

as well as any one knew, the perilous position of the administration, and of the democratic party, with reference to this subject. No insight was clearer than his into the nature of that peril, and into the indispensableness of peace, of early peace, to avert it. At the same time he felt, keenly felt, the many wrongs which he considered himself as having suffered at the hands of that administration; and, above all, he was indignant at what he considered as both the injustice and the ill-faith involved in the endeavor to supplant him after he had been sent here to carry out—as he has done, in so beautiful, and masterly, and glorious a manner—the plan of campaign devised by himself. But all this was nothing. His nature is too lofty, his perceptions of high principles too clear, his obedience to them too steady and habitual, to admit of his swerving, under the influence of such feelings, from his line of duty as a servant of his country; and, governed as he was by this sense of duty, no servile tool of party could have been more earnestly or more anxiously solicitous to fulfil the wish, the all-engrossing wish of the administration, than he proved himself to be on this occasion, and on every occasion, when the fulfilment of that wish could be in any degree affected by aught which he could do, or which he could omit doing.

The armistice was his own act, emphatically his own. It required no advice, no argument, no suggestion from me. Had any such suggestion been necessary, the high estimate which, with every possible prepossession against him, I had been forced by stubborn facts to form of his character, would have become greatly lowered. Had he under the circumstances of that crisis, as known to us both, omitted to enter into that armistice, I should have considered this omission as the cause of the indefinite protraction of the war; and although it might not, and probably would not, have had the effect of shaking the confidence which my knowledge of him had inspired in his patriotic intentions, I should have denounced it as such.

And we had been duped! By whom? By *Santa Anna*! We had innocently put trust in the good faith of—whom? *Santa Anna*! This is the "Union's" way of accounting for the armistice and the negotiation! This is the only explanation of the deep enigma which access to high sources enables the "Union" to afford to the country! This is the conjecture which, with the aid of such lights, is deemed rational and probable with respect to the general-in-chief of the armies of the United States, and with respect to the agent employed by their government to execute a trust, which, in the eyes of that government, was one of some importance!

Rational and probable as it may be, however, it is nevertheless quite erroneous. Upon this stage, whatever may be thought of the matter at Washington, it would be difficult to find a person, however low in understanding, with reference to whom such a conjecture would be deemed otherwise than indecent. *Santa Anna*! The most *notoriously*, if not the most thoroughly unprincipled man whom this country holds; a man, in regard to whom it would be scarcely possible to find a woman or a child that knew how to read, who could be made to believe that the most solemn asseverations

coming from *him* would be worth a straw. And yet, this is the man by whose assurances the American general-in-chief and the American commissioner were duped! However probable, it is all a mistake to believe that it so happened. No such proof of imbecility was given by either as to suppose for an instant that *Santa Anna* was capable of good faith for the sake of good faith, or that his word was to be trusted. And yet we did believe him sincere in his professed desire for peace. Why? For the same reason that a man who, when seen drowning, should be heard to express his desire for a plank, might, although he were the most notorious liar that ever existed, or that can be conceived to exist, even such a man might, under such circumstances, be believed to be sincere; and this without the believer's being a dupe. And if, upon the plank's being thrown to the drowning man, he should, in the bewilderment of the moment, fail to avail himself of it, and should go down in consequence, all this would amount to proof of insincerity on his part, or of imbecility on the part of the person who had believed him. It would be a proof of this, and nothing more—that he had lost his head, and become, from the circumstances of the case, incapable of knowing how to act. Such precisely (as every one here saw, and as the event has proved) was the nature of *Santa Anna*'s position, and such the ground and the sole ground of our belief that he was sincere in expressing a desire for peace. We believed this, because it was in the nature of things impossible that it should be otherwise; because nothing short of the most conclusive proof that downright madness had suddenly taken possession of him, in place of the calculating and sagacious selfishness for which he is proverbial, could have made any sane man believe that the bent of his mind could be on anything else save peace. That this actually *was* the case, as well as that it must be the case, everything conspired to prove then, and everything has conspired to prove since.

The sincerity of his desire proved *itself*—proved itself in every way in which the nature of the case rendered it possible that it should prove itself—by giving rise to acts which could not possibly proceed from any other motive. No such proofs were necessary, to satisfy any mind acquainted with his position and his utterly selfish character, and with the condition of the country; but still many such were afforded.

No sooner had the armistice been entered into than he published the "Manifesto to the Nation," a copy of which was transmitted by me at the time. In this he asserts and demonstrates the international obligation of *listening to propositions of peace*. Did he stop at that point? What he had done thus far did not require him to go beyond it. He *could* not have done so; it would have been just the reverse of craft and cunning; it would have been sheer imbecility to do so *without an absolute necessity*. Every prudential consideration demanded that if the purpose which he then entertained required only a justification of the armistice, he should strictly confine himself to that topic. But he did not so confine himself. His purpose did require more—much more; for his purpose was *to make peace*. He had become fully convinced that peace

was necessary, and that this necessity was urgent and immediate, not only for the good of his country, but for that which alone he cares about—his own good, his own safety. Thus convinced, he had made up his mind to act, to *make peace*; and for this purpose to cut the Gordian knot of constitutional questions, by *assuming* whatever powers might be necessary. That such was his state of mind, that such was his determination, and that he then believed this determination to be fixed beyond the possibility of change, it is impossible to doubt, after reading the following passage—although, to feel the full force of the proof which it affords, it is necessary to be perfectly acquainted with the nature of his position and the state of the country at that precise moment. Passing from the armistice to what he considered as certainly to follow the armistice, he said: "*A perpetual war is an absurdity*; because war is a calamity, and the instinct of self-preservation, which is even stronger and more powerful in nations than in individuals, recommends that no means whatever be omitted that may lead to an advantageous arrangement. To adopt this course *the constitution gives me competent authority*. Consecrated to interests so noble and highly privileged," [that is, the interests of peace,] "it is my duty to maintain at all cost the respect and reverence due to the supreme authority with which I am invested. \* \* \* \* \*

I will be yet more explicit: sedition and attempts at subverting the government *shall be exemplarily punished*." Thus, in defiance of the decree of the 20th April, and of any other decree or law, or constitutional provision; thus trampling under foot every obstacle which stood or which might stand in his way to peace; and thus conquering for the moment the chief obstacle of all, (and the one before which he finally quailed,) his dread of those at whom these last words are aimed, and whom they threaten with his avenging power; thus did he proclaim his irrevocable resolve to take the whole matter into his own hands, and announce that he was then acting in pursuance of that resolve.

Is such a course as this (on the part of a man of his base stamp particularly) reconcilable with the crude notion which constitutes the germ of what I have called, and call again, (knowing no other name for such stuff,) the *balderdash*, the unworthy, the disgraceful balderdash, with which the "Union" has insulted the intelligence of our country upon this subject? Where is the man who is able so far to blind himself as not to see that, if no other proof existed, this manifesto stands there as a substantial reality, the existence of which is absolutely irreconcilable with any such belief as that the armistice was a mere trick of Santa Anna's, to gain time? with any such belief as that he did not then intend to make peace? with any such belief, even, as that he possibly could, at that moment, have believed otherwise than that peace was immediately to take place?

Again, take his appointment of commissioners. Whom did he select for this office? His own tools, who would do whatever he might bid them do in the way of chicanery and cheatery? No! He selected men of the very highest standing, from the ranks of

the party which had always been opposed to him: men, two of whom were among the few openly-declared friends of peace in the country, and every one of whom—so great was their aversion to have anything to do with him, or with public affairs whilst he held the reins—it was a matter of extreme difficulty to prevail upon to act. With respect to these commissioners I will here repeat a passage contained in my last despatch, under date the 27th ultimo.

"Before quitting the subject, I will call attention to the letter of Don Vicente Romero, contained in the 'Razonador' of the 13th instant. It was the reading of this letter in Congress, on the 4th instant, by Don Eligio Romero, son of the writer, as the ground for the motion with which it concludes, that gave rise to the statement mentioned in my despatch No. 20, respecting General Mora y Villamil. The Romeros are both ultra puros. The father was a member of Santa Anna's cabinet, as minister of justice, at the time when the negotiation took place. The letter, it will be perceived, concludes its attack upon the Peña y Peña administration, by saying: 'and, in fine, General Mora y Villamil is the person appointed to the post of minister of war; he who has been the avowed *apostle of peace*; and so decided in this character, that, in a meeting of the cabinet, of which I was a member, he said (he being at the time one of the commission appointed to receive propositions of the envoy of the north) "*that he had been for many years in favor of peace*; and that *this ought to be made by adopting the propositions made by Mr. Trist*.'" in which, let it be known, by the by, *the other commissioners* (Couto and Atristain) *concurred, except Señor Herrera, who did not say a word*."

"The fact here published to the world by a member of Santa Anna's cabinet was previously well known (as such a fact could scarcely fail to be) to all the initiated here; and that this was the disposition of the commission, of the *whole* commission, was, independently of what had passed in the cabinet, known to their confidential friends. In addition to this fact I will state another, one of many of the same complexion well known in the select political circles here, to wit: that so late as late in the night of Saturday, the 4th of September, Santa Anna was still undecided whether he would not give to those very commissioners whose opinions had thus been declared in full cabinet, a *carte blanche* to negotiate with me such treaty as they might deem proper."

To this latter fact, I have an amendment or addition to make here. Santa Anna's state of hesitancy *ended in a determination to give the carte blanche, and a letter to that effect was actually draughted by the Secretary of State, after 3 o'clock, p. m., on Sunday, the 5th of September*. This was the state of things when Santa Anna was again made to waver by the interference of a person already mentioned, in former despatches, as the one who had been chiefly instrumental in alarming him at the treaty. After this, he could not again be prevailed upon to come up to the mark. In my despatch giving an account of my last meeting with the commissioners, on the 6th of September, I mentioned the circum-

stance of their having come out in great haste, several hours after the time appointed, bringing with them only the *rough draughts* of the counter-project and the communication accompanying it. *Those papers had just been prepared.* The question whether our projet was to prevail had remained in suspense until that moment.

Thus near had we come to the attainment of our object! Thus nearly had the restoration of peace to our country come to pass, as the consequence of that armistice and negotiation, in which, through the atmosphere of Washington, nothing could be seen save a trick of Santa Anna to gain time, and, on the part of General Scott and myself, imbecility the most egregious.

No! there was no deceit practised upon either General Scott or myself. There were, it is true, two dupes in the case: but both were the dupes of their own characters—of what passed within their own bosoms, their own hearts, and their own heads—of the moral obliquity which renders them most extraordinary twin phenomena; although these phenomena present one most remarkable difference, to wit: that whilst the production of the one is most easily accounted for by natural and obvious causes, the other is altogether incomprehensible, for the very reason that the circumstances under which it was produced—the circumstances with which our happy country environs every man born and bred within her bosom—are adverse in all respects to the production of such a character.

Of these two dupes, the one was Santa Anna; the other, a most worthy compeer of Santa Anna, so far as he can be made so by the same low craving for distinction, and the same happy facility in deviating from the ways of truth, and in being deaf to the dictates of common justice and common honesty, while pursuing his object; a person, in fine, whose character, in regard to the reach of his mind, and the tone of his mind was most felicitously and accurately sketched by a friend of mine in these words: "It is such as to qualify him for shining at a country court bar, in the defence of a fellow charged with horse stealing; *particularly* if the case were a bad one, and required dexterous tampering with witnesses."

These two were the dupes in the business, and the only dupes; the only dupes *here*, at least; for I cannot pretend to say how many each of them may not have made *elsewhere*. Of the American, I may have, I *shall* have, I know, more to say hereafter. Here, I will confine myself to the Mexican.

*Santa Anna*, then, was a dupe in more than one particular: he was the dupe of his *suspensions*, the dupe of his *hopes*, the dupe of his *fears*, and, finally, *my* dupe, although very innocently and unintentionally on my part. Of his suspicions, inasmuch as he allowed himself to be brought to believe that the armistice was, on our part, a mere trick to "gain time" for reinforcements to arrive, a trick *on our part*, just precisely a match for, the very twin brother of, the one on *his* part, which our country has been given to understand by the "Union," that General Scott and myself had proved ourselves such arrant imbeciles as to be taken in by. Of his hopes,

inasmuch as he allowed them to flatter him always with the possibility that the *next* conflict might prove favorable to the Mexican arms; and that the national honor being thus vindicated, he should be enabled to make a treaty with far less risk to himself. Of his fears, inasmuch as he allowed them to make him believe that there would be less danger in abandoning than in carrying out the bold determination which had dictated his manifesto, and an unflinching adherence to which—as the event has proved—could alone save him, as it unquestionably would have saved him, for the time, at least, and very possibly forever.

The manner in which he came to be my dupe was as follows: while at Puebla, I had been approached—not on the part of Santa Anna, but of a foreigner deeply interested in the restoration of peace, and exceedingly active in his endeavors to bring it about—by a person whose object was to obtain some idea of the terms to which it was necessary to reconcile Santa Anna. He touched upon the territory between the Nueces and the Bravo as being the point of greatest difficulty; and my answer was to this effect: "I can say nothing about the boundary until the negotiation shall have been opened; but let them take this step, and they will find that our terms are not so bad, perhaps, as they expect." This person, as I discovered after the negotiation had commenced, left me, impressed with the idea that the Rio Bravo would not be insisted upon; and this impression being communicated to Santa Anna, he was greatly influenced by it in venturing upon taking the position which he did in his manifesto. Upon discovering the mistake he was greatly alarmed and incensed.

One more point I will touch upon under this head: *the terms of the counter-projet*. Here, in truth, was a trick, and a trick of Santa Anna's; but it was not practised upon or against us—his own country was the object. It was never expected that this counter-project would be considered by me—would engage my attention for a moment. The time when it was presented proves this conclusively; for it was not produced—it was not written—until the 6th of September, when all idea of peace had been abandoned. This paper was but a part of Santa Anna's store of *ad captandum* "material," which, true to his character, he had begun to provide himself with from the beginning, to meet the possible contingency of a failure of the negotiation; in which event, it would be necessary for him to be able to prove, that, notwithstanding his having consented to negotiate, he had been as strenuous in upholding the interests and honor of the country as the most ultra of his assailants could have been. This character is so deeply stamped upon the entire series of documents, (which, be it remarked, he lost not a moment in publishing and scattering all over the republic,) that it would be as easy in our country to find a man unacquainted with the taste of table salt, as to find here a person of tolerable intelligence who would require more than a glance to see into the whole proceeding; to see that there is nothing in it but the thread-bare trick of political mountebanks, to hide up the truth under a great show of

"official" falsehoods, prepared before hand, to be suppressed or to be produced, according as circumstances may require.

But, in respect to this also, as in regard to everything else, the telescope proves itself to be an inverting one. While the real, *bona fide* intention, (it may not be an unnecessary precaution, here, to protest against my use of this term being taken as a proof of idiocy, by being construed into an admission on my part that it is within the bounds of possibility, that Santa Anna should ever act in *good faith*, according to the true and proper sense of the words; that is to say, good faith for *its own sake*;) while this real *bona fide* intention to make peace converts itself, for all eyes viewing matters through that telescope, into a shallow trick, the shallow trick now under consideration, converts itself into an expression of real, genuine *bona fide* intentions. Nay, it puts on *dignity*, high dignity; dignity enough to make it worthy of arousing the sense of dignity of our government; dignity enough to require our government to become careful, and solicitous, and alarmed about what the poor Mexicans are so often heard to talk of under the name of "*pundonor*." To this extent, nothing short of it, goes the transformation! The pitiable expedient of a miserable, trembling faction to save itself, to prolong its miserable existence by practising upon the stupid ignorance and playing upon the imbecile pride of its own country, this stuff transmutes itself into something which can touch and wound the dignity of ours. 'Tis true, the faction from which the trick proceeded had actually terminated its existence, and become fugitive and outcast, scattered to the winds, before the power of the printing press, prompt and rapid as it is, could be brought into play to make the trick effective; before the power of steam could carry the thing to the press in the nearest part of the United States. But this did not alter the case: the "terms proposed"—*proposed* in the sense I have stated, and in no other—were derogatory to the honor of our country, and she must bristle up. Yes! our country, the United States of America, must bristle up! Just as she would do if derogatory terms had been proposed, in the most deliberate and solemn manner, by England, or France, or Russia. And against whom must she bristle up? Against whom must she feel indignant and resentful? Upon what object must her high wrath be poured, and the sin of that faction be visited? Upon Mexico! Upon unhappy, distracted, faction-torn, helpless Mexico! She is the being with respect to whom the United States of America must be vigilant and jealous of the high *pundonor*! Her unhappy inhabitants—for they *cannot* be called a *nation*—her helpless inhabitants—no wish lay so deep at the bottom of their hearts as the wish to see that very faction broken up and scattered as it has been. It spoke not their will, it had no sympathies with them; it was their oppressor, their worst enemy; its destruction would be to them deliverance. But, on the eve of its downfall, it had made derogatory proposals! Such proposals had actually been written down upon a sheet of paper, and that paper had actually been handed to a commissioner of the United States of America! The *pundonor* consequently had been touched. And what? Let my country give the

answer. When the truth shall have become known to her, and she shall have bestowed one thought upon it, let her say what are the feelings on her part which become *her* civilization, *her* intelligence, *her* position of pride among the powers of the earth.

Alas, alas, alas! My national sensibility has, I confess it, been outraged. My pride of country—and but few of her sons can be prouder of the title—has been touched to the quick, wounded in its very core. But *my* pride of country is not of the right sort, perhaps; for the indignation which it causes me to feel, directs itself to what *may* be the wrong quarter. Most certain am I that the feeling which preceded it was mortification, not anger.

Here concludes what I have to say for the present—and I trust I shall never again be under the necessity of touching the subject—under this last of the four heads into which it has divided itself.

It had been my intention, on commencing this communication, to limit it to those four heads: that is to say, to an explanation of the reasons by which I have been actuated in taking the determination which now keeps me in this country. But, whilst engaged in this task, my mind has necessarily reverted to the whole series of events in which I have taken part, embracing *the offer made by me to the Mexican negotiators*. Whilst this topic is fresh in my thought, I will, to enable me to dismiss the entire subject at once—and I hope forever—enter into the explanations which that offer requires, in order that a just opinion may be formed respecting it.

In my last despatch, after acknowledging the receipt of the communication recalling me, I said:

"On a future occasion, perhaps—should I ever find time to employ on a theme so insignificant with respect to the public interests, and so unimportant in my own eyes as regards its bearings upon myself personally—I may exercise the privilege of examining the grounds for the censure cast upon my course by the President, and explaining those upon which rests the belief, still entertained by me, that that course was calculated to attain the end contemplated by our government, and was the only one which afforded the slightest possibility of its being attained: the end, I mean, of bringing about a treaty of peace on the basis, in all material respects, of the project entrusted to me. For the present, I will merely call attention to the fact, that a mere offer to *refer a question* to my government constitutes the only ground on which I can be charged with having 'gone so far beyond the carefully considered *ultimatum* to which [I was] limited by [my] instructions.'

"Whether this offer, under the circumstances and prospects of the crisis when it was made, was wise or unwise—wise or unwise, I mean, with reference to the end desired by our government—is a question which no longer possesses any practical importance; though the time was when it constituted with me a subject of the most careful and the most anxious deliberation, not because of the personal responsibility attaching to the decision in which that deliberation resulted—for *that* never occupied my mind for an instant—but because I knew, and I *felt*, that upon my decision de-

pended, according to every human probability, the early cessation of the war or its indefinite protraction. The alternative presented by the position in which I found myself was, on the one hand, to keep on safe ground, so far as I was personally concerned, and destroy the only possible chance for peace; on the other hand, to assume responsibility and keep that chance alive, with some prospect, at least—and, all things considered, as perhaps I may hereafter take the trouble to show, by no means a prospect to be despised under such circumstances—that *the adoption of our projet might come to pass.*”

At the time when this was written, I had no idea that I should ever occupy the position in which I now stand. I considered my connexion with this whole subject and with public affairs generally (except as a citizen) as having terminated forever; and regarding the question, therefore, as devoid of all practical importance to our country, I deemed it improbable in the extreme that I should ever allow myself to be tempted to waste upon it any portion of the time which I am provided with full occupation for, during the remainder of my life, upon numberless topics, the investigation of which is to me a pleasure, that nothing but the active duties of life has power to draw me from. But the state of the case is now entirely changed in this respect. In consequence of the determination upon which I am now acting, the question has again become one of direct practical importance to our country: for it has a forcible bearing upon the question presented by that determination; so far, at least, as regards my fitness or unfitness, as manifested by past events, to form determinations of this nature, and consequently, so far as regards the probable complexion of the results which may be expected in this instance. If in the former case—one of some difficulty, certainly—my decision was really not a stupid one, but the reverse; if it was not calculated to injure, but, on the contrary, was calculated to advance the cause which it was intended to promote, then will this afford a presumption, at least, that I am not acting stupidly or mischievously now. And *vice versa*, should that decision, upon an attentive consideration of the grounds on which it rested, appear still to have been unwise, this will afford a presumption that my present course partakes of the same character. In this respect, therefore, the subject is one of immediate practical interest at the present moment.

The question is, *whether the offer made by me was wise or unwise, with reference to the end desired by our government: this end being the early conclusion of a treaty, on the basis of our projet in all material respects; that is to say, so far as regarded boundary, amount of compensation, and the principles involved in the minor details.*

What were the circumstances and prospects under which it was made? This question is, to a great extent, answered by what has been stated above, under the four heads. It has there been seen, in part, on what grounds rested my conviction that Santa Anna was earnestly and anxiously disposed to peace; that the renewal of hostilities would inevitably result in the dissolution of the fede-

ral government; that the formation of another federal head was improbable in the extreme; that even supposing one to arise, its character, with respect to the restoration of peace, was altogether problematical, and the chances very greatly on the side of its being adverse.

On the other hand, should the armistice be prolonged, these results, would, in all probability, follow: Santa Anna's position, with respect to his own countrymen, would become stronger and stronger every day. Even supposing the causes which had made him recede from the determination which had produced his manifesto to remain in full force, his means of self protection, whilst acting in defiance of those causes, would augment. His nerves would have time to recover from the shocks they had received from protests on the part of the State governments, and arguments and warnings on the part of individuals, which had been pouring in upon him ever since the rumor of an armistice had gone abroad; and which proved how vivid was the apprehension, and how extensively it prevailed, that he was about to make peace. But the causes just referred to could *not* remain in full force. To say nothing of the means he would himself employ for diminishing them, their diminution could not but happen in a way altogether independent of him. The *moderado* party, which heretofore had kept entirely aloof from him, and had never taken any part in public affairs except in opposition to him, now found themselves committed in a very great degree to give him their support, so far as this might be necessary for the restoration of peace. That party had long wished for peace, and the chief cause which had deterred them from active exertions to bring it about was the fear that, if made while he was at the head of affairs, it would confirm and perpetuate his power. While *he* had been waiting for an opportunity when it might be made with advantage to himself, *they* had been waiting in the hope of seeing his downfall. But now, four of the leading men of this party had committed themselves irrevocably to the cause of peace, even although it should be made by him. They had gone so far even as to commit themselves in favor of the acceptance of our *projet*; and this fact—as is proved by Romero's letter—was known to their political enemies. At the head of these four men was General Herrera, the favorite candidate always of the *moderado* party, and of the people, for the presidency, as is proved by his having repeatedly been elected to that office. He is at this time the President elect, by a perfectly fair constitutional election, and is to come into office early in January. From this resulted a strong probability that the influence of the whole party would immediately begin to exert itself actively in favor of peace. What, then, did I expect from the offer made me? In the first place, this offer, if accepted, would commit the Mexican government, commit Santa Anna, commit the commissioners—*officially* commit them all—to every *principle* involved in the treaty; to the principle of alienating their territory; and, in a very great measure, to the alienation of that territory *to the extent* demanded by us. Beyond this, I expected, *first*, that the answer from Washing-