and highly excited crowd. After carrying him in this way for over a mile, he was permitted to dismount, and once on terra firma it is said he made tracks for the city at a "Flora Temple" gait.

THE CITY OF SPRINGFIELD, Illinois, the home of Mr. Lincoln, gives a Democratic majority of 400, and the county of Sangamon, in which he lives, gives from 900 to 1,200 Democratic majority. At the Presidential election it only gave 42 majority against him.

ST. PAUL, November, 8.—Over three hundred Indians have been convicted at Howe's Sioux Agency, as participants in the late horrible massacres and condemned to be hung. Whether they live or not rests with the authorities at Washington. The people of Minnesota to a man are in favor of the immediate execution.

LIT HERBY STURGEON UP.—The man elected to the Legislature as a Democrat, who panders to abolitionism or votes for Simon Cameron or any other Republican Abolitionist for United States Senator, deserves nothing but the scaffold and halter. "Old Centre" will furnish the rope and two thousand seven hundred honest and brave men to pull it, with the poor, cringing miscreant dangling from the other end. That other counties will do likewise, we have no doubt.—Belleville Watchman.

A dutchman looking for a person by the name of Dunn, who owed him a "small account," asked a wag near Sweeney's eating house where No. 60 was, as he "wished to find Mr. Dunn." The wag told him to go to Sweeney's and the first person at the first table was the gentleman he was enquiring for. The dutchman went in, about as slow as a jackass to a peck of oats, and this first gentleman, happened to be an Irishman. "Are you Dunn?" says the Dutchman. "Duce!" says Pat, "by my soul, I'm only just commenced."

A freight train ran off the track near Kittanning Point, on the Penn'a R. R. on Wednesday, the 5th, precipitating the locomotive and fifteen cars over a high embankment, completely demolishing them, and burying the engineer, Augustus Wolf, of Pittsburg, in the ruins, killing him instantly.

A negro preacher was holding forth one Sunday, and in the course of his remarks, said: "Der be two roads. De first is a broad straight road leading to death and brimstone. De other is a straight and narrow road leading to hell, fire, and eternal damnation." "If dem be de fact," shouted Sambo, rising from his seat, "dis 'ere nigger is for de woods."