

The present letter will treat of a matter in my opinion of much importance. I regret that I cannot enter as fully into details on one portion of it as I desire.

You are of course aware of the Treaty whereby England agreed to use its good offices in mediating a peace between Texas and Mexico, and of the utter failure of that mediation.<sup>a</sup>

You are also doubtless aware that I was instructed to invite the Govt. of France to act in concert with England and the United States in making a joint representation to Texas and Mexico—That France acceded to that invitation with alacrity and every manifestation of friendly spirit, and instructed its Ambassador at London to present this subject to the British Govt.;—and that the British Govt. positively refused to act in concert with France and the United States in this matter. The French Govt. on the refusal of Great Britain to act jointly, instructed their Minister at Mexico to tender *separately* their good offices to the Mexican Govt. to bring about if possible an amicable arrangement between this power and Texas. Here the mediation rests. Nothing has been accomplished nor is likely to be accomplished by any mediation in its present shape. The English influence at Mexico is alone paramount.

You are also aware that in the mean time two Steam Frigates, the *Guadaloupe* and *Montezuma* were fitted out in England for the Mexican Govt. Their models of building and arming, I was informed in London were furnished by the British Admiralty; they were fully armed, manned with British Seamen and commanded by officers of the Royal Navy. The *Guadaloupe* sailed from Liverpool with her armament mounted and ready to beat to quarters for action. Supplementary officers, gunners, went out to serve on board the other vessels of the Mexican Navy. These things were done with the full and avowed knowledge of the destination and purpose of these vessels by the British Ministry and in *violation* of their own laws, as was *expressly* declared in an order of the Lords of the Treasury, of which order I possess a copy.

In the replies however of Lord Aberdeen to my protests, he denies the fitting out of these vessels to be a violation of International Law.

There are many points and facts in our recent relations with England to which I would gladly call your attention; but I must omit them for want of space.

The English Govt. in recognising Texas were influenced by several considerations. One of these was our ceding to them "the right of search" which they made a *sine qua non* of recognition. England was particularly desirous at that time to isolate the United States on this great question. Next, that Govt. were afraid that Texas might be annexed to the American Union. They desired our separate ex-

<sup>a</sup> See Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, II, 886-888.

istence for commercial reasons, as a consumer of their manufactures and a producer of cotton not subject to the tarriff restrictions of the United States, and also as a means of attacking that tarriff by smuggling through Texas. They desired our separate existence as interposing a barrier to the incroachments of the United States upon Mexico

There now exists another matter which has been entertained for *some months* in England; whether or not, for a longer period I am unable to say. I will develop it in a separate paragraph.

It is the purpose of some persons in England to procure the abolition of Slavery in Texas. They propose to accomplish this end by friendly negotiation and by the concession of what will be deemed equivalents. I believe the equivalents contemplated are a guarantee by Great Britain of the Independence of Texas—discriminating duties in favor of Texian products and perhaps the negotiation of a loan, or some means by which the finances of Texas can be readjusted. They estimate the number of Slaves in Texas at 12,000 and would consider the payment for them in full, as a small sum for the advantages they anticipate from the establishment of a free State on the Southern borders of the Slave holding States of the American Union.

In July last in London, two matters were submitted to me in conversation by a person then and now having relations with the British Govt. *One* was, whether the people of Texas would listen to and consider a proposition from the English Government to abolish Slavery in consideration of concessions and equivalent advantages to be offered by that Govt. The *second* matter was, whether Texas would not be induced to divide itself into two States, one slave-holding the other non-slave holding. It was argued that but few slaves would probably be introduced into Western Texas by reason of its proximity to Mexico, and that therefore, it would be conceding but little to establish “a free state” on this frontier; and the Colorado was proposed as a dividing line. I do not know to whom is due the initiative of these matters; but I was informed that the propositions in question, had been a subject of conversation with Lord Aberdeen. And I am aware that in another conversation in which Lord Aberdeen took part, it was maintained that the population which would flock into this “free state” from Europe would be enabled to vote down the Slave holders, and thus the Texians would of themselves establish an entire non-slaveholding country.

Although I carefully noted these conversations from the mark of the person with whom I had them, I did not probably fully estimate their significancy

I may be mistaken in regard to the equivalents to be offered by England as they were not dwelt upon in detail. But in regard to

the two propositions, one to abolish slavery throughout the entire territory; the other to establish a nonslave holding state in Western Texas; and in regard to the personal standing and relations with the Govt. of the Gentleman making the propositions, I cannot be in error.

Until within a few months the British Govt. undoubtedly desired the establishment of peace between Texas and Mexico—Texas remaining a slave holding country—chiefly from an apprehension, that if the contest continued Texas might be thrown into the American Union. That Govt. are now convinced that Texas cannot be admitted into this Union, and that a decisive attempt on the part of the Southern States to receive Texas would endanger the stability of the Union

Have the British Govt. now the same motives as formerly for desiring peace between Texas and Mexico? May they not imagine that the present disturbed condition of our country continuing—enterprise and industry being paralyzed—our citizens being wearied out with a harassing war, which has checked Emigration, prevents the cultivation of our soil and the development of our resources. We may be more ready to yield the point of slavery in exchange for England's guarantee of our Independence and some commercial and financial advantages? Whether the equivalents mentioned will be those proposed. I repeat, I do not certainly know. But rely on it, as certain, that in England it is intended to make an effort, and that some things are already in train to accomplish if possible the abolition of slavery in Texas. And might not Texas exhausted as just described, listen in a moment of folly to such overtures from the British Govt?

In the meantime, rely on it we have nothing to expect from the continued offer of British mediation to Mexico on its *present basis*.

As little have we to expect from the good offices of France, although sincerely and faithfully employed, so long as they are separately exerted as at the present time.

The independence of Texas and the existence of Slavery in Texas is a question of life or death to the slave holding states of the American Union. Hemmed in between the free states on their northern border, and a free Anglo Saxon State on their southern border and sustained by England, their history would soon be written

*The Establishment of a free state on the territory of Texas is a darling wish of England for which scarcely any price would be regarded as too great. The bargain once struck what remedy remains to the south?*

France and the United States might conjointly decide at once the affairs of Texas and Mexico without the concurrence of England

The generous promptness with which France acceded to the former invitations induces me to believe she would cooperate with the United

States on an invitation *emanating from this Power*. France will not take the initiative and make the invitation to the United States.

Does it not behoove the American people particularly of the Slave holding states to look to this subject; and the American Government single handed or in concert with France to declare to the world their determination to maintain the *Independence* of Texas and the integrity of her institutions?

The foregoing letter has been drawn up in haste. Some things have been omitted which it would have been well to mention. I might have explained how the recal of the British officers was a practical nullity. But notwithstanding the haste, every sentiment I have expressed has been carefully weighed

I am with sentiments of great respect Your very  
obedient humble Servant

*signed,* ASHBEL SMITH

To Hon. ISAAC VAN ZANDT  
*Chargé de Affaires of Texas at Washington City*

A correct copy  
ASHBEL SMITH.

(Copy)

No 2

ASHBEL SMITH TO MR. VAN ZANDT.<sup>a</sup>

\* \* \* The subject of the accompanying letter and the purposes there mentioned will perhaps occasion some surprise and at first be difficult of belief. You may however rely on the facts, and that something has been brewing for some time past in England, having for its end the establishment of a non-slave-holding state in our territory. Whether these projects will ever assume a definite outward form and be put into action, or whether the English Govt has taken any further part therein, further than to have had information of the same I am yet unable to say.

If the southern states are wise, they will require the general Govt to express a decided opinion in regard to the *Independence* of Texas, and to the termination of the contest between us and Mexico, and further to declare that they will not permit Texas to *become in any way a dependance on any foreign power*.

The contest with Mexico has now assumed a much graver character than formerly. The British holders of Mexican stocks were the securities of the Mexican consul at London for the building of the Guadalupe and Montezuma steamers. This is a *certainly* known fact. Large quantities of Mexican stock were issued in London secretly as

<sup>a</sup> The date of this letter must have been the same as that whose copy precedes. See Smith's reference in his letter inclosing these copies to "letters" written to Van Zandt January 25.

you have probably seen, and sold, as was believed, to furnish Mexico the means to operate against Texas. Most of the bondholders are violent *anti slavery* men, their hostility to Texas as a *slave holding country* is extreme, and while it continues such, they would spare no money to subjugate the country, as they believe it would be doing God service. The English *Govt* may be a very impartial looker on of the contest now waging with Mexico, but it is nevertheless practically true that we have now to contend with Mexico, aided with British mercenaries and British money.

In France I find the best disposition to think favorably of us and although they felt a little sore from the difficulty between the late administration and their *Chargé d' affaires*, they would forget it all, and do us every good in their power, did not the opposition prints of Texas so bewray our country, defame our Government and calumniate our administration that persons in Europe cannot put confidence in the permanence of our institutions or credit our ability for self government. They await further developments.

My position, you naturally will conceive, is not very pleasant—having to contend against the misrepresentations of Texas by our own citizens. But for these calumines of our own, we might have been recognized by nearly every power in Europe.

With sentiments of great esteem I am truly yours

signed ASHBEL SMITH

The Hon Mr VAN ZANDT  
*Chargé d' affaires du Texas.*

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SMITH TO JONES.<sup>a</sup>

LEGATION OF TEXAS, LONDON  
*42 St. James's Place, July 3, 1843*

HON. ANSON JONES  
*Secy of State*

SIR,

\* \* \* \* \*

I shall proceed to Paris to meet Col Daingerfield in about a week from this date, unless the movements being made here for the abolition of slavery in Texas should in my opinion render it proper for me to prolong my stay in London.

With great respect

Your most obedient servant

ASHBEL SMITH.

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<sup>a</sup> A. L. S.

<sup>b</sup> Here is omitted a paragraph relating to Smith's salary.

SMITH TO DAINGERFIELD.\*

3 ST. JAMES STREET LONDON

*July 6th. 1843*HON. HENRY WM. DAINGERFIELD  
*etc. etc. etc.*

DEAR SIR

I have this moment received and run my eye over the package you sent me embracing your own very acceptable letter. My Desire to join you in Paris is very great, and I expect confidently to do so in the course of the next week. No private considerations would have detained me in London to the present time. While matters of so much public importance to our Country as the adopting of means in England to abolish Slavery among us have been occupying the attention of influential persons here including members of this Government I have been unwilling to leave London, and especially as the principal inducement which will be held out from Europe to our citizens for this purpose is and will be the immense influx of European emigrants into Texas upon the abolition of Slavery. Before taking so important a step we ought not only to look at the value of the proposed advantages but be also assured that those advantages will truly accrue. I have made careful inquiries concerning the emigration we may reasonably expect from Europe upon the abolition of Slavery. Intelligent Gentlemen themselves abolitionists though not committed to the busy and meddling projects ever in agitation here have assured me that even under the circumstances in question, they do not believe we should receive any considerable augmentation from this Country. This view and opinion and various others of the same General tenor I have communicated to Mr Andrews with whom I have had several full conferences. There are other important points connected with this subject on all of which I desire a full consultation with you. I have been and am willing here in Europe to consider every proposition upon or concerning Slavery though I need not intimate to you that I am not at all in favour of any plan of abolition yet proposed. Adding that I have many things to confer with about and being well aware how impatient you must needs be at Paris, I trust you will nevertheless contrive to spend your time agreeably untill my arrival next week. In regard to Barnards application I am quite of your opinion though I think he made the same previously to your reaching Europe.

with great regards very truly and faithfully yours

(Signed) ASHBEL SMITH.

\* See Records of Department of State (Texas), Book 55, pp. 16-17.

ELLIOT TO JONES.<sup>a</sup>BASIS FOR AN ARMISTICE BETWEEN MEXICO AND TEXAS.<sup>b</sup>SMITH TO DAINGERFIELD.<sup>c</sup>

3 ST. JAMES STREET LONDON.

*July 11, 1843*HON. H. W. DAINGERFIELD,<sup>d</sup> etc. etc.

MY DEAR SIR

I have this moment received your favour of the 9th.; and I can well understand your wish to proceed to your Post at the Hague; It is not greater than mine to return to Paris and nothing but the importance of our interests which have needed watching at London would have kept me there so long. I am to day to present Mr Andrews by his request to Mr Addington under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs who has expressed to me his willingness to receive Mr Andrews. I have deemed it best to do so as this course puts me in possession of the matters proposed to be treated of with the British Government to wit the abolition of Slavery, and authorises me to make at once a verbal protest agst all proceedings here in England in these Premises. I saw Mr Andrews on Saturday and learned from him in general that the plan of abolition is maturing though he gave me no additional information touching its details. He is fully aware of my opinion on these matters and of my decided oposition to his project; It is a source of great regret that I cannot have the benefit of your counsels at this time and I must also beg that you will not leave Paris untill my arrival When in Brussells and previously in Paris I had conversations with Leopold and with Count Goblet d' Alviella the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs concerning the recognition of Texas by Belgium and I possess some information hereon which you ought to know. Leopold is now in London and will proceed to Paris in a few days where I hope to see him with you Major Samuel Whitney, a friend of yrs is in London, and will accompany me to Paris. Do not leave till the arrival of yours very truly

(Signed) ASHBEL SMITH

<sup>a</sup> July 7, 1843. See Calendar.<sup>b</sup> Undated; but it was copied at Galveston July 25, and the original must have been written some days before. See Elliot to Jones, July 24, 1843.<sup>c</sup> See Records of Department of State (Texas), Book 55, pp. 17-18.<sup>d</sup> W. H. Daingerfield.

SMITH TO DAINGERFIELD.<sup>a</sup>LONDON *17th. July 1843*

MY DEAR DAINGERFIELD

I am afraid that I shall not only exhaust your patience but wholly lose my reputation for punctuality. You may *positively* rely on seeing me the present week. Major Whitney and myself *will leave* Wednesday or Thursday Evening. My protracted Departure has been occasioned wholly by the importance of the abolition movements here which I have deemed deserving of carefull attention on my part. I have seen Mr. Addington and other gentlemen but I will not bore you further on these and other matters untill we meet. With great respect yours very truly

(Signed) ASHBEL SMITH

SMITH TO JONES.<sup>b</sup>

LEGATION OF TEXAS, LONDON

*July 21, 1843*HON ANSON JONES  
*Secy of State*

SIR,

His Excellency the Baron de Cetto, Bavarian Minister at this Court, has inclosed to me the accompanying judicial document directed to Mr Francis Peter Hoffmann, a Merchant residing at Houston, and begs leave to inquire whether it would be possible for me to cause the paper to be served on Mr Hoffmann, and to procure Baron de Cetto a certificate of its having been so served.

In my reply to the Baron de Cetto I stated that I would forward the document in question, to Texas together with his wishes in relation to it, by the earliest opportunity.

I am with great respect  
Your very obedient servant

ASHBEL SMITH.

P. S. This despatch was delayed in London until this 12th October 1843.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> See Records of Department of State (Texas), Book 55, p. 19.

<sup>b</sup> A. L. S.

<sup>c</sup> The dispatch is filed with Smith to Jones, August 22, 1843, and seems to have been transmitted as a part of the same dispatch, which is marked "45."