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## THE WAR WITH MEXICO.

AFTER a period of political tranquillity, now of more than thirty years duration, the peace of our country is broken. We are involved in war. The gates of the Temple of Sacrifice are once more thrown open, and all who love to worship at a shrine of blood are invited to enter. We are involved in war with a neighboring people, occupying a portion of our own North American Continent, and dwelling in a land conterminous with our own—a sister republic of the New World—a people numbering nearly nine millions, a considerable portion of whom rejoice in the pure blood of as gallant and noble a race as belongs to either the New World or the Old—a people who are not only neighbor to us, but with whom we have been, and let us not hesitate to say it, with whom we ought now to be, friends. And *we* are at war—we, a Republic, to which war is peculiarly an unnatural and hazardous state, never to be ventured upon for conquest, or for glory, or for any cause short of the defence of national independence, liberty, or honor, or the defence of rights in which such high matter is involved. We, the leading Republic of this American Continent, and of the world—sometimes called the Model Republic—have gone to war; we, whose special mission it was to show the world what preëminent gain was to be found in the assiduous cultivation of the arts of peace, and the practice of the unambitious virtues—

justice, moderation, contentment—so indispensable to the preservation of representative forms, and the maintenance of personal and popular freedom. And it is not a light or unimportant consideration that, in going to war, we are the first to disturb the repose of Christendom, after a continued peace of thirty years. The United States and Mexico are the first two Christian nations of any considerable note, in thirty years, who have appealed to arms, and the arbitrament of blood, to settle their national difficulties and disputes. We two are the first to interrupt that delightful tranquillity in which the nations of Christendom have reposed amongst themselves, for so long a period, and which the heart of philanthropy everywhere had begun to look upon as almost promising to be eternal. We have broken the spell—that charmed security in which men had begun to rest, as if the nations would learn war no more. Surely, a fearful responsibility rests on those who have brought these two countries into deadly strife and conflict. A terrible account will *they* be called to render, on whom the blame shall finally be found to fall. It is too late in the nineteenth century—the sentiment of peace, and the love of peace, are too universal, and the advantages of peace too universally felt, to be at all safe for one Christian nation to make war on another, without a demonstrable neces-

sity strong enough to hush all complaint, and silence all cavil. Let those who have made this war look to it, that they be ready to render reasons, in which the flashing and indignant eye of wronged humanity can discover no gloss, no fallacy, no defect. Glosses will not do. Specious argumentation will not do. The war must be justified on grounds which reason, religion and humanity can approve. And it must be shown to be a necessary war; no war is just which is not necessary. If it be a war of policy merely, whether on the one side or the other, it is odious and abominable, and will bring the curse of God, and of virtuous men, on the head of its guilty authors. If it be a war of ambition—a war waged, on either side, with a view to national aggrandizement, or the extension of territorial limits, or with a view in any manner to the profits of the spoils of war—it is utterly indefensible and execrable. Above all, if it be a war, undertaken by either party, in which no national considerations, even of policy or ambition, or gain, have entered, but where the impelling and governing motives are to be looked for in the petty ambition of some upstart revolutionary or party Chief, or of some miserable Cabal, seeking to gratify the unreasoned love of excitement and turmoil in one portion of the population, and the savage lusts which burn in another, for the sake of some personal or party advantage or support—if such be the war, then let those who have brought it on the two countries beware! There is a day of reckoning at hand. Wise and good men will desire to know, and they will know, very exactly, why the relations of peace have thus been exchanged for war.

And let none among us say—Why, it is only a war with Mexico; as if a war with Mexico was a small affair, and of trivial importance, or as if any war was a small affair. Mexico, we know very well, is not England; she does not cover all seas with her fleets and her sea-borne armies, nor dot the round world with her military posts. She lacks the vast resources of wealth and power, and the enterprise and energy which belong to some other nations. But Mexico is a respectable power, a civilized and Christian nation, next to ourselves vastly the most numerous on the Western Continent, with a broad, beautiful, and sunny country, having an extended coast on both the great oceans of the earth, and altogether,

in position, climate and soil, and generally in natural advantages, unsurpassed by any country on the globe. She is every way entitled to respectful consideration and regard at the hand of all other nations, and above all, she is entitled to the deepest sympathy of those nations, which, like herself, have had to conquer their own independence and freedom, by their valor and their blood. Nor is she altogether a despicable power to be encountered in arms; though still she is weak enough to make it no great achievement of renown or glory to conquer her ill-trained and ill-disciplined forces in the field. The men that compose the bulk of her armies are small in stature, and, though brave, or rather reckless of danger, holding not their lives at a pin's fee, yet they want physical strength and endurance, and the training and discipline of some others. It would take five Mexican soldiers, as they run, to make one, the equal of a first-rate American soldier. But then they are not unused to war, and they have gallant spirits to lead them;—so gallant, so deserving of a better fortune, that a high-souled American officer might almost blush to find fame in being their conqueror, considering the disadvantage at which he would take them. And we may find it an easier thing to conquer Mexican armies when we can meet them, than to conquer Mexico. Yet she is distracted with intestine divisions and commotions, and she *can* be conquered; though she will be apt to present an unbroken front to an enemy, which begins with offering what is taken as a mortal offence to the lofty pretensions of her Castilian pride and honor. The *hidalgo* will brook anything but that. It was the pride of the Mexican that was touched when the dismemberment of the Empire was attempted. Witness the obstinacy with which that people clung to independent Texas for long years after the reconquering of that revolted province had become a demonstrable impossibility. It was that same pride that was wounded to unendurable sensibility, when a powerful neighboring nation—and a friend!—stepped in to decree the consummation of that dismemberment, and to bear off the amputated member as a spoil and trophy of her own. Santa Anna declared to General Thompson, then our Minister in Mexico, in, perhaps, the last interview he had with him, that Mexico should never, never cease to struggle and fight for the reconquest and subjugation of

Texas. But this was before Annexation. Up to a recent period, the United States, and the people of the United States, were regarded with unbounded admiration, and strong attachment, by the Mexican everywhere. Now he scorns and hates us; and there is, we apprehend, little difference of sentiment or feeling towards us among Mexicans, from one end of the country to the other.

General Taylor encountered this feeling everywhere on his original march to the banks of the Rio Grande: and so he has informed the Government. He entered the country, proclaiming, that the rights, and property, and religion of all peaceable citizens should be respected; but everywhere the haughty Spaniard refused his protection. The inhabitants retired as he approached, abandoning to the invader their cherished homes. Says a writer on the spot: "This Mexican State, Tamaulipas, in which we are encamped, is a beautiful, a most delightful region. Far as the eye can reach, one level surface presents itself to view, dotted with cotton and sugar-cane fields, interspersed with lovely gardens, after the Spanish fashion, the whole cut up and divided, in all sorts of ways by groves of the finest trees," &c. He adds, forcibly, "The scene is rich and peaceful, with nought to mar its appropriate character, but the armies of two nations, worshipping the same eternal God, strengthening their hands to slay each other like beasts of prey." All accounts represent the country bordering on the Great River as exceedingly fertile and beautiful. And such is the country, and such are the homes, which these people abandoned, rather than stay by their property under the guarranty of a hated enemy. Says another writer on the spot: "These people are \* \* \* actuated by a universal feeling of hostility towards the United States, and since our arrival, nearly all of them have left this side of the river, and gone over. \* \* \* They quarrel amongst themselves, but against a foreign foe they are united." Never was a more sullen and dogged disposition manifested. The Prefect of the North of Tamaulipas, at the head of a deputation, met General Taylor on his march, to protest against his occupation of the country; and when this would not do, an attempt was made by the inhabitants of the little town of Fronton, to destroy that place, by fire, with their own hands. It was their Moscow, and they would burn it!

And all this comes, not of attachment to the Central Power of Mexico, but of hatred to us; for it is only six years ago that they were engaged in an attempt to throw off the authority of that power, and establish the independent Republic of Rio Grande.

What we mean to assert is, that it is not to be deemed, or spoken of, as a very little war, to which we are now committed, and so to be justified on any lighter grounds, so far as we are responsible for it at all, than if we had taken, or had, for our foe, the most puissant nation of the earth. It is not such a war, nor like such a war, as we might wage with one of our own miserable Indian Tribes. It is not a Florida war, nor like a Florida war—though that was serious enough, considering that it was only an Executive war. It is not even such a war as the British forces in India have lately waged with the powerful armies of the Sikhs in that country; and though it should never involve a single pitched battle, last as long as it may, or the conflict of one-tenth or one-twentieth part of the numbers that have been engaged on the banks of the Sutlej, yet ours is a greater and higher war than that, in every national view. It is not a war with savage or semi-civilized tribes, who are under our protection, or over whom we claim the right to exercise an ultimate, arbitrary control. It is a war between two independent nations, mutually members of the great family of civilized nations, and the equals of each other, and of every other in that family, before the law of nations. It is a war undertaken, and to be prosecuted, subject to the settled principles of that law, and with the other nations for our witnesses, interested and watchful—as many of them will be—to see that we violate none of their rights as neutrals, on land or sea, sympathizing with the weaker and oppressed party, whichever it may be, and ready to interpose themselves, with a strong arm, on the one side or the other, as they may think their interest, or policy, or safety, may require.

In no light, then, in which the matter can be regarded, is this to be deemed a small war—one which might be lightly entered into, or listlessly prosecuted. As we have said, it is the first time in thirty years that any two considerable nations of Christendom have undertaken to settle their disputes by an appeal to arms. We are one of the parties to this bloody appeal, and one

of the last in Christendom that should ever make such an appeal, till forced into it by an inexorable necessity. If we are responsible for it, the responsibility is a fearful one. And we must not flatter ourselves that we can escape under the notion that it is, comparatively, an unimportant affair—only a war with Mexico! If Mexico, measured by our standard and stature, is a weak nation, distracted, and almost ready to fall to pieces by the essential discordance of the living materials of which it is composed, and, at any rate, utterly unfit to cope with us in feats of arms, or in the necessary resources of war, so much the more shame for us if we have sought a quarrel with her, except on the last necessity, or have allowed her to quarrel with us, when we might have calmed her anger by acts either of justice or of generosity, or soothed her by words and deeds of forbearance and kindness. If Mexico is a weak nation, physically or morally, the more shame for us if we *could* have avoided this war, and have not. If her sense of right and wrong is not as delicate as ours—would that some casuist, great in the resolution of doubtful and difficult problems, would demonstrate the advantage we have shown we possess over her in this particular!—if when she has done us wrong she has not seemed as sensible of her error, or as ready to repair it, as we, the injured party, may have thought she should have been; if we have found her prompt to take offence where none was intended on our part, or imagining that her rights were invaded, or her honor insulted, when we have only pursued our own interests or followed a lawful advantage, without doing her any positive wrong; if all this be so, why could not we, proudly conscious of our eminent superiority over her in this regard—would that this, too, were proven to the world's full satisfaction!—why could not we have waited a little longer, with kind and generous indulgence, on her unreasonable temper, or her delays of justice, giving her passion time to cool, her wounded pride to salve itself out of its extreme irritation, and her sense of justice to recover from its blindness? Was the case so urgent that we could not brook one hour's longer delay? Must we fly to our arms on the instant? Was it necessary to answer a threat of war from such a quarter by a defiance sent by a herald no less formidable than a well-appointed army,

ready to proclaim that defiance by the mouth of hostile cannon? We had to complain, and we had good reason to complain, of "long-continued and undressed wrongs and injuries committed by the Mexican Government on citizens of the United States, in their persons and property," as set forth by the President in his recent War Message to Congress; but these outrages were not committed yesterday, and is it certain that all hope of peaceful redress was at an end? Was there no alternative left but war? Mexico owes us some eight millions of dollars, it may be, but if we are at liberty to suppose that this has been the *real* cause why the two countries are now at war, may we not well ask ourselves whether we have always shown, in all parts of our own Union, such extreme alacrity in the discharge of our undoubted pecuniary obligations to others, as to entitle us to be very strict and exacting in our demands upon those who happen to be indebted to us? Are we quite at liberty to put any such case on the alternative of prompt settlement or war? Might not the President of the United States, considering what States he had among his most strenuous supporters—some of his hottest partisans might, we are sure—have well enough seemed to be touched with the feeling of that infirmity which causes an impoverished and distressed debtor, if not to repudiate his debt, at least to resort to dishonest or unjustifiable pretexts and pretences for present avoidance and delay?

Or if we are to believe that the *real* cause of this rupture is to be found in the fact of the refusal of the Mexican Government, in past or present revolutionary hands, to receive from our President a Minister Plenipotentiary, resident near that government, so circumstantially complained of, and not without apparent grounds of justice, by the Executive, in his late Message, still we may be allowed to ask, whether even so shocking an indignity as this was so unendurable, considering the quarter from which it came, that it could only be answered on the instant by a blow? We know that wars have arisen before now from lighter causes than this—but not very lately; and we did not suppose that the scrupulous, not to say fantastic, spirit of chivalry, was to be revived in our day, and in the person of President Polk. That gallant functionary gives us to understand in his message, so ready was he, with

lance in rest, for a tilt with the adversary, that, instead of waiting until the insult was actually offered, he anticipated events, and ordered a movement of our army, bristling with war, up to the very teeth of the Mexican forces, in a very remote quarter, as soon as he "had received such information from Mexico as rendered it *probable*, if not certain, that the Mexican Government would refuse to receive our Envoy!" So, then, the President snuffed this insult in the distance; and distant enough it was when this movement was first contemplated; for so long ago as the 30th of July, 1845—more than three months before his Envoy was commissioned for Mexico, and long before the mission appears to have been thought of—a dispatch from the government instructed Gen. Taylor that he was "expected to occupy, protect and defend the territory of Texas to the extent that it has been occupied by the people of Texas;" and to "approach as near the *boundary line—the Rio Grande*—as prudence will dictate!" And it is not to be doubted that if the excellent officer in command of the "Army of Occupation," whose trade is war, had not been more reluctant than the President, so sensitive to the honor and interests of the country, to bring on a conflict of arms with Mexico, the fight which has only commenced in April of this year, would have been begun in the first days of autumn in the last. But even the peremptory order to Gen. Taylor, of the 13th of January, to take up a position on or near the Rio Grande, was quite early enough to save the scrupulous honor of the President, in the matter of his Envoy. At most, the rejection of the Minister was only "probable," in the mind of the President, when that order was dispatched, and his final dismissal did not take place till the 12th of March. One day before that event took place, it happened that our army was actually on its march for the banks of the Rio Grande. Twelve days before that, it seems that Mr. Slidell's letters from Mexico, he then being at Jalapa, *spoke confidently of his being received and recognized*. What if he had happened to have been received, after all! So far as concerns this point of honor, it would appear that chivalry, on the one side and on the other, took very opposite views. President Paredes proclaims, on the 23d of April, that "Mr. Slidell was not received because the dignity of the nation repelled this 'new insult.'" In

Mexico, then, it was deemed an insult for us to send there a Minister Plenipotentiary, under the circumstances of existing relations, and the hostile demonstrations made by our Government. Here, it was deemed an insult that Mexico should refuse to receive and accredit that Minister. Oh, for some Chevalier Bayard, or Admirable Crichton, to resolve this point of honor between two chivalric nations, that else must needs end this notable difference of opinion by cutting each other's throats!

No one can read the President's War Message without perceiving that great stress is laid on this matter, as one principal ground to justify the war. Mexico affected to deem it as much a ground of offence, that a Minister, with such a commission as ours bore, was sent to her at all. Our President complains of a breach of faith on the part of Mexico, in refusing to receive a Minister whom she had promised to recognize. The Mexican President denies, indignantly, that that Government ever agreed to receive a minister on such terms as would imply that relations of friendship were restored between the two countries, so long as that grand difficulty—the Annexation of Texas—which had caused the suspension of those relations, remained unadjusted. A Minister, or Commissioner, to adjust that difficulty, would have been received. How much of this suggestion was sincere, and how much a mere diplomatic quirk, it is not for us now to decide. Mr. Polk chose to regard the whole of it as evasive—mere dishonest pretences for delay. "If it were so, it were a grievous fault." And, one way or the other, either because the parties really misunderstood one another, or because Mexico, in the distracted state of her internal affairs, with no regular administration, the supreme power altogether unhinged, held by one military chief to-day, and by another to-morrow, and the whole Government water-logged and in a sinking condition, saw fit to degrade herself by diplomatizing and quibbling for delay against the just demands of a rich and stern, but not unjust creditor; why, for one or the other of these very grave offences, the administration at Washington pretend to have deemed it necessary to push matters to extremes.

But whether this affair of the rejection of the President's Envoy, which he construes as if Mexico had unqualifiedly "refused the offer of a peaceful adjust-

ment of our difficulties," is to be regarded or not, as one main ground of the war, within the purview of his message, it cannot be doubted that, at least, he means we should understand him as having made the fact of such rejection, though by anticipating the event, *the* immediate occasion of his orders to plant the standard of war on the banks of the Rio del Norte. "This force," (the army), he says, "was concentrated at Corpus Christi, and remained there until after I had received such information as rendered it probable, if not certain, that the Mexican Government would refuse to receive our Envoy." It is not for us to attempt to reconcile this declaration with the disclosures made in the documents accompanying his message. It there appears, plainly enough, that the military occupation of the country up to the Rio del Norte was a foregone conclusion, determined on at Washington, even before Gen. Taylor left his station at Fort Jessup. In a "confidential" letter directed to him at that place, under date of June 15, 1845, from the Department of War, Gen. Taylor had these significant instructions:

"You will forthwith make a forward movement with the troops under your command, and advance to the mouth of the Sabine, or to such other point on the Gulf of Mexico, or its navigable waters, as, in your judgment, may be found most convenient for an embarkation, at the proper time, for the *Western frontier* of Texas." \* \* \* \* "The point of your ultimate destination is the western frontier of Texas, where you will select and occupy, *on or near the Rio Grande del Norte*, such a site as will consist with the health of the troops, and will be best adapted to repel invasion, and to protect what, in the event of annexation, will be our western border."

The time for this embarkation "for the western frontier of Texas," viz., for the *Rio Grande*, was fixed for the period when the Convention or people of Texas should resolve to accept the proposition of annexation, which Gen. Taylor was informed would probably be on the 4th of July, or very soon thereafter.

This carries us back to the original cause of our difficulties with Mexico—the question of annexing Texas to the United States. Everybody understands that when annexation should be consummated, when Texas should become part and parcel of the United States, the territory of Texas, whatever it really was, or

should turn out to be, was to be protected and defended, as if it was the soil of Carolina or New York. But every well-informed citizen knows also, that what constitutes the proper limits of Texas on the side of Mexico was, and is, wholly unsettled and disputed; and, in the proposition made by us to the Republic of Texas on the subject of annexation, was expressly reserved, as a question of boundary, to be settled between us and Mexico. And another thing we all know; that annexation was to be finally consummated, if at all, only by the act of the Congress of the United States in admitting Texas as a State into the Union. This final action of Congress, with the approval of the President, was not had till the 29th of December last. Yet we see now that the President determined, at an early day, to regard annexation as well enough consummated, at least for his military operations, when a Convention, or the people, of Texas should resolve to come into our Union, without waiting for Congress to pass on the question of her admission; and also upon that event to regard the extremest verge of territorial limit to which the wildest pretensions of Texas ever pushed her nominal, paper claim of title, as the fixed boundary of the State, for military occupation, without waiting to hear what Mexico had to say about it, or consulting her in the premises. He made preparations to act accordingly. More than this. He did not even wait for the action of Texas on the question of annexation. Some time before that event, at the invitation of Texas—a Republic then as foreign to our own as San Marino is to-day—he directed an army to take post in that country, for its defence; and not content, even at that early period, with occupying undisputed Texan ground, he took care to push his Army of Occupation first across the Nueces—the Rubicon, beyond which every inch was disputed ground between Texas and Mexico—then to await the action of the Texan authorities on annexation, and then, as he had already confidentially advised the commander of his forces, to strike for their "ultimate destination, on or near the Rio Grande."

Mexico had taken mortal offence at us for undertaking to receive Texas at all, in any manner, into our Union. Upon this she had withdrawn her Minister from this country, and closed all diplomatic relations with us. Annexation, even

conducted in the most delicate manner, seemed likely to embroil the two nations; but it became evident, after a short time, that, with the best will to make war on us for that measure, the wheel of revolution was turning too rapidly in her own empire to admit of her prosecuting such an enterprise. It became perfectly manifest that her opposition to that measure would expend itself, in due time, in some very natural and proper, but very innocent ebullitions, when nothing, of that question at least, would remain to be settled, but the matter of the boundary. By a solemn act of Congress, we had pledged ourselves before the world, that, in bringing Texas into our Union, we would take only "the territory *properly* included within, and *rightfully* belonging to, that republic," and we took "all questions of boundary" within our own jurisdiction, out of the hands of Texas, to be adjusted by ourselves. And how adjusted by us? By prompt military seizure of the whole territory in dispute? By an Executive war in defence of the disputed territory? So the President seems to have understood it. He informs the country that he attempted negotiation, which failed by the fault of Mexico. He negotiated, however, after the manner of Frederic of Prussia, with an army already in the disputed country, instructed to occupy and defend every inch of it, and to make war on the opposite party if he attempted to set a hostile foot in it.

How this war has come about it is easy enough now to see. It is not because Mexico owes us money for spoliations and injuries, which she neglects to liquidate and pay. Nor is it because she sent home our Minister, as she had before called home her own. It was not for either of these causes, or both of them, justifiable causes of war as they might be, that the Executive sent his army, on his naked authority, to occupy the banks of the Rio Grande; though a part of his Message might be read as if he meant we should so understand him. Nor has the war broken out because any act of hostility was committed, or offered, by Mexico, up to the time when our flag was raised to flout the Mexican forces on the opposite side of that river, in the Mexican city of Matamoras. But "the war exists by the act of Mexico." So says the President; and Congress—yes, the American Congress—has echoed the declaration! It exists, says the President, "notwithstanding all our efforts to

avoid it"—and we almost wonder that Congress did not echo this declaration also. Yes, "the war exists by the act of Mexico." It is true we first set down an army in the heart of a vast country which she claimed as her own, and in that particular part of it of which she has been in undisturbed possession ever since she became a nation; a country where she had numerous towns and cities, and many thousands of peaceful citizens, subject to her sway and authority; and we planted a fortified camp there before one of her important commercial towns, pointing our batteries on the principal square of the city, and when she threatened resistance, we blockaded the mouth of the river on which it stands, to cut off the supplies of the forces that were quartered in it. We did all this; but we committed no act of war—not we; and it exists, as all the world must see, "notwithstanding all our efforts to avoid it."! It exists "by the act of Mexico." She first pulled a trigger upon us, not we upon her. It is true that her President, Paredes, ever since he has held his present position, has constantly declared that he was not authorized to make, and would not make, offensive war on the United States. But this at least he has done; he has seen fit to regard the departments of Tamaulipas and New Leon, as we dare say he would also those of Chihuahua and New Mexico, as an integral portion of the Mexican territory, and the presence of our army there as an invasion of Mexican soil, and has accordingly issued orders that they shall be defended as such. Under those orders, though still protesting that he does not declare war against the United States, and first causing a solemn demand to be made that our troops shall be withdrawn "to the other side of the Rio de los Nueces, the ancient limits of Texas," the forces of Mexico have actually ventured to come on to the same side of the river, in the State of Tamaulipas, where our army is encamped; and thus it is, "notwithstanding all our efforts to avoid it," that hostilities have actually been commenced. Of course, the war exists "by the act of Mexico!"

But it was far from our purpose, when we commenced this paper, to enter into any particular examination of the causes that have led to the commencement of hostilities, and to the actual existence of war. Nor shall we pursue the subject further at this time. In another number

of the Review, when we may have more space than we can spare in this, when we shall have had time to possess ourselves more fully of all the facts in the case, by a further examination of interesting documents, and when we shall have given to the subject all that deliberation which so grave a matter demands, we may, perhaps, undertake to speak at length on these topics, and to place the responsibility of this war just where it belongs.

We may say in advance, however, that we believe this war might and should have been avoided; that it would have been avoided if Mr. Clay had been President of the United States instead of Mr. Polk, without any sacrifice of national interests or national honor, whether annexation had taken place or not; and that it is emphatically an Executive war, and brought about, however just and necessary as against Mexico, by a series of the most flagrant and alarming Executive usurpations on the Constitution of the country. These things we may attempt to show hereafter; when we may take occasion also to speak of the objects to be attained in the prosecution of the war, since we are in it, and the manner in which it should be prosecuted. We protest beforehand against every idea of carrying this war into Mexico, if that were ever so easy, with any view to the making of permanent conquests. When our brave soldiers must fight, we shall pray that they may win victories always, and everywhere—but we want no conquests—no new acquisitions of territory acquired by arms, and least of all in that quarter.

We are not of the number of those who indulge in anxieties lest their patriotism and love of country, in a case like this, should be suspected. Nevertheless, we deem it right to say, that when our country is at war, her enemy is our enemy, whatever we may think about the origin or causes of the rupture. When a war exists between us and another people, it is enough to know that our own country is one party to it; and there can be but one other, and that is the enemy. As between the two, it would seem as if no citizen who knows what the duty of allegiance means, or is capable of feeling the sacred sentiment of patriotism, could hesitate about his proper position. It would be difficult to find a spot to rest upon anywhere between the support of our country in the war, and

moral treason. At all times, we hold the duty of respectful obedience to government to be one of paramount Christian obligation, so long as it does not become unendurable in its oppressions. This obligation is all the stronger in our case, since we have so much to do with making the government, and providing an administration for it; and it is never so strong, in any case, with us or with any people, as when the country is at war. The putting the country at war is infinitely the most solemn and responsible of all the acts which government is ever called on to perform. It is their act, and not ours. As citizens, we are placed, by those who have a right to command us, in the relation of enemies to the people of another nation; and as between our own country and the common enemy, there can be no room for choice. We are committed from the beginning; and, for ourselves, we should not care to come into the councils of those who should even think it a point to be argued about. Nations go to war because there is no other mode of settling their disputes, when all peaceful means of adjustment have failed; just as two individuals might think themselves compelled to come to a trial of personal strength to end their disputes, if we could suppose them existing in what is called a "state of nature," and having no civil tribunals to which they might appeal. The appeal of two nations at war is to the ordeal of battle; and every citizen and member of each, on the one side and the other, is a party to the conflict and trial of strength. The part of patriotism in such a case is too plain to be mistaken. Besides; we do not hesitate to affirm in this case, that our country is not without good grounds of complaint against Mexico, of long standing; sufficient, if we had chosen so to consider them, according to abundant precedents among civilized nations, to justify reprisals and even war, if not otherwise redressed. And, though we should have been far from advocating a declaration of war by Congress for these causes, (the President *could* not make such a war at all without rank treason to the Constitution,) certainly until all peaceful measures for reparation had been tried; yet, since we are at war, and though it was not undertaken for these causes, Mexico has nothing to complain of, if we now count her our enemy till these injuries are redressed, or atoned for. Besides all this too; hostilities have been begun, and the sword of battle

has fallen already, with fatal effect, on some of our brave men and gallant officers, and is likely to fall on many more, and henceforward it is not merely duty coldly calculated, however sacred, to which we are called, but the support of the war becomes matter of feeling, almost too deep and impetuous for the just restraints of reason. It can hardly be necessary to add, however, that all the duties of a good patriot may be performed in behalf of our own government and country in reference to the common foe, without involving the necessity of abject silence and submission, where we think, and feel, and know, that the rule of the country has fallen into incompetent or unsafe hands, and that the very war in which we are engaged, the deepest calamity that can fall on the country, is only one of the consequences and miseries we are called to endure under the curse of their evil sway. In such a case, we, certainly, shall not be deterred from uttering, in a becoming and prudent way, our honest convictions concerning the conduct and character of the administration in reference to the war, as well as other things. We support the country, though we do not support the administration; we support the war, though we may condemn those who have brought us into it. In this support of the war, however, we shall deem it all the while a personal duty, as far as the feelings naturally prompted by the conflict will allow, to keep steadily in view the paramount object of hostilities—the only object which a Christian people have any right to propose to themselves in war—namely, the speediest possible restoration of peace, consistently with strict national rights and national honor. This we hold to be the duty of every good citizen, of the administration, and the whole country. The country must be defended with whatever energy the exigency may require. The enemy must be allowed to do us as little harm as possible; and we must seek to do him so much harm as may constrain him to come to terms with us. If we *must* deal him blows, they must be vigorous ones, such as may bring him to a sense of the necessity of a just composition with us; but, in the whole war, ministers of reconciliation should be deemed just as indispensable as soldiers—able negotiators for peace just as indispensable as armies and able commanders.

We confess we are not without strong

apprehensions, that the notions of the administration, in regard to this war, differ widely from these views. It is manifest that for one whole year they have had this war in near contemplation. From the day they began to direct the attention of General Taylor to the banks of the Rio Grande, as his “ultimate destination,” they must have known that their chances for a war were as a hundred to one. They must have believed that the summer of last year would not be ended—certainly that the autumn would not pass—considering how skillfully their instructions were framed to that end, while avoiding the responsibility of peremptory orders, without seeing an American army at the point of their “ultimate destination.” We will not think so meanly of their capacity, as to suppose they could believe for a moment that General Taylor, in that position, could escape a collision. Had hostilities then commenced, the President would have had the war wholly in his own hands, and no Congress to consult in the matter, till the country should be committed beyond any possible retreat or escape. But General Taylor *would* wait for peremptory orders—and we honor him for it; though the catastrophe has not been avoided. As it has turned out, the collision came when Congress was present at Washington, and it must be confessed that President Polk has contrived to manage this embarrassing circumstance with much adroitness. The easy virtue of his friends in Congress yielded everything to the insidious assault he made upon it. A reconnoitering party, from the American camp opposite Matamoras, was cut off by a large force of Mexicans on the 24th of April. General Taylor, under his instructions, considered this; as he was bound to do, the commencement of hostilities; and he concluded at once to make a requisition, as he had long been authorized to do, on the nearest States, for an auxiliary force of “nearly five thousand men,” as being, in his opinion, “required to prosecute the war with energy, and carry it, as it should be, into the enemy’s country.” In his report of this affair he informs the President of the requisition he had made; and the only suggestion he makes in regard to it, beyond a request for the necessary supplies for this additional force, is, that inasmuch as his position was remote from support, it would be of importance if a law could be passed authorizing volunteers to be raised for twelve months

instead of the short term to which their service was confined by existing statutes. He did not ask for more men, but only that their term of service might be extended: he had already called for all that he then required, even to carry the war into the enemy's country. In his previous correspondence he had urgently requested that "no militia force would be ordered to join him without his requisition for it." Now it was on the receipt of this report from General Taylor, at Washington, that the occasion was seized by the President, when all sympathies were excited for our brave soldiers fallen in a murderous ambushade, to call upon Congress, first to declare that "war exists by the act of Mexico," and next, to grant him a large army and the most liberal means, with imperial and dictatorial power, to prosecute just such a war with Mexico as it might suit his policy to undertake. We are obliged to record, with shame and mortification, that the

friends of the President in each House of Congress, as the measure was successively presented to them, refused to allow to themselves or others even a single night of reflection to interpose; and though there was not the slightest reason or apology for such urgent dispatch, at once accorded to the President all, and more than he demanded. Considering how this war has been begun, they might about as well have carried up the Constitution of the country, in solemn procession, to the National Mansion, and laid it down at the President's feet!\* What use the President means to make of his power remains to be seen. The public ear is stunned with rumors of magnificent plans and projects of conquest in Mexico. We are not without strong apprehensions for the end of this business; but we shall wait for events to develop and shape themselves, with what composure we may.

D. D. B.

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#### W O O I N G .

The Lily was a maiden fairy,  
 Nodding her white caps to the wave,  
 Toying, beckoning, light and airy,  
 As a sultan's favorite slave;  
 The Wave crept up the beach, all soft and stilly,  
 Lispering, "Thou'rt imaged in my breast, fair Lily."

"Sweet Lily, stayest thou lone and cheerless?"  
 Half to the Wave the Lily dips.  
 "Pale Lily, kiss me fond and fearless;"—  
 Sweetly thrill their meeting lips;—  
 "In lands below soft bridal notes thou hearest:  
 Waves call thee, flowers beckon thee thither, dearest."

"The skies beneath are bended fairer;"—  
 He decks her breast with liquid pearls:  
 "The earth beneath hath blossoms rarer;"—  
 The Wave with the Lily downward whirls;  
 Lispering he, "Above us all is sad and dreary,  
 Beneath we'll live forever gay and cheery."

So, palely, with the darkling water  
 The trembling, trusting Lily went;  
 And ne'er again, O Sun-light's daughter,  
 Thy father's eyes on thee were bent,  
 Nor Earth, thy mother, pressed thee, moist and chilly:—  
 Fond marriage vows were thine, O pale and trusting Lily!

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\* We sympathize deeply and sincerely with those of our friends in Congress who found, or felt, themselves obliged to put their hands to this measure, or be compelled to occupy a position in which they would seem to stand opposed to furnishing the necessary supplies of men and money for the proper defence of the country.