

University of Oklahoma College of Law

University of Oklahoma College of Law Digital Commons

American Indian and Alaskan Native Documents in the Congressional Serial Set: 1817-1899

5-9-1848

Message from the President of the United States, with information in relation to Yucatan, called for by a resolution of the Senate of the 8th instant.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.law.ou.edu/indianserialset>



Part of the [Indigenous, Indian, and Aboriginal Law Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

S. Exec.Doc.No.43, 30th Cong., 1st Sess. (1848)

This Senate Executive Document is brought to you for free and open access by University of Oklahoma College of Law Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in American Indian and Alaskan Native Documents in the Congressional Serial Set: 1817-1899 by an authorized administrator of University of Oklahoma College of Law Digital Commons. For more information, please contact Law-LibraryDigitalCommons@ou.edu.

MESSAGE

FROM THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

WITH

Information in relation to Yucatan, called for by a resolution of the Senate of the 8th instant.

MAY 9, 1848.

Read, and ordered to be printed.

To the Senate of the United States:

In answer to the resolution of the Senate of the 8th instant, requesting further information "in relation to the condition of Yucatan," I transmit, herewith, a report of the Secretary of the Navy, with the accompanying copies of communications received from officers of the navy on the subject.

JAMES K. POLK.

WASHINGTON, May 9, 1848.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, May 9, 1848.

SIR: In obedience to your directions, I have the honor to transmit copies of communications from Commodore Perry, Commander Bigelow, and Lieutenant Commanding Mason, with the papers which accompanied them, on the subject of the present condition of Yucatan.

Commodore Perry's despatch No. 164, of April 15, 1848, was received at the department on the 5th of May; the others were received prior to the date of your recent message to Congress relative to that country.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
J. Y. MASON.

The PRESIDENT.

Extract of a despatch from Commodore Perry, dated

[No. 117.]

NAVY YARD, VERA CRUZ,
January 30, 1848.

SIR:

* * * * *

Affairs are still in an unsettled state in Yucatan. The Indians, receiving their arms from the settlements in the bay of Honduras, are gaining strength, and the white population are removing towards the coast.

* * * * *

I have the honor to be, &c.,

M. C. PERRY,
Commanding home squadron.

Extract of a despatch received at the Navy Department, from Commodore Perry, dated

[No. 125.]

FLAG SHIP CUMBERLAND,
Vera Cruz, February 15, 1848.

SIR:

* * * * *

On arrival here, I found a letter from Yucatan informing me that the Indians were still in great force, and had carried their excursions of rapine and murder still nearer the coast. I propose, therefore, as I know of nothing of importance to keep me here at present, to make another visit to Laguna and Campeachy, as the appearance of two or three vessels of the squadron upon the coast will doubtless have a tendency to check the advance of the Indians upon the principal towns, and give time to bring a larger white force into the field.

* * * * *

I have the honor to be, &c.,

M. C. PERRY,
Commanding home squadron.

[No. 135.]

FLAG SHIP "CUMBERLAND,"
Vera Cruz, February 29, 1848.

SIR: I sail to-morrow for Laguna and Yucatan. My departure has been somewhat hastened by information recently received from that part of the gulf. I had given little credence to the rumor which has been in circulation some days in the city, that the Spanish government had interfered in the affairs of Yucatan, and I presume the present movement (if any has actually been made) is without authority from Madrid; but has probably been started at Havana, to suit some commercial speculations. I shall, however,

soon look into the matter, and will communicate with the department at the earliest moment.

It will be desirable to have the views of the government upon the question of European interference with the affairs of Yucatan. Though that State has been allowed by the United States to hold a neutral position in the pending war, I presume it is still considered to be an integral part of Mexico.

The alleged object of the rumored offer of aid from Cuba, is solely to assist the Yucaticos in their war against the Indians.

Under any circumstances, I shall act according to my best judgment, and until I can receive precise instructions on the subject; and, if necessary, I shall not hesitate to exercise the authority vested in me of using force.

Enclosed is a letter received this moment from a merchant of Vera Cruz, to whom I had addressed a note requesting intelligence from Yucatan.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, your obedient servant,
M. C. PERRY,

Commanding home squadron.

Hon. J. Y. MASON,

Secretary of the Navy, Washington.

VERA CRUZ, February 29, 1848.

DEAR SIR: The latest dates I got from Yucatan were from Campeachy, dated the 11th of this month. It appears that the revolution of the Indians was not yet entirely quelled. Mr. Preciot writes me, however, "some days ago a Spanish schooner of war arrived at Sisal from the Havana, sent by the captain general of the island of Cuba with the special commission to offer to our government the assistance required to reduce to order the Indians raised against the white race, and it is generally asserted that this government had accepted of that generous offer, and had requested two hundred thousand dollars, two thousand guns, and three or four small men-of-war; but the truth is not yet known, as the said schooner remains still at Sisal."

This statement agrees with what I have been able to learn from other sources. It was told in town some days ago that the people of Yucatan had hoisted the Spanish flag, acknowledging again the Spanish dominion, by reason of being unable themselves to finish the war against the revolutionary Indians. However, I cannot believe it, and do think, if the Spanish flag has been hoisted at all, it will have only been done out of gratitude for the mentioned offer.

My latest dates from Laguna are of the 5th instant. They are, however, entirely destitute of interest.

I shall make free to send some letters for Yucatan this afternoon, and, wishing you a prosperous and pleasant passage, and to see you soon back again amongst us, I have the honor to remain, dear sir, your most obedient servant,

H. HOPPENSTEDT.

LAGUNA, February 29, 1848.

SIR: I forward, for the information of the department, a newspaper and handbill, published at Merida, giving an account of the arrival at Sisal of a Spanish vessel of war, sent by the authorities of Havana to inquire into the wants of the Yucatecoes, and offering them assistance.

Information has reached here that a treaty of peace has been concluded between the United States and Mexico. The inhabitants of Laguna are apprehensive of a withdrawal of our forces, and that they will be left without protection against the unstable and revolutionary government of Yucatan, or, in case of its being overthrown, of the Indians, who are advancing upon the capital, and who, it is feared, will possess themselves of the whole country.

The people of this place consider themselves compromised in the eyes of their countrymen, in consequence of having submitted quietly to our occupation, and having consented to serve in civil offices under our authority. They are, I am informed, about to draw up a petition that a force may be left here as long as is necessary for their protection.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
 A. BIGELOW,
 Commander.

Hon. JOHN Y. MASON,
 Secretary of the Navy.

The Union, of Merida, official organ of the government of Yucatan, under date of the 8th of February, contains the following:

On the 29th of last January, his excellency the commander-general of the naval station of Habana, Don José Premo de Rivera, ordered the commandant of the schooner-of-war "Churroa," Don Jacobo Crespo y Villavicencio, to get ready for sea, lay in three months' provisions, and, being thus prepared, proceed to the coast of Yucatan and Sisal.

The object of this commission, conferred upon Señor Crespo, was, to inform the consular agent of her Catholic Majesty at Sisal, and in his absence, the constituted authorities of said port, that the captain-general and commander of the naval station, informed of the state of this country in consequence of the sanguinary war waged by the Indians against the whites, negroes, and mestizos, had resolved to send a vessel of war, in order to obtain more correct information of the true situation, not only of the Spaniards, but also of the natives and other foreigners residing in Yucatan, so that the authorities of Cuba might render them such assistance as circumstances should demand.

In order to obtain said assistance, the chief magistrate of the state will have to address himself directly to the authorities of the island of Cuba, and Señor Crespo will, by all means, request a written answer from the authorities of Sisal, in conformity to which the necessary determination will be taken.

The commander of the "Churroa" received, furthermore, the following instructions:

1. That the presence of his vessel on the coast of Yucatan is merely protectory, and has no hostile character whatsoever.

2. That on this principle only, will he be allowed to land assistance to the Spaniards and other inhabitants, who may look for protection under his flag.

3. That he should, in all cases, act in harmony with the authorities of the country.

4. That he should keep up equally amicable relations with the commanders of other foreign vessels who may be at Sisal, and with whom he may be obliged to communicate.

5. That, notwithstanding the commission be purely protectory, if the Indians were to attack on the beach, and under the fire of his musketry, those who might claim his protection, he shall defend the latter, repelling force by force, with the understanding that he shall only use the latter in extreme cases.

Señor Crespo was ordered to return to Havana after having effected the object of his commission; and the same good dispositions entertained by the captain-general, the commander of the naval station and the superintendent of the treasury, towards the people of Yucatan, in the extreme case that they should be obliged to abandon their country, were repeated to him. At the same time, he was informed that the assistance offered could never extend to an armed force on land, which they could never lend without grave compromises, to an independent country like Yucatan; and that should it be necessary, they would send a sufficient number of vessels of war and steamers to receive on board all those who might ask for protection under the Spanish flag.

Then follow the various particular instructions to the commander of the "Churroa," having for object to save the population of Yucatan in the advent of the extreme case before mentioned. To this effect he will devise measures jointly with the authorities of the country; such as establishing large huts under shelter of the castle of Sisal, and on some of the islands in the proximity of Cape Catoche, to facilitate the emigration of the refugees, providing them with food and other articles they may require, before they can be transported to the coast of Cuba or Guatemala.

In these instructions, which it would be too long to insert here, the commanding general of the naval station manifests all the foresight and prudence of which a good government is capable, guarding against all cases that may possibly occur.

To enable Señor Crespo to give assurances that the authorities of the island of Cuba have bona fide the intention of lending to Yucatan all necessary assistance—that of troops excepted—he has been ordered to declare, that the brig of war Nervion had received orders to proceed forthwith to Sisal, and that with the same object two large vessels of war and a steamer were preparing, which may come to succor these inhabitants should circumstances require it.

Señor Crespo was further directed to make use of the following question:

What is it that Yucatan requires to save its inhabitants from the death with which they are threatened by the barbarians?

To this question a corresponding answer will be requested. It must, also, be mentioned here, that under no circumstances whatever will any of the inhabitants be conducted (by Spanish men-of-war) to Campeachy or any other point of the interior of the Mexican gulf.

Lastly, after having earnestly repeated to the commander of the "Churroa" that he should carry the desires that animate the authorities of Cuba, to be useful to the inhabitants of Yucatan, to whom they are linked by ties of blood and friendship, he was further directed to effect a landing on the beach, if it should be necessary to do so, in order to protect the lives of men, women, and children, in case that they should be attacked within range of his musketry; but that under no pretext should the landing party advance more than ten yards from the seashore.

We shall not speak of the gratitude which the superior authorities of the island of Cuba deserve for this act of humanity and philanthropy, which will forever redound to their honor in the civilized world, and which shows clearly and unequivocally the already proverbial Castilian generosity. Nor will we say any thing of the distinguished demonstrations of affection that were shown in Sisal, and in this capital, to the commander of the "Churroa," this worthy bearer of news that speaks so highly in favor of his countrymen at large. We will be permitted, however, to repeat here with full enthusiasm what we said last Saturday in our extra: Long life to the magnanimous Spanish nation!!! Long life to the worthy sons of Cid and Pelayo!!! May the cause of humanity and civilization prosper! We cannot help praising and applauding the discretion and prudence of the superior authorities of Havana, with which they repeat that all kinds of assistance may be expected from them except that of "men," and that only in the last extremity should the crew of the "Churroa" be landed; but without advancing further than ten yards from the seashore, and employing force only to repel force.

Thus they respect the independence and sovereignty of Yucatan and the international law, in order that it should in no wise be understood that, profiting by the critical situation of the country, they had an intention of subjugating it by the establishment of a certain domination.

And this it is that honors more than anything else the generous officers of her Catholic Majesty in the island of Cuba, who offer us their protection, moved only by the holy love for afflicted humanity.

We are not yet in possession of any positive information in regard to the reply of our government to the generous offers of the authorities of Cuba; but we understand, that, in returning due thanks for such kind dispositions, and availing themselves of them, without, nevertheless, considering the situation of the country so critical, that it could not be saved by the efforts of its sons, they ask, in form of assistance, (auxilio,) for 2,000 muskets, with bayo-

nets, six pieces of mountain artillery, 200 quintals powder, 400 swords, and 200,000 dollars, in silver; to be paid back with its corresponding premium, with the fifth part of the proceeds of the custom-house of Campeachy and Sisal, which will, to that effect, be mortgaged. The return payment will commence as soon as the present critical circumstances will cease to exist.

We cannot guaranty the veracity of the foregoing, as we have no official documents before us; but we may vouch for the statement made in regard to the instructions of Sr. Crespo, which we have perused, in virtue of the authorization which has been conferred upon the Spanish consul and the chief authority at Sisal, not only to read them confidentially, but to give even copies of them. We do, however, not in the least doubt the reality of the request, on account of the frankness of the offer, and more so, when we consider the extensive meaning of the question with which the commander general of the naval station of Havana, concludes his ardent and unlimited desires to lend us assistance, viz: "What does Yucatan require to save its inhabitants from death, with which they are threatened by the barbarians?"

It deserves particular notice that not only the captain general and the commander general of the naval station, but also the superintendent of the treasury have desires to help us; or, in other words, that arms, vessels, and money, are offered to us at the same time. Nor could such generous protectors do anything by halves.

We hasten to publish all this, with the object of reanimating the public spirit, and of producing a powerful effort to subdue the barbarians, counting with the aid and assistance that has been offered to us, which our paternal government has accepted, and which will be sent in the shortest time possible, (we are convinced,) without the slightest curtailment.

Therefore, away with despair! To your arms Yucatecos!! Let us fly to the defence of our cause with the assurance that nothing will be wanting, and that we will reduce the rebels with the elements of warfare, which will soon [be] at our disposal.

Long life to the government of the State. Long life to its good sons and the peaceful inhabitants of Yucatan. Amen.

[No. 137.]

CAMPEACHY, *March 13, 1848.*

SIR: I have the honor to inform the department of my arrival at this place last from Laguna, having with me the steamers Mississippi, Scorpion, Iris, and Water Witch, and the bomb brig Vesuvius. Most of these vessels have been withdrawn temporarily from their particular stations, in order that I might make as imposing a demonstration as my means would allow, in the probability that the appearance of such a force on the coast might have some influence upon the fears of the Indians, with whom the authorities of Yucatan are endeavoring to bring about terms of pacification.

In my several interviews with Governor Mendez, who came from the seat of government expressly to meet me, I have found him to be an intelligent and energetic person, ardently attached to the present existing institutions of the country, but entertaining, in common with his coadjutors in the government, serious apprehensions that these institutions cannot much longer be sustained without prompt assistance from some foreign power; indeed, such have been the successes of the Indians, that the whites have become panic-stricken, and seem to have lost all courage, and all hope of checking their advances.

The accompanying papers will exhibit to the department the unhappy condition of the country. Doubtless the Yucatan commissioner, resident at Washington, Don Justo Sierra, has presented a similar representation to the United States Government, and has made urgent application for assistance in the present alarming crisis.

The statements set forth in these papers are not in the least exaggerated; and, unless assistance is received from some quarter, the whole country will be laid waste, and the numerous towns and villages of the interior destroyed. Such is the disgraceful panic of the Yucateco soldiers, that many of them fly upon the very appearance of the enemy, and not a few of the citizens consider themselves unsafe even in this walled city.

In this state of alarm the authorities are at a loss how to move, and they look in every direction for succor. Application has been made to me for men and munitions; but however I might be disposed to take upon myself the responsibility of such measures, in aid of the defence of these unhappy people against the exterminating cruelties of an uncivilized and ruthless enemy, the department is aware that I have not the means of extending protection beyond the range of the guns of the one or two small vessels* that can alone be spared from the present force of the squadron; and, besides, I have good reason to believe that Señor Sierra has already communicated with the government at Washington, and I may soon expect instructions upon the subject.

The authorities are very desirous of obtaining muskets with a supply of ball cartridges, but the ships have only a few more muskets than are required for their own use, and these are without cartridge boxes. I should be glad to loan the few we have to spare, if they can be made available, and I have promised to present a request of Governor Mendez to the military governor of Vera Cruz, for a loan of some of the arms taken from the Mexicans at the capitulation of that city.

This supply has, however, been rendered less urgent by the arrival at Sisal (intelligence of which has been this moment received) of three small Spanish vessels of war, with 2,000 stand of arms, four pieces of artillery, 200 quintals of powder, with some other munitions, sent, it is differently alleged, by order of the captain

* Vessels drawing over nine feet cannot approach within cannon range of the city.

general of Cuba, by the civil authorities of that island, or by private account, but upon this point I shall soon be correctly informed, as I shall despatch a vessel of the squadron to-day to Sisal, to obtain information as to the object of the visit of the Spanish vessels, and the source from whence the supply of arms has been furnished.

General O'Donnell, as I learn, has been cautious in his instructions to the commanders of the Spanish vessels, admonishing them not to proceed with an armed force beyond a distance of ten yards from the shore.

I have it direct from the French consul here, that the government of Yucatan has more than twice within a few years back, applied to France for permission to hoist the French flag and to become a French colony, but their proffers have as often been declined.

The French consul expresses the opinion that England may, in view of obtaining an increase of territory in the bay of Honduras, and possession of the harbors of "Ascension" and "Espiritu Santo," on the east coast of Yucatan, be induced to furnish aid in troops and munitions from the settlement of Balize, and a person is now in the city, professing to be an agent sent expressly from Jamaica to enter into some arrangement with the Yucatan government. This information is given for what it is worth; in my own mind it has little weight.

Governor Mendez has declared to me that, failing to obtain aid from the United States, he should apply to other powers, and as a last resort the people of Yucatan would offer up the sovereignty of the state to whatever power would consent to take it under protection.

I sail this day on my return to Vera Cruz, via Laguna and the Tabasco. The bomb brig "Vesuvius," Lieutenant Commandant M. Mason, will be left at anchor off this city to look after American interests, and to render whatever aid she can in the protection of the lives and property of the citizens. I propose to employ another small vessel of the squadron on the same duty, and hope to be able to add a third.

With great respect, I have the honor to be your obedient servant,
M. C. PERRY,
Commanding home squadron.

The Hon. J. Y. MASON,
Secretary of the Navy.

MERIDA, February 1, 1848.

SIR: The undersigned, Secretary of State of the government of Yucatan, has the honor to address your honor, by order of the said government, with the object of informing you of the state which the atrocious war, declared by the Indians against the other races, has brought on.

Notwithstanding the activity employed to stifle this formidable conspiracy, the kind of warfare adopted by the Indians makes it extremely difficult to terminate the war, with the few and doubtful resources of the country.

The latter, oppressed, as it is, by the misfortunes and reverses which it has suffered for some time past, cannot offer, nor put in action, such means as circumstances would require; and, for this very reason, it is not strange that, in a war of this nature, it should be so difficult to obtain the desired results.

Only relying upon one single battalion of infantry and two companies of permanent artillery, whose numbers have been reduced to an insignificant force, it has been necessary to order into active service all the existing (military) militia forces, in order to partially meet the grave exigencies of the moment.

Your honor will at once see that the military operations, entered into with such resources, could not have been as efficient as necessary.

Your honor, knowing people as you do, cannot be ignorant of the fact that armies cannot be created by improvisation; and that, although enthusiasm may, now and then, lead armed citizens to do prodigies in moments of effervescence, when their valor appears to be indomitable, this exaltation, leading people, as it does, into a state of violence, cannot last long; and, therefore, their valor is like electricity, which can only work with rapidity.

The soldier of this class is of very little use in a long-lasting and tiresome war; in the bush and mountain war, which those barbarians are waging against us.

This class of military people, whose profession is not war; who have no hopes of promotion; have other interests; other affections, which, as soon as the enthusiasm is passed, must operate rather too freely upon their spirits; do away with their fortitude; diminish their resignation, and finally lead them to abandon those ranks, in which they do not like to remain any longer. Only those who have no exact idea of human nature will be surprised at those facts.

Your honor, who is not ignorant of the local circumstances of this country; who has a knowledge of its population and their customs, need not now receive long narrations, in order to form an opinion in regard to the present war; the principal character of which is a greatly superior number of enemies, indolence and cynicism. Hunger, nakedness and hardships of all kinds have no effect upon them; their roving and savage life have not changed much by their relations with society. Woods, swamps and mountains offer no impediments whatever to their movements, which they carry out with the most admirable rapidity.

The number and the qualities alluded to, make up for the bad condition of their arms, and enable them to laugh at the persecution of our troops, however active and well combined they may be. On this account, and in consequence of their destructive propensities, which lead them to take, burn, and destroy any place which offers, an extreme terror has stricken a greater part of our population, who have been abandoned by their neighbors.

From these circumstances have resulted the apparent triumphs of the Indians—the vacillation of our troops, and the conflict in which the whole country is involved.

In this truly critical case, philanthropical nations and men, the

friends of civilization and humanity, cannot deny assistance to a community threatened with death; and this consideration, with reliance on the part of the Yucatan government, in the common sympathies of civilization, and the more particular feelings of amity, which have existed between the governments of Yucatan and the United States, the first mentioned government hopes that your honor will render them as prompt and as efficient assistance as circumstances may permit, in order to deliver this country from its heartrending situation; for it cannot have escaped the penetration of the philanthropical eye of your honor, that this country, worthy of a better fate, is threatened by the worst of dangers.

Your honor, in common with all illustrious men, will know that in this case is not only involved the particular cause of a people, or the private interests of a small part of the world, but an object of the most general importance, which is "civilization," whose empire has been attacked, and is in danger of perishing in Yucatan.

With this object, the government, which orders the undersigned to address to your honor the present note, hopes that this solicitation will not be refused, and that your honor, accepting it, with the goodness and dignity which stamp your estimable character, will not only assist them in what is immediately necessary, but transmitting this request to the government of the United States, will recommend and procure all the best assistance that may be necessary for the entire pacification of this country, with the understanding that on the 31st of last December, instructions have been sent to our commissioner at Washington with the same object, and this very day other instructions will be transmitted to him, referring to the last occurrences, in order that he may take all possible steps promptly to obtain all the assistance asked for, in consideration of the danger which every day becomes more imminent.

In addressing to your honor the present, the undersigned has the honor to offer your honor his particular consideration and esteem.

God and liberty!

JOSE R. NICOLINI.

Commodore M. C. PERRY,
*Commander-in-chief of the naval forces
of the United States in the Gulf of Mexico.*

CAMPEACHY, 10th March, 1848.

SIR: I had the honor of receiving yesterday, a duplicate of your communication of the 1st ultimo, and hasten to inform you that I shall take the earliest means of transmitting it to my government, with such representations from myself of the deplorable state of the province of Yucatan, as my personal observations and inquiries will enable me to communicate.

His excellency Governor Mendez may be assured that I shall exhibit a faithful picture of the disastrous state of things at present existing, and I need hardly say that I shall enter with promptitude

upon the execution of any measures that may be ordered by my government in aid of this unfortunate country.

With great respect, I am, sir, your most obedient servant,

M. C. PERRY,

Commanding home squadron.

Señor JOSE R. NICOLNI,

Secretario General Del Gobierno de Yucatan.

To Commodore Perry :

SIR: At the request of his excellency, the governor of the State, I proceed to lay before you a succinct statement of the war waged by the Indians in the south and east of this State.

To begin with, it will be necessary to mention that, under the colonial government, Yucatan enjoyed a mild and paternal treatment, as far as the Spanish and their immediate descendants were concerned. The Indians formed a class of serfs, who were obliged to labor for the benefit of their Spanish conquerors, and to pay, at the same time, a tribute of \$2 81 for each male from 14 to 60 years of age; they also had to pay \$1 68 for men, and \$1 12½ for women, as an ecclesiastical duty, in compensation of which their agricultural products and their cattle were exempt from tythes, which were paid by the rest of the inhabitants. The church fees paid by Spaniards were much greater than those paid by the Indians.

This state of things existed until the formation of the Spanish constitution, when slight modifications were made in favor of the Indians, but the latter were rarely put into execution in the administration of justice, as the pre-existing abuses were kept up by the clergy and government officers.

When Iturbide established the independence of Mexico, Yucatan became voluntary a province of that empire, and when the latter was changed into a republic, Yucatan joined Mexico in forming the federal government, in 1825; when a State constitution was published, founded upon the liberal and enlightened principles of the 19th century.

In conformity with this constitution, the Indians were recognised as citizens, enjoying equal rights and immunities with the other races; and although they remained subject to the before mentioned ecclesiastical tax, the personal tax was reduced to \$1 50 a year for males from the age of 16 to 60.

This tax was levied upon all classes, and formed the principal revenue of the State.

A new era arose in Yucatan; a representative government was chosen by the people; a government liberal in its principles. As it became necessary to select suitable persons for the different branches of the government, divisions arose, and the various parties called in the aid of the Indians, inducing them to vote in their favor.

These were the first acts of citizenship exercised by the Indians of this country, and they were thus directed to vote by violent party men, who could easily control them.

In consequence of this violent party excitement, and the fears entertained by the former governor, Mr. Lopez, aid was solicited from Mexico, under pretext of maintaining the tranquility of the country. This imprudent request enabled Mexico to introduce into Yucatan 2,000 of her immoral troops, who succeeded, to a certain extent, to enslave the country, by creating an almost complete disorganization, and by encouraging and aiding, alternately, the different political parties who disputed each other the possession of power. At the same time, said troops created an expense to the State, over and above the amount contingent upon, and religiously paid by the latter to the confederacy. Finally, towards the end of 1829, a central government was established in Yucatan, which, as it was not adopted by the rest of the republic, caused a separation between the latter and this State, until in 1832, the patriots of Yucatan, by their joint efforts, abolished that regimen and restored the federation. This movement was then favored by the revolution General Santa Anna had entered into against the administration of General Bustamente.

After this the constitution of 1825 was again established, and the authorities which had been destituted were restored; but the same General Santa Anna, who had favored our movement while he was in revolution against Bustamente, and avowedly in favor of liberal principles, with his characteristic inconstancy, and guided by unlimited ambition, abandoned those who had aided him, and commenced from the year 1834 to prepare the ruin of the federal system, which he accomplished in 1836.

The patriots of Yucatan desired to place an efficient check to the advances and machinations of the satellites of that general; but owing to the want of skill in the militia, which was but imperfectly organized, they were compelled to yield, and their efforts only served to procure the persecution of many of the most distinguished citizens, and the expulsion of others, among whom was the present governor of the state, then vice-governor.

This state, as well as all the others belonging to the republic, was then governed by military despotism; tyranny in its worst forms weighed heavily upon the people and their defenders, destroying the industry of commerce of the country. General Santa Anna then deeply engaged in the war of Texas, and the administration that succeeded him, when he became a prisoner in San Jacinto, were obliged to make frequent demands upon Yucatan for men and money to sustain their wars. This gave rise to odious conscriptions and exactions, which in 1839 produced a general rising against the oppressors, which commenced in Tizimin and Valladolid, and established the liberty of Yucatan towards the middle of 1840, when the last partizans of the Mexican military theocratic oligarchy, enclosed within the walls of Campeachy, capitulated and were sent to Mexico.

This was the first time the Indians were called upon to take up

arms, and they contributed efficiently in procuring the liberty of the country. Afterwards they retired to their homes, and the offers made to exempt their women from the ecclesiastical tax were religiously complied with.

Prosperity once more smiled upon Yucatan; agriculture and commerce began to increase; her income was sufficient to cover her expenditures, and a considerable quantity of arms and ammunitions were purchased for her defence.

Public confidence was restored, and it was hoped that a more liberal government in Mexico would enable Yucatan to return to former political relations with that republic.

General Santa Anna got again into power in 1841, and, desirous to subjugate Texas, wished first to reduce Yucatan, which had refused to recognise him as president, and then to destroy the principles of liberty contained in her constitution of 1841. He also intended to obtain from Yucatan four or five thousand men for his projected campaign in Texas, and leaving Mexican troops in the garrisons of Yucatan.

The government, then in the hands of the present incumbent, and the people of Yucatan made an efficient resistance against an invasion of 5,000 Mexican troops, who were gradually augmented to 11,000; one division of which, under the command of General Pevay Barazan, capitulated in Pixpenal, five leagues from Merida. The remainder then, under the command of General Ampudia, who was then besieging Campeachy, broke up their camp and embarked for Tabasco and Vera Cruz, after having solicited, by order of General Santa Anna, that Yucatan should send commissioners to Mexico to procure the restoration of peace, and the re-incorporation of Yucatan into Mexico. Accordingly, a commission was appointed, whose labors resulted in the famous treaty of 14th December, 1843. Unhappily enough, it had been necessary during this war to arm the Indians, and it must be confessed that they rendered efficient and useful services, which ended in the expulsion of the enemy. The war was ended; they returned again to their homes, and the government faithfully complied with the promises made them when called into service.

This treaty had scarcely been ratified when it was infringed, and almost annulled, by the administration of Mexico. In February, 1844, a decree was passed prohibiting the introduction of the greater part of the most valuable productions of Yucatan into the ports of the republic, subjecting them, in case of disobedience, to confiscation. Notwithstanding the fall of this administration, that of General Herrera pursued the same policy towards Yucatan, publicly infringing the treaty by which Yucatan became incorporated with the rest of Mexico, and projecting a decree in the congress of Mexico, with the object of overturning entirely the stipulations of the aforesaid treaty. On account of this, the authorities of Yucatan, after having used their utmost exertions, and solemnly protested against the proceedings of the Mexican congress and cabinet, declared solemnly, on the first of January, 1846, to separate

themselves from the republic until the treaties aforesaid should be re-sanctioned.

The administration of General Herrera was overturned by General Paredes, who, as president of the republic, sent Colonel Carro to Yucatan, as his agent, with instructions to solicit the aid of the latter in the war which was about to commence between Mexico and the United States, offering, as a compensation for said aid, the faithful compliance on the part of Mexico with the treaties already referred to, until said treaties should be reformed by mutual consent. But the authorities of Yucatan, distrusting that general, and not wishing to engage in a war which might have been avoided, and which would necessarily have been of great injury to this country—which subsists, in a great part, by its limited commerce—refused to grant aid of any kind; and when, in June of the same year, after the war with Mexico had commenced, the American brig-of-war "Somers" arrived at this port, with the object of ascertaining the course Yucatan would pursue, the authorities answered, accompanying the decree of 1st of January, 1846, by which the latter had declared her temporary separation from that republic, manifesting that, in consequence of this act, she was not disposed to take any part in the contest. This declaration, passed by a majority of the State legislature, was seconded by the then governor, Don Miguel Barbachano, was in accordance with the wishes and opinions of the greater part of the inhabitants of the country, and in conformity with their true interests.

Unfortunately General Hactna, although exiled from Mexico, resided in Havana; he procured a correspondence with Governor Barbachano, and other persons of standing in the country, whom he succeeded in inspiring with confidence and induced to adhere to his future ambitious plans, offering them that as soon as he would be called to the presidential chair, he would insure the fulfilment of the treaty of 1843. Accordingly, a decree was published, dated 25th of August, recognizing General Santa Anna, as president of the republic, which decree, in a certain measure, nullified the neutrality adopted by Yucatan in the war between Mexico and the United States.

The people of Campeachy and the city council refused to obey this decree; but the present governor, Mr. Mendez, believing that the greatest evil which can possibly afflict any country is civil war, and that division among the whites, at a time when the Indians gave indications of rebellion against them; and considering also that in breaking the neutrality, (then existing,) the only result would be the occupation of the country by American forces, which, in his opinion, would be rather a benefit than an evil; induced the city council and people of Campeachy to desist from their opposition to said decree, which was consequently published in this city.

Notwithstanding discontent and excitement occupied the minds of the people, and in spite of the efforts of Mr. Mendez to prevent it, another "pronunciamento" was made in Campeachy, on the 25th of October, 1846, against Governor Barbachano.

State legislature, then in session, proclaimed the constitution of 1841, reducing, at the same time, the capitation tax paid by the Indians and whites from 25 to 12½ cents per month. But Governor Barbachano thought to sustain his pretensions by force, and the State was about to be involved in a civil war, giving occasion to the Indians to a sublevation by which they seemed inclined to profit, with the object of destroying the other races which are infinitely inferior to them in numbers, and who were then divided among themselves. Mr. Mendez, guided by these considerations, exerted himself with so much energy that he persuaded the people to desist from their pretensions, (as well those of Campeachy as many others who had adhered to the new state of things,) and to submit themselves again to the government of Mr. Barbachano.

Unfortunately enough, this submission was but of a short duration, for, on the 8th of December, of the same year, another "declaration" took place, with the same object as the former, and Mr. Mendez, convinced that the government of Barbachano must necessarily fall, and desirous of directing the revolution in order to render it the least destructive possible to the country, took part in it, and brought it to a conclusion on the 21st of February, 1847, while the pronounced troops were occupying the capital; having only to lament the butchery and sacking of Valladolid, which were perpetrated by a multitude of Indians who had congregated spontaneously from Tihosuco, and Valladolid, situated on the eastern extremity of the State. Many whites were inhumanly murdered and their houses sacked and burnt. The provisional government, which succeeded that of Mr. Barbachano, hastened to send to Washington, Doctor Jose Robisa, to inform the American government of the establishment again of neutrality, and to procure, if possible, its ratification by the government of the United States, which he obtained, although upon the condition that Laguna should be occupied by American forces, which has been of great injury to the country, and especially Campeachy, which has been constantly in favor of neutrality, and consequently entitled to the greatest consideration. This gave pretexts to partizans of General Santa Anna for frequent disorderly movements and pronunciamientos in the capital in favor of Mexico, which, although suffocated by the government troops, have caused immense injuries to the State, demoralizing the people, and producing, finally, the insurrection of the Indians, who were stimulated to these acts of rebellion by the movers of these disorders.

In the mean time, the Indians, encouraged by the division of the whites, and stimulated by a few reprobates (whites) who resided among them, threw off all disguise and boldly took the field, proclaiming destruction to all the other races. Tihosuco was taken, and many of its citizens were inhumanly butchered; and the women after being violated, were carried into hopeless captivity. The town was burnt and razed to the ground, and the most appalling atrocities committed.

Emboldened by the fate of Tihosuco, and made rapacious by the

large booty there found, and their numbers being greatly increased, they followed up their work of destruction with increased fury. Village after village sunk before the ruthless incendiary, and hundreds of families have perished by the hands of these blood-thirsty monsters, who respect neither age, sex, nor condition; and when any one becomes their prisoner, his case is considered worse than that of those who have sunk into the arms of death.

In this appalling state of affairs, Governor Mendez took the command. He displayed great energy, despatching troops and arms wherever they were needed for the defence of the helpless inhabitants.

But he suffered great embarrassment in his operations by the scarcity of resources, the finances of the State exhausted, the quota of arms belonging to the State ruined by use and exposure, a great want of workmen to repair them, and the difficulty produced by malevolent persons who represented the rising of the Indians as a trifling circumstance and a mere interlude to the drama which has been so long before the people. The troops were worn out by a tedious, and, to their view, an interminable campaign; destitute of clothing and wanting food, desertions became frequent, and the common discipline of the camp could hardly be enforced by the officers. These circumstances discouraged the commanding officers, and to prevent desertion, they were obliged to remain in their barracks.

During these fatal but unavoidable delays, the Indians increased in numbers and daring, and their arms, which were very few at the commencement, were augmented by those of deserters who abandoned their flag.

These ravages are still progressing. Thousands of persons, thrust from their homes, are wandering either in the forests or villages without the means of existence, and a number equally great have sunk into the arms of death, pierced by the dart of these fell assassins.

In the military operations there have been some advantages gained over the enemy, but, in other instances, the troops have been either completely routed, or, yielding to an unaccountable panic, have precipitately abandoned the field of battle, in some instances losing their best officers and men. At present the alarm has spread in all directions; consternation shades the brow of old and young; and the fears of the flying helpless inhabitant are frequently communicated to the men of arms who should defend them; consequently, they are almost daily losing ground, and the very existence of the State is threatened unless aid can be procured to check the advances of the foe.

The present condition of the country is truly deplorable. The finances of the government completely exhausted; a great want of arms and ammunition; some of the bravest of the officers and troops fallen victims on the field of battle, and the rest dispirited and cast down by a long and dangerous campaign, performed beneath a scorching tropical sun and through a region scarcely practicable, can hardly be persuaded to remain in the service.

The number of the Indian insurgents is exceedingly great, and the country they occupy exceedingly extensive, as will be made manifest by the following statement, which comprises the places occupied by the Indians, which towns and ranchos have almost all been destroyed and their inhabitants either murdered or ruined.

Yoamal, (district of)	has 4 villages, 20 haciendas, 15 ranchos,	} with 3,500 inhabitants.
Valladolid, "	27 villages, 191 haciendas, 95 ranchos,	
Tizinnir, "	11 villages, 20 haciendas, 105 ranchos,	} 31,444 "
Espita, "	2 villages, 10 haciendas, 120 ranchos,	
Tekan, "	2 villages, 21 haciendas, 101 ranchos,	} 18,988 "
Yascaba, "	18 villages, 77 haciendas, 72 ranchos,	
Peto, "	30 villages, 47 haciendas, 317 ranchos,	} 10,600 "
Bacalar, "	5 villages, 3 haciendas, 27 ranchos,	
		} 12,500 "
		} 32,850 "
		} 51,081 "
		} 1,500 "

Which makes a grand total of—

99 villager,	} with 162,463 inhabitants.
389 haciendas,	
852 ranchos,	

Of these inhabitants, 120,000, at least, are Indians of both sexes, of whom 30,000 are males, capable of bearing arms and of assisting in the war.

Those here enumerated are now in a state of open rebellion; but a number equal or greater may still revolt and join the file of those already in arms. Among those reputed as whites, there are many of mixed blood whose sympathies are decidedly with the Indians, and there are fears that they may be induced to take part with them, which would render the destruction of the country inevitable. This sketch, however imperfect, has been penned in great haste among continual engagements; it is full of errors, which I have not time to correct; but as it embraces a general idea of the existing state of affairs here, I submit it to your inspection in its present imperfect condition, promising, if you should return it, to correct

it and fill up the vacancies which the want of certain documents for reference has made unavoidable.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. MCKENNEY.

UNITED STATES BRIG VESUVIUS,

Campeachy, (Yucatan,) March 18, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR: The commodore came here a few days since with the steamer and the brig, and has gone, leaving me to protect the American interests at this place; which duty I will fulfil with great pleasure, so far as I can, without committing myself and more particularly our flag. You are aware of the state of this government. The Indians are driving out the whites. The mail from Merida came in this morning, in which were letters stating the Indians mustered about forty thousand men, and were within fifty or sixty miles of Merida, the seat of government of Yucatan. *The government* has been able to muster two thousand men; and, as they say, are able generally to disperse and put to flight all the Indians. My opinion, from information that I can collect, is, that unless Yucatan can get more troops from some foreign power, she is lost, and that within a few months. Cuba has offered her arms and money; but to save herself she must have men. The Yucatanos are already scared and running from their homes. Every night carts, wagons, stages, &c., are coming in from the interior, with families, whose houses, farms, &c., have been destroyed. These people are in great distress; but if they have not courage to defend themselves, what can they expect?

In relation to the brig Vesuvius, I have put her in fine order, and, if you can relieve her, she is in good condition to be sold. A steamer, of about 350 or 400 tons; would prove much more efficient, being ready to move at any moment; whereas the brig must be governed by wind and tide; and in the gulf we ought to be ready to move at a moment's warning. I was towed from Laguna to this place by the steamer Iris. If my proposition should meet with the approbation of the department, I hope, as I now have command of her, I may be permitted to take her home; which will make my service in the gulf from ten to twelve months; long enough to have made a terrible inroad upon my constitution, (although I have never been on the sick list.)

Be kind enough to answer this, directing to Campeachy, to the care of Messrs. Tacharir & Co., New Orleans, who will forward it to me without delay.

Make my best respects to Mrs. Mason, and my father and family, when you see them.

Yours, respectfully, &c., &c., &c.

M. MASON.

Hon. J. Y. MASON,

Secretary of the Navy.

[No. 138.]

U. S. STEAMER "MISSISSIPPI,"
At sea, March 25, 1848.

SIR: I have the honor to inform the department of my being on my return to Vera Cruz, from visits of necessary duty to Campeachy, Laguna, and the Tobasco river.

Since my communication of the 13th instant, dated at Campeachy—a duplicate of which is herewith enclosed—intelligence has been received of another disastrous defeat of the whites. The city of Valladolid has been abandoned, and many women and children have, by the pusillanimity of the Yucateco troops, fallen into the hands of the Indians. The greatest consternation pervades the whole army, and the inhabitants are flying towards the coast.

Enclosed are papers lettered _____, which relate to the affairs of this unhappy country. I also forward a map, copied at my instance from one loaned to me by Governor Mendez, and as it is doubtless the most correct map of Yucatan extant, it is worthy of being preserved among the archives at Washington. The space embraced within the red line, indicates that part of the State at present occupied by the Indians in arms.

I have the honor, &c., &c., &c.,

M. C. PERRY,
Commanding gulf squadron.

Hon. J. Y. MASON,
Secretary of the Navy.

UNITED STATES STEAMER "IRIS,"
Laguna, March 16, 1848.

SIR: I have the honor to report, that in obedience to your order of the 13th instant, I sailed for Sisal, where (owing to a fresh northeast wind) I did not arrive till the 14th, at sunset.

On the next morning I called on the military commandant of Sisal, Don Alonzo Aguar, and in conversation with him, learned that the Indians were in arms and in considerable numbers, about twenty leagues from Merida. The last place of any importance which they have occupied is Soluta, and before going to Merida, they would have to capture three yet more important places—Jyamel, Texax, and Valladolid.

It appears to me, from my conversation with Aguar and other gentlemen whom I met at his house, that the people of Merida, Sisal, and its neighborhood entertain much less fear of the vicinity of the Indians and their hostilities than those of Campeachy, and the reason seems obvious. In the removal of Miguel Barbachano from the government of Yucatan, about six months since, and the substitution of Santiago Mendez, the Indians were engaged by the Campeachenos in support of Mendez, with promises of a remission of the capitation tax and other indulgences; but when Mendez was elected, the tax was claimed; the Indians refused, and in its col-

lection some of them were put to death. Outrages also on the families of some of the chiefs of the Indians seems to have been perpetrated by some officers from Campeachy; and hence the fears of the Campeachenos, and the comparatively secure feelings of the inhabitants of Merida and its vicinity.

El Senior Aguar stated that the Spanish national vessels in port had landed muskets, powder, and balls, part of which had been sent off to Matida, but that no assistance of men or money had been brought or offered; and that a frigate was expected shortly, with further supplies.

Among the gentlemen whom I met at the commandant's, was Don Pedro Camara, said to have been a leading man of the Barbachano party before its expulsion from office. This gentleman spoke with great confidence of the ability of the whites to resist the Indians, and seemed very confident and much at his ease. All of which further inclined me to the belief that the whole matter is a party quarrel, in which that of Barbachano has the best, and that of Mendez the worst, though they may have put elements in agitation which may overwhelm them both, and hence wish for Spanish interference and assistance.

In further confirmation of my opinion that this is not a war of class, another gentleman of the country, of good standing, Don Simon Peon, who is the owner of several haciendas in the interior, stated that the Indians in his employment had asked for arms for the purpose of defending his property.

After obtaining all the information I could on shore, I visited the senior Spanish naval officer in port, Don Francisco Garcia de Salas, commander of the brig "Nervion," a vessel which has been some time on the station, and near which the "Iris" lay at Sacrificios, in December last. This person, evidently a gentleman, and with whose conversation I was much pleased, was at first reserved and cold, but upon my stating to him that I had the honor to be the messenger of the commander-in-chief of the United States naval forces in the Gulf of Mexico, and that in his name, and for his information, I respectfully asked answers to the questions which I propounded, he (after referring to a paper, which I took to be his instructions) replied to them nearly categorically.

As to the question "whether the vessels were sent by the government of Madrid or by the authorities of Cuba," he "did not know." "He merely received orders from his immediate superior," the object he stated to be humanity, and the desire to save life. He was not authorised and had no intention to land, or take part in the war, further than to lend to the Yucatecos such assistance as his vessels could render near the sea shore.

To the question, if arms or munitions of war had been landed, he replied: "Yes, to the amount of some six hundred muskets, and twenty quintals of powder, more or less."

To the question, "if they were landed by Spanish men-of-war," after some hesitation, and reference to the paper, he replied, "yes."

To the question, "if further forces were expected," he said, "no

that he knew of." He further stated, without reference to the questions, that he doubted if money would be sent, or even the rest of the arms and munitions of war, including artillery, which had been expected; and which, it appears, the authorities of Yucatan had requested, and, in my opinion, probably bargained for.

The commander at first seemed disposed to give me the impression that these arms and munitions of war were requested by private individuals here, and sent by private individuals in Havana; but admitted afterwards that it was partly private and partly public, and left the decided impression with me that it was entirely public matter.

He charged me with his distinguished consideration for the commodore.

The Spanish men-of-war in port were the brig "Nervion," from Vera Cruz, and the schooner "Churroa" and brigantine "Juanita," from Havana. Three British merchant vessels and one American, from Newburyport, were in the roads.

I found at Sisal the family of Doñ Liburcio Lopez, formerly governor of Yucatan, with the son-in-law, son of the Spanish consul at Laguna, about to sail for Laguna in one of the coasting canoes of the country. Consideration for the comfort and safety of ladies of so distinguished a family induced me to offer them a passage in the "Iris." I hope that my conduct in this matter will meet with your approbation.

I found the services of Mr. William Hubutter, who acted as interpreter, of great value, and I estimate them at a very high rate.

Respectfully, &c., your obedient servant,

WM. LEWIS HERNDON,
Lieutenant commanding.

Commodore M. C. PERRY,

*Commander-in-chief home squadron, Gulf of Mexico,
Laguna de Terminos.*

[No. 148.]

U. S. FLAG SHIP CUMBERLAND,
Vera Cruz, March 29, 1848.

SIR: Referring to my communications of the 13th and 25th instants, (Nos. 137 and 138,) I beg leave further to remark, that the people of the district of Carmen are in great apprehensions lest the United States government, after the arrangement of peace, may withdraw the naval force now stationed at Laguna and its vicinity.

The enclosed documents (lettered A and B, which are accompanied by translations) set forth the true state of things; and it would seem to me nothing more than just that a small naval force should remain at Laguna, as a protection against the anticipated aggressions of Mexico, or at least until the affairs of Yucatan become more settled.

Laguna, in consequence of the American protection, is now con-

sidered by the Yucatecos the only safe place of refuge in Yucatan to those who are flying before the infuriated Indians.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, your obedient servant,
M. C. PERRY,
Commanding home squadron.

Hon. J. Y. MASON,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington.

A.

Corporation of the town of Carmen.

YOUR EXCELLENCY: The corporation of this town, who, for some time past, has with pain had its attention fixed upon the occurrences which in the present day afflicts the unfortunate towns of Yucatan, owing to the cruel war which the Indian population of the department are waging against all those who are not of their race, and believing that, notwithstanding the perfect tranquillity which is enjoyed within this district, probably the time may arrive in which it may meet with the same fate, should the necessary precautions for its salvation not be adopted, with anticipation as the rest of Yucatan, or even more calamities, owing to the local situation of the island.

From these motives, and wishing to see in practice those measures easiest to be adopted and most suitable to the well being of the inhabitants, this corporation has received, and viewed with the greatest satisfaction the respectful representation which the inhabitants of this town have made to your excellency, soliciting that meanwhile the Indian war continues, the forces of the United States occupying this island may not be withdrawn, but remain for the object in view.

Satisfied as to the sound intention of said inhabitants, as also of the powerful reasons upon which the same are based, and wishing to see carried out so desirable an object, this corporation has the honor to transmit said representation to your excellency, giving to it at the same time that recommendation which it merits, satisfied that your excellency will use your personal intercession with his excellency Commodore Perry in furtherance of this object. This corporation flatters itself that so salutary a measure will not only be productive of benefit to the inhabitants of this district, but also to those of Yucatan, who may seek in it that asylum which is offered by a peaceful town, favored by a strong and generous hand, resolved to protect its brethren.

Whilst transcribing the present note, this corporation has the satisfaction of presenting to your excellency its respectful consideration and distinguished esteem.

God and liberty!

CARMEN, *March* 13, 1848.

To his excellency

The GOVERNOR of this island.

B.

[Translation.]

CARMEN, *March* 10, 1848.

We, the undersigned, inhabitants of the town of Carmen, having met for the purpose of deliberating upon measures of future security, owing to the deplorable state in which Yucatan finds herself at present, through the general insurrection of the Indians, it was resolved to lay the following representations before your excellency, begging that you be pleased to make the same known to his excellency Commodore Perry:

SIR: Yucatan, in former times a model state for order and tranquillity, has found herself carried headlong into a chaos of anarchy and civil war, the result of which state of affairs has been the insurrection in mass of the Indian population, whose object is to overrun the entire peninsula and exterminate the Spanish descendants.

We will describe in as concise a manner as possible the steps, which, in our opinion, have placed Yucatan in her present condition.

On the breaking out of the present war between the United States and Mexico, one party was opposed to neutrality, preferring to share the fate of the rest of the nation, whilst the more sensible portion of the community, convinced of the uselessness of a struggle between a powerless and solitary State, against a powerful nation, declared for neutrality.

The Indians had been instructed in the use of arms in 1840, and, during the Mexican invasion in 1843, the finishing stroke was given, and their eyes opened to their power; they therefore took advantage of the present seasonable moment presented to them for waging war, not in favor of a faction, but for their own account.

Under no circumstances could the time have been more favorable to them. Mexico was not in a position to succor Yucatan. Yucatan was deprived of the advantages to be derived from her commerce with the ports of the gulf. Her revenue, never in a flourishing state, was reduced almost to nothing, owing to the general stagnation of trade from the war, as also from her not being able to dispose of the revenue of this island.

All these motives placed the country in a powerless position, physically and morally, as there can be no power or morality where there is neither union, order, or resources; and the natural consequence of such a state of affairs is that, in the event that a powerful arm should not be put forth in our aid, the nationality of Yucatan is lost, in favor of a race who, in their insurrection, have committed horrors scarcely to be conceived by the most exalted imagination, their steps being marked by barbarous murders, and the most horrid desolation.

Such is the sad picture the unhappy Yucatan presents to our view, and in her lamentable situation seeks anxiously the protection of that nation which may be inclined to extend to her a friendly hand.

And we the inhabitants of the town, seeing that there is no barrier to the incursions of the Indians in their savage conquests; and fearful that at some future day that they may extend their horrid depredations even to this soil, we implore his excellency, Commodore Perry, that he be pleased to take into consideration our critical position, should we return to the dominion of Yucatan, and be abandoned to our own resources; and feeling convinced of the misfortunes that would in such a case attend us, we trust that his excellency will be pleased not to withdraw his protection from this island, even should peace be declared between the United States and Mexico, until the conclusion of the Indian war, and we be prepared with the necessary means of defence for repelling any attack that might be attempted by the barbarians against any portion whatever within this jurisdiction.

To his Excellency, the GOVERNOR OF THIS ISLAND.

[No. 154.]

UNITED STATES SHIP CUMBERLAND,
Vera Cruz, April 2, 1848.

SIR: I received, late last evening, despatches from commander Bigelow, of which the enclosed are copies, and have detained the John Adams (to sail this morning) an hour, to forward these communications.

My recent letters to the department will have given information upon the deplorable condition of Yucatan. The whites make little or no effort to defend their firesides, but they fly at the first appearance of the Indians. Since the detachment of the Albany from the gulf I have not the means of rendering much assistance to these unfortunate people; but I shall do all I can, by detaching on this service such vessels as can possibly be spared from the rivers.

I trust that the Germantown and Saratoga will soon return to the gulf.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, your obedient servant,

M. C. PERRY,
Commanding home squadron.

Hon. J. Y. MASON,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington.

UNITED STATES BRIG VESUVIUS,
Off Campeachy, 22d March, 1848.

SIR: There is nothing new here; except that the Indians are gradually and successfully taking this country; and they are now about one hundred miles from Merida, and in large force, say four thousand men. Merida, Sisal, and Campeachy, will finally be taken. I have had many and long conversations with the inhabitants on the subject, and from all I can see and hear, I think they ought to, and will, get what they deserve. They are too cowardly to defend

themselves; and my protection will go so far as my discretion will permit.

P. S. A courier from the interior arrived this morning, and reports that the towns of *Espita* and *Texbaka* have been taken.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

M. MASON,

Lieutenant, command. U. S. brig Vesuvius.

To Commodore M. C. PERRY,
Commanding home squadron.

LAGUNA, March 25, 1848.

DEAR COMMODORE: I send you an official despatch, by which you will see that things are daily getting worse in Yucatan, and that the Spanish race is about abandoning the country to the *aborigines*. I shall do all I can for the preservation of lives. Property has already been abandoned by these miserable fugitives. Why could not a few thousand troops, who will remain idle during the armistice, be sent here to "roll back the tide of victory?" The war-whoop of these ruthless Indians would have no terrors to those who have conquered the red men of our own territory. I sincerely believe that three thousand of our troops, either regulars or volunteers, would, in a month, with the *prestige* which they possess, drive every Indian in Yucatan into the bay of Honduras. I hope you will approve of my course, and that I shall soon see the "Scorpion" again, and hear from you.

Please give my regards to Captain Mackenzie, and believe me as, sir, truly yours,

A. BIGELOW.

Commodore PERRY.

P. S.—A subscription is now going on among the inhabitants of this place to send up barges with provisions to relieve these unfortunates.

LAGUNA, March 25, 1848.

SIR: Last evening a barge arrived from Campeachy, bringing me letters from the United States consul, Mr. McGregor, and Lieutenant Commanding Mason, copies of which I enclose. As Mr. McGregor requested me to communicate the contents of his letter to our government, and to forward one which he sent me for the agent of the Yucatan government at Washington, I availed myself of the opportunity afforded by a vessel which left this morning for New Orleans, and enclosed the letter for the commissioner, together with copies of Mr. McGregor's and Lieutenant Commanding Mason's letters to the Hon. Secretary of the Navy.

The "Falcon" sailed for Campeachy this morning. I put on

board of her ten barrels of flour, all which was left of the twenty-five barrels purchased by your order, and have purchased twenty more for the use of the vessels here and at Campeachy. It is probable we shall have to feed the people, who may be rescued so long, at least, as they may remain on board of our vessels.

Lieutenant Commandant Herndon informs me that the "Iris" will be in a condition to get up steam this evening, and I intend sending her also to Campeachy for a few days. The "Wasp," which I was preparing to send to Frontera, I shall now send to Vera Cruz with this and a despatch from Lieutenant Commanding Mason, giving directions to Acting Master Madigan to proceed from thence to Frontera, and report as you directed, unless he shall receive counter orders from you. I have ordered Lieutenant Robertson to return with the "Morris" from Palisada, and she will be the only vessel here for the present. As every thing is tranquill, and likely, to remain so at this place, I feel no apprehension on account of being left without a force. The "Morris" and my guard of a dozen marines are quite sufficient to preserve order. On examining into the condition of the municipal fund, I find that there are outstanding debts for the materials for the mole, &c., of some fourteen hundred dollars, and no funds on hand at this time to meet them. This, and the probability of my being obliged to do something at the public expense for the relief of the distressed people of Yucatan, who may now be expected here in great numbers, has induced me to suspend operations on the public works till sufficient funds accumulate in the treasury to pay off the debt now outstanding.

I shall, however, proceed to contract for driving the piles to secure the work already done at the mole. As there will be considerable revenue due on the 1st proximo, I hope soon to be able to square up the accounts and commence again on the hospital, &c.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. BIGELOW,
Commander.

Commodore M. C. PERRY,
Commanding, &c., gulf of Mexico.

CONSULATE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
At Campeachy, this 22d day of March, 1848.

SIR: Your communication of the 23d ultimo has been received, and its contents duly noted.

I am at a loss what to say in reference to the Indians. It seems that they are gaining strength every day; and we have just learned that they have taken Espita and Fisimin, and that Tekax would also fall. The inhabitants of these villages have fled to the sea shore for assistance, (that is, to the eastward of Sisal,) and, it is said, they number from three to four thousand souls. The authorities of this place are taking measures; several vessels and canoes will be sent this evening to their aid. Enclosed are letters from Captain Mason, who also writes you on this subject. We have no

vessel at present for the United States. Should you meet with an opportunity, I request you will have the kindness to communicate with our government concerning this information. The enclosure for Mr. Sierra, at Washington, you will be pleased to forward by the first opportunity.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
 JOHN F. MCGREGOR,
United States Consul.

A. BIGELOW, *Commander U. S. Navy,*
Civil and Military Governor, Laguna.

U. S. BRIG VESUVIUS,
Campeachy, March 22, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR: If you can possibly spare me a *steamer*, you will be doing a great act of charity. There are now thousands of men, women and children on the beach, suffering and in want. I cannot go; had I the *Falcon* or a steamer, I could relieve, in a great measure, the distress of this people.

I am aware it is my duty to communicate to the commodore; but not knowing where to find him, I must necessarily write to you, and you will be kind enough to explain it to him. If you can, send me the *Scorpion* or the *Iris*. It would be the measure of relieving many families.

Respectfully yours, &c., &c.,

M. MASON.

To Captain BIGELOW, *Laguna.*

U. S. BRIG VESUVIUS,
Off Campeachy, April 2, 1848.

SIR: You are aware of the state of this country. Yucatan is lost, unless some foreign power comes to her assistance. The Indians now muster about sixty thousand men, and they are divided into four columns. A map I sent by my brother *James*, will show you how far they have advanced. The ex-governor, *Mendez*, through our consul, begged that I would call and see him in reference to the state of this country. He stated to me that he was desirous that I should forward a despatch to the United States, and, as you will see, that the government of Yucatan desires to be annexed to the United States. All they ask is this—hoist the flag of the United States, annex us to your government, and we are satisfied.

Now, it comes to this—unless we do it, *Spain will*. She is sending over ammunition, &c. All the people, merchants, (wealthy,) the lower classes, and all, want our protection.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

M. MASON,

Lieut. com'dg U. S. brig Vesuvius.

To the Hon. JOHN Y. MASON,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington.

APRIL 2, 1848.

I enclose a copy from Captain Glasson, of the *Falcon*, which vessel I sent up the coast to bring down the suffering families.

U. S. SCHOONER *FALCON*,
Off *Campeachy*, 2d April, 1848.

SIR: In conformity to your order of the 28th ultimo, I proceeded to windward to give such succor to the people, from the cruelty of the Indians, along the coast of Yucatan, as was pointed out in it. The nearest point was Selam, about one hundred and twenty miles to the eastward of *Campeachy*, at which I anchored. In proceeding to the shore I boarded a small vessel with English colors, at anchor, named the *True Blue*, James Smith, master, bound to the Island of Cosumel, crowded with persons, who, according to the statement of the master, preferred the Island of Cosumel as an asylum, as there was an English settlement. I landed at the town of Selam, and found a number of persons there from the city of Valladolid, who had fled at the capture of it by the Indians, and anxious to proceed with me to *Campeachy*. I took on board one hundred and twenty-one persons. Many of the inhabitants had arrived and left for Sisal with a hope of reaching *Campeachy*. It was said that the Indians were within seven or nine leagues of Selam, and that they destroy every habitation and put to death all whom they meet. The accounts of those whom I brought here for protection give a most heart-rending description of the unfortunate condition of the country. The country is lost, unless we come to its assistance. She would sooner have our aid than that of any other. I was credibly informed that the sloop-of-war *Susie Fernandez*, from Havana, had arrived at Sisal with munitions of war to succor the whites. Something must be done either by us or some other power, or the whole country must inevitably fall into the hands of the Indians.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
JOHN J. GLASSON.

Lieut. Com'd'g. M. MASON,
Com'd'g. U. S. Brig *Vesuvius*, *Campeachy*.

UNITED STATES BRIG *VESUVIUS*,
Campeachy, April 2, 1848.

SIR: In my conversation with the ex-governor, Mendez, of Yucatan, he informs me that it is impossible for the whites to resist the Indians, who are destroying every town and village, killing men, women, and children.

Mr. Mendez is about to offer this country to Great Britain, France, Spain, and the United States. The sense and feeling of the country is in favor of the United States. I therefore send the

schooner *Falcon* to New Orleans with despatches from this government on the subject.

Your obedient servant,

M. MASON,
Lieutenant Commanding.

To the Hon. JOHN Y. MASON,
Washington.

Extracts of a despatch from Commodore Perry, No. 164, dated—

FLAG SHIP CUMBERLAND,
Vera Cruz, April 15, 1848.

SIR: The *Iris* has this moment arrived from Campeachy, bringing letters from Commander Bigelow as late as the 12th instant, and from Commander Engle, at Frontera, up to the 10th.

In Yucatan the Indians were still gaining ground, and the whites, without attempting the least defence, continued to fly towards the coast. The United States schooner *Falcon* had taken to Campeachy more than one hundred of the poorer classes, who were found on the coast in a destitute condition.

Governor Mendez has resigned in favor of his political rival, Señor Barbechanó, which measure has, it seems, produced increased dissensions among the troops.—(See enclosed extract from the report of Commander Bigelow.) * * *

Perhaps there has never been a more extraordinary example of disgraceful cowardice, than has been exhibited by the people of Yucatan in their war with the Indians. If it were not for the unhappy condition of the women and children, they would not deserve the sympathies of any one. Men who will make no effort to defend their own firesides, have no claim upon the friendly aid of others.

* * * * *
I have the honor to be, with great respect, sir, your obedient servant,

M. C. PERRY,
Commanding home squadron.

Hon. J. Y. MASON,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington.

Extract of a communication from Commander A. Bigelow, senior naval officer at Laguna, dated Laguna, April 4, 1848, and addressed to Commodore M. C. Perry, commanding home squadron.

We have accounts from Yucatan which state the troops stationed at Texax, on learning of Barbechano's having superseded Mendez

in the presidency, immediately took up the line of march for Campeachy, and abandoned their position. The parties appear to be as divided and hostile to each other as ever; or, perhaps, the troops who wished to retreat, took advantage of the change in the government to screen their cowardice.