

THE FRONTIER.

A New Class of Slave States.  
Correspondence of The Tribune.  
EAGLE PASS, Saturday, Jan. 18.

Since even the Secretary of War has announced the necessity of amending the feeble, unsystematic half-measures that are wasting so much of the blood and revenues of the country to so little purpose, on our extended frontier, perhaps a quiet looker on may be forgiven for saying one word more on Government omissions. While the last session, Congress spent nine months doing that which it ought not to have done, it omitted to devote as many days to doing those things which it should have done, and as nearly as one can judge from the results, the Cabinet was equally busy helping the legislative branch to do nothing. Partizans and game hunters squabbled vehemently over the exact line of latitude and longitude that was to circumscribe the shadowy march of an imaginary slave army into New Mexico, but what statesman upraised his voice against the real existing, overwhelming servitude that sits a paralysis upon the country and clogs the wheels of life—that makes her a half dead skeleton, a bye-word of poverty and sloth, and would keep her a starved pauper among her rich and active sisters, neglected and forgotten in a corner of the family domain, so soon as she ceased to be a convenient football for the players in the political circus at Washington. Did one man of all those who made speeches about "Southern rights" and "human liberty" in New-Mexico expend one sentence for her real salvation, or turn one glance at the Peon servitude which entrails two thirds of her population?

New Mexico must be guarded against a State constitution that will put her landless, uneducated tillers of the soil at the feet of the landowners; for, as I before warned you, a property qualification for voters and laws for imprisonment for debt, are all that is required to keep the ignorant, enslaved and homeless Indians of New-Mexico in bondage.

These are three immediate wants of that half buried region, and it is at once the duty and the interest of the whole Federal family to see their embarrassed sister relieved of her bonds and placed in the path of prosperity and independence. Whatever enhances the wealth of the individual partners, increases, as of course, the common capital of the Union. First, humanity and policy demands that another servile race and another form of bondage shall not be introduced in the bosom of our motherland, to distract the peace and rend her members asunder. Present justice and future peace require the instant and firm abrogation of Peonage. Let it take root in New Mexico and we may soon have a Peon State of Western Texas; to be followed by the annexation of other Peon States torn from Mexico. You may smile at the term "Peon State" as a chimera, and it will be but a phantom if New Mexico is not made sovereign this or the coming year. But if she is, the phantom hardens into a black and iron reality, and before you have touched it to know what the stern substance is like, California, the Free, may be legalizing her code of Apprentice Labor, and Imprisonment for Debt. Let Mr. Webster look to his laurels, or he may find too late that he is wearing the black nettle of Peonage in his historic chaplet. The second claim of New Mexico is a thorough geological survey, and it is a pity that none of her boisterous nurses thought of urging for her this "most helpful medicament." This survey would keep most salutary step with the military reconnaissance which everybody concedes is due and inevitable, but which nobody sets about giving her in earnest. The immense mineral wealth which is scattered in marvellous abundance and most orderly confusion, over the wrinkled front of her mountains, would, if fairly given to the world's notice, attract to her healthy vales and sunny plains the men to make her forget her foolish days of Peonage, and the capital to decorate her new-born greatness with luxury and wisdom. The sales of public domain that would accrue from a better knowledge of the rich mining regions locked up in her unexplored sierras, and which are not yet monopolized, would liberally repay whatever is lent—for it is only lent her—from the National Treasury. Prompt action is the more necessary, as by her present laws, whoever "denounces" or informs the authorities that he has discovered and appropriated a mine, becomes its owner. The restless tide of speculators will flow in and "denounce" extensively, and for the purpose of selling out again to actual workers, and thus secure to themselves the first purchase money, which should go to reimburse the Nation for its outlay. Mere speculators, as Texas has found to her cost, are worse than profitless drones; they are mischievous leeches, who produce nothing themselves, and draw undeserved fortunes from the public resources and private industry.

A collateral need with this early survey and advertisement of the mineral lands of this region, is the establishment of competent tribunals to ascertain and settle pretended land titles. Nothing can be more loose, indefinite, and, we may add, unfounded, than the titles to an immense portion of the pasture lands of New-Mexico. A few families claim it all, and this shuts the door to a home and independence to the laboring classes. This it is that Peonizes the poor workmen in all New-Mexico. They have no foot of ground to rest upon, and must accept, on the landowners' own terms, the narrow privilege to toil—to starve and to die on his soil. The adoption, survey and sale of the public domain in New-Mexico will introduce the life and health of a home-possessing

class into her stagnant industrial system, and I repeat, the returns from those sales, while it returns to the general treasury every dollar advanced for her benefit, will be but a reasonable fee for bringing the resources of New-Mexico into light and market.

Emancipation from domestic enthrallment, the survey and protection of her territory, and the settlement of her combous land monopoly, are direct and pressing obligations, which the General Government, in its capacity of guardian to the infant State, should lose no time in discharging. There is still a fourth debt, which is imperfectly admitted, and still more imperfectly attended to, that is a part of this general necessity, and of close interest to the whole round of States.

To bring New-Mexico into family intercourse, we must open a door in the wall of isolation that surrounds her, and show her how she can shake hands with her sisters. No fair attempt to do this has been made. The trains that have staggered blindfold from the Gulf of Mexico to El Paso del Norte thought they were doing something that way—and they were, negatively, by fearing what to avoid; but the probable path of future trade, which should also be our line of operation for border defense, has never received a word or glance of notice. That it has not, proves how far the Government falls short of its duty.—From the coast to the head waters of the Colorado River are half a dozen tracks, known to be good and feasible for teams, and running through a rich and beautiful country. From the harbors up half way to Santa Fé, say 500 or 600 miles, there can be no question which is the best route, although the Government has never tried it; and what is still more important, from the upper waters of the Colorado runs the most direct and practicable line of communication between New-Mexico and the sea. It is yet untried, and unspoken of—but to it they must come at last, just as the studiously neglected line between the Nueces and Rio Bravo is the one that must finally be adopted and protected, as the proper direct route from the coast to El Paso and all the ports below it on this frontier. The sturdy determination not to see the importance of these routes to the interior will be difficult to overcome, but in three or four years they will be opened by individual enterprise. Then, when no one cares for them, we will be favored with costly exploring parties and elaborate reports, with innumerable plates and tables, and all other learned and useless lumber, in sufficient quantities to cover up and hide from sight the wasted blood of the pioneer citizens.

CORA MONTGOMERY.

Enslaving American Citizens in Mexico.  
Correspondence of The Tribune.

EAGLE PASS, Tuesday, Jan. 23, 1851.

I have propounded to the higher authorities an important question, but great bodies move so slow that I would ask of you and the people a speedy opinion. It scarcely touched us before, but now that our settlements are crowding to the Bravo river, its solution may cost many an innocent man his liberty and life, and perhaps be made the excuse for another war, and the waste on Mexican ground of another twenty thousand lives. Another hundred million of dollars, and an overflowing tide of demoralization and suffering for all who come in contact with the river of blood-glory. This then is the question—give it heedful attention:—*American citizens can be and are enslaved for debt in Mexico. Will our Government apply a remedy?*

Do not doubt the fact, and fail not to urge preventive measures: above all do not accept the equivocal denials and false representations with which it is now the fashion for our public servants to gloss over their derelictions and "make the worse appear the better reason." One simple example out of the thick harvest of them that is now springing up on the river will set the principle in its proper light. VICTOR ESPERA, a man in the mechanic class, and guilty of some admixture of Indian blood, became an American citizen by the annexation of Texas, and by the final treaty with Mexico, which repealed and confirmed the naturalization of the inhabitants of Mexican stock who resided on our side of the line. Victor is now in the service of an American family as groom and confidential out-door servant, and is much liked by his employer for his good natured fidelity and his courage in the cattle range; for every one is not willing to ride and sleep out alone miles from the settlement in an Indian country. Victor is always ready for an enterprise, and is never so happy as when he is called to take his horse and gun and go on some perilous errand. Such a man is of value on the border, and it is a great drawback to his own usefulness, and the interest of his employer, that he cannot be sent over the river on any of the frequent occasions in which he could be especially serviceable. Unfortunately he cannot set foot on the opposite bank without imminent danger of being caught and enslaved, although he is an American citizen. I have good and satisfactory right to believe he does not in justice owe anything, but it is easy to make a person a peon there on the mere accusation of debt. His citizenship is rather an incumbrance in such a strait, for he has no protection from Mexican laws, and I have never heard a hint of the possibility of our Government interfering for the rescue or redress of a citizen thus deprived of liberty. Victor, who laughs so lightly at danger from the arrows of the redoubtable Camanches, fell a victim to the delicate shafts of a little blind boy named Cupid. On a visit to San Fernando for mark you, he has never vitiated his citizenship by a residence in Mexico since he acquired it, and it was on a visit only that he doubly forfeited his freedom—Victor met a bewitching peon girl, to whom he lost his heart. His enslaver was herself a slave for the mighty sum of \$16, and like all other peons had no earthly prospect of ever regaining her freedom. Victor had no money—few children of the red race ever have it often or long—but he had a very fair Mexican horse and his gun, and he gave them to an old man in pledge for the repayment of the expense and trouble of smuggling his beloved Guadalupe over to the American side. It did not cost the old Shylock more than a dollar and a day's journey to deliver the runaway peon girl to her enamored Victor, but he had the conscience to charge \$18, and the bridegroom was too happy to cavil at any price for his rescued treasure. Guadalupe, however, exacted another sacrifice, when she found that she could never revisit the other side without being snatched up again as a peon serf; she insisted that the debt of servitude should be cancelled. Victor's employer willingly advanced the money, and the pretty Indian girl became the wife of an American citizen, but at the price of transferring her yoke of slavery to the neck of the husband. Victor's wages are \$12 a month, and the money for Guadalupe's emancipation, some clothes for his bride, of which she stood sufficiently in need, and a trifle of old arrears left him so much in debt to his employer that he could not ask for the money to redeem his horse and gun. If he had stated his difficulty at once, his long and faithful service would doubtless have procured him the indulgence of the advance further required. Instead of this, he waited until he had nearly worked out his bridal debts on the American side, and then, when he went to bring his Mexican creditor to settlement, the old knave not only refused to give up the pledged property, but demanded \$18 more, as a debt which Victor had admitted. Victor repudiated this new charge, and the old creditor is now watching to arrest him on the other side of the river, and sell him for the debt. I now repeat the question—*Can this American citizen be enslaved for debt?* If our Government will not take the trouble to settle this question properly, the liberty of hundreds, ay, thousands of our poorer citizens, come from what State they will, is in peril. The neglect to guard against enslaving our citizens, and even kidnapping them from our soil, must lead to serious evils, if not actual war. The President and Mr. Webster will be guilty of all these consequences if, in this favorable season of their power, they do not take early and energetic action in these matters. To shut them off from excuses of "no formal notice," &c., by a legal authenticated case of kidnapping—that of Manuel Rios—is duly lodged in the State Department.

CORA MONTGOMERY.