THE WAR WITH MEXICO.

SPEECH OF

Hon. John A. Dix, of New York,

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, JAN. 26, 1848,

On the Bill reported from the Committee on Military Affairs to raise, for a limited time, an additional Military Force.

Mr. DIX said: Mr. President, it was my wish to address the Senate on the resolutions offered by the Senator from South Carolina, (Mr. Calhoun,) and not on this bill. I should have preferred to do so, because I am always unwilling to delay action on any measure relating to the war, and because the resolutions afford a wider field for inquiry and discussion. But as the debate has become general, and extended to almost every topic that can well be introduced under either, the force of the considerations by which I have been influenced, has become so weakened, that I have not thought it necessary to defer longer what I wish to say.

Two leading questions divide and agitate the public mind in respect to the future conduct of the war with Mexico. The first of these questions is, shall we withdraw our forces from the Mexican territory, and leave the subject of indemnity for injuries and the adjustment of a boundary between the two republics to future negotion, relying on a magnanimous course of conduct on our part to produce a corresponding feeling on the part of Mexico? There are other propositions, subordinate to this, which may be considered as parts of the same general scheme of policy, such as that of withdrawing from the Mexican capital and the interior districts, and assuming an exterior line of occupation. I shall apply to all these propositions the same arguments; and if I were to undertake to distinguish between them, I am not sure that I should make any difference in the force of the application. For whether we withdraw from Mexico altogether, or take a defensive line which shall include all the territory we intend to hold permanently as indemnity, the consequences to result from it, so far as they affect the question of peace, would, it appears to me, be the same.

The second question is, shall we retain the possession of the territory we have acquired until Mexico shall consent to make a treaty of peace which shall provide ample compensation for the wrongs of which we complain, and settle to our satisfaction the boundary in dispute?

Regarding these questions as involving the permanent welfare of the country, I have considered them with the greatest solicitude; and though never more profoundly impressed with a sense of the responsibility which belongs to the solution of problems of such magnitude and difficulty, my reflections have, nevertheless, led me to a clear and settled conviction as to the course which justice and policy seem to indicate and demand. The first question, in itself of the highest importance, has been answered affirmatively on this floor; and it derives additional interest from the fact, that it has also been answered in the affirmative by a statesman, now retired from the busy scenes of political life, who, from his talents, experience, and public services, justly commands the respect of his countrymen, and whose opinions on any subject are entitled to be weighed with candor and deliberation. I have endeavored to attribute to his opinions, and to those of others who coincide with him wholly or in part, all the importance which belongs to them, and to consider them with the deference due to the distinguished sources from which they emanate. I believe I have done so; and yet I have, after the fullest reflection, come to conclusions totally different from theirs. I believe it would be in the highest degree unjust to ourselves, possessing, as we do, well-founded claims on Mexico, to withdraw our forces from her territory altogether, and exceedingly unwise, as a matter of policy, looking to the future political relations of the two counties, to withdraw from it partially, and assume a line of defence, without a treaty of peace. On the contrary, I am in favor of retaining possession, for the present, of all we have acquired, not as a permanent conquest, but as the most effective means of bringing about, what all most earnestly desire, a restoration of peace; and I will, with the indulgence of the Senate, proceed to state, with as much brevity as the magnitude of the subjects admits, my objections to the course suggested by the first question, and my reasons in favor of the course suggested by the other.

I desire, at the outset, to state this proposition, to the truth of which, I think, all will yield their assent: that no policy which does not carry with it a reasonable assurance of healing the dissensions dividing the two countries, and of restoring, permanently, amicable relations between them, ought to receive our support. We may differ in opinion, and, perhaps, hopelessly, as to the measures best calculated to produce this result; but if it were possible for us to come to an agreement in respect to them, the propriety of their adoption could scarcely admit of controversy. This proposition being conceded, as I think it will be, it follows, that if the measures proposed—to withdraw our forces from Mexico—be not calculated to bring about a speedy and permanent peace; but, on the contrary, if it be rather calculated to open a field of domestic dissension, and possibly of external interference, in that distracted country, to be followed, in all probability, by a renewal of active hostilities with us, and under circumstances to make us feel severely the loss of the advantage which we have gained, and which it is proposed voluntarily to surrender, —then, it appears to me, it can present no claim to our favorable consideration. I shall endeavor to show, before I sit down, that the policy referred to is exposed to all these dangers and evils.

I do not propose to enter into an examination of the origin of the war. From the moment the collision took place between our forces and those of Mexico on the Rio Grande, I considered all hope of an accommodation, without a full trial of strength in the field, to be out of the question. I believed the peculiar character of the Mexicans would render any such hope illusive. Whether that collision was produced in any degree by our own mistakes, or whether the war itself was brought about by the manner in which Texas was annexed to the Union, are questions I do not propose to discuss now; and if it were not too late, I would submit whether the discussion could serve any other purpose than to exhibit divided councils to our adversary, and to inspire him with the hope of obtaining more favorable terms of peace by protracting his resistance. No one can be less disposed than myself to abridge, in any degree, the legitimate boundaries of discussion. But I am not disposed to enter into such an investigation now. The urgent concern is to know, not how the war originated, not who is responsible for it, but in what manner it can be brought to a speedy and honorable termination; whether, as some suppose, we ought to retire from the field, or whether, as appears to me, the only hope of an accommodation lies in a firm and determined maintenance of our position.

The probable consequences of an abandonment of the advantages we have gained may be better understood by seeing what those advantages are. I speak in a military point of view. While addressing the Senate in February last on an army bill then under consideration, I had occasion to state, that the whole of northern Mexico as far south as the mouth of the Rio Grande and the 26th parallel of latitude was virtually in our possession, comprehending about two-thirds of the territory of that republic, and about one-tenth of its inhabitants. Our acquisitions have since been augment by the reduction of Vera Cruz and the Castle of San Juan de Ulloa, the capture of Jalapa, Perote and Puebla, the surrender of the city of Mexico, and the occupation of the three States of Vera Cruz, Puebla, and Mexico, with nearly two million and a half of souls. It is true, our forces have not overrun every portion of the territory of those States; but their chief towns have been reduced, the military forces which defended them captured or dispersed, their civil authorities superseded, their capital occupied, and the whole machinery of the government within the conquered States virtually transferred to our hands. All this has been achieved with an army at no one period exceeding fifteen thousand men, and against forces from three to five times more numerous than those actually engaged on our side, in every conflict since the fall of Vera Cruz.

I had occasion, on presenting some army petitions a few week ago, to refer to the brilliant successes by which these acquisitions were made; and I will not trespass on the attention of the Senate by repeating what I said at that time.* But I cannot forbear to say, that there is a moral in the contest, the effect of which is not likely to be lost on ourselves or others. At the call of their country our people have literally rushed to arms. The emulation has been to be received into the service, not to be excused from it. Individuals from the plough, the counting-house, the law-office, and the workshop, have taken the field, braving inclement seasons and inhospitable climates without a murmur; and, though wholly unused to arms, withstanding the most destructive fire, and storming batteries at the point of the bayonet with the coolness, intrepidity, and spirit of veterans. I believe I may safely say, there has been no parallel to these achievements by undisciplined forces since the French revolution. I am not sure that history can furnish a parallel. As to the regular army, we always expect it to be gallant and heroic, and we are never disappointed. The whole conduct of the war in the field has exhibited the highest evidence of our military capacity. It confirms an opinion I have always held—that a soldier is formidable in ratio of the importance he possesses in the order of the political system of which he is a part. It establishes another position of vital importance to us: that, under the protection of our militia system, the country may at the termination of every contest, lay aside the more massive and burdensome parts of its armor, and become prepared, with energies renewed by that very capacity, for succeeding scenes of danger.

Mr. President, the political condition of Mexico has been gradually approaching a dissolution of all responsible government, and of the civil order, which constitutes her an independent state. This lamentable situation is not the fruit alone of our military successes. The factions. by which that country has been distracted, each in turn gaining and maintaining a temporary ascendency, and often by brute force, lie at the foundation of the social and political disorder which has reigned there for the last twenty years. To most of the abuses of the old colonial system of Spain she has superadded the evils of an unstable and irresponsible government. The military bodies, which have been the instruments of those who have thus in succession gained a brief and precarious control over her affairs, though dispersed, still exist, ready to be re-united and to renew the anarchy which we have superseded, for the time being, by a military government; and this brings me to the first great objection to the proposition of withdrawing our armies from the field.

I have already said that no policy can deserve our support which does not hold out the promise of a durable peace. Nothing seems to me more unlikely to secure so desirable a result than the abandonment of Mexico by us at the present moment without a treaty, leaving behind a strong feeling of animosity towards us, with party divisions as strongly marked, and political animosities as rancorous, perhaps, as they have been at any former period. Even when her capital had fallen, humbled and powerless as she was, party leaders, instead of consulting for the common good, were seen struggling with each other for the barren sceptre of her authority. Our retirement as enemies would, in all probability, be the signal for intestine conflicts as desperate and sanguinary as those in which they have been engaged with us—conflicts always the most disastrous for the great body of the Mexican people, for, on what side soever fortune turns, they are certain to be the victims. You know, sir, there are two great parties in Mexico, (I pass by the minor divisions,) the "Federalistas" and "Centralistas." The former, as their name imports, are in favor of the federative system; they are the true republican party. With us, in former times, the terms "Federal" and "Republican" designated different parties; in Mexico, they are both employed to designate the friends of the federative system. The Centralists are in favor of a consolidated Government, republican or monarchial in form, and are composed of the army, the clergy, and I suppose a small portion of the population. I believe our only hope of obtaining a durable peace lies in the firm establishment of the Federal party in power—the party represented by Herrera, Anaya, Pena y Pena, Cumplido, and others. I understand Herrera has been elected President of the Republic; and this is certainly a favorable indication. But, unfortunately, I fear this party would not succeed in maintaining itself, if Mexico were left to herself at the present moment with an imbittered feeling of hostility towards us. The military chiefs, who controlled the army, and who might rally it again for political uses, if we were to retire without a treaty, are, for the most part, enemies of the federative system, and conservators of the popular abuses, to which they owe their wealth and importance. Nothing could be more unfortunate for Mexico than the re-establishment of these men in power. It would bring with it a hopeless perpetuation of the anarchy and oppression which hove given a character to their supremacy in past years—a supremacy without a prospect of amelioration in the condition of the Mexican people—a supremacy of which the chief variation has been an exchange of one military despot for another.

Calamitous as the restoration of this party to their former ascendency would be for Mexico, it would hardly be less so for us. Relying on military force for their support, their policy would be to continue the war as a pretext for maintaining the army in full strength, or, at least, not to terminate it till peace would ensure their own supremacy. It is believed that these considerations have been leading motives in the resistance they have opposed to us. It is true, the republican party has been equally hostile, so far as external indications show; but the fact is accounted for by their desire to see the war continued until the army and its leaders, the great enemies of the federative system, are overthrown. Undoubtedly the obstinate refusal of Mexico to make peace may be very properly referred to the natural exasperation of every people whose soil was invaded; but there can be little doubt that it has been influenced, in no inconsiderable degree, by considerations growing out of party divisions, and the jealousy and animosities to which those divisions have given rise. My confidence in our ability to make an amicable arrangement with the federal party, if it were in undisputed possession of the Government, arises from the belief that their motives are honest, that they have at heart the public welfare, and that they must see there is no hope for Mexico but in a solid peace with us. My utter distrust of the Centralist arises from the belief that their objects are selfish, and that, to accomplish them, they would not hesitate to sacrifice the liberties of the people and the prosperity of the country. But whether I err in these views or not, I feel quite confident I do not err in believing that if our armies were to be withdrawn from Mexico, without a peace, the flames of civil discord would be rekindled in that unhappy country, and burn with redoubled violence. I should greatly fear that the military chiefs would succeed in re-establishing their ascendency, and that no probable limit could be assigned to the duration of the war. If I am right, our true policy is to stand firm, and, if posssble, united, until wiser counsels shall prevail in Mexico, and a disposition shall be shown to come to an amicable arrangement with us on reasonable terms.

The objection I have stated to the proposition of withdrawing our forces from Mexico, concerns only the relations which now exist, or may exist hereafter, between the two countries. If there were no other objection, the question might be decided upon considerations touching only their domestic interests and their mutual rights.

But I come to the second objection—one perhaps of graver import than the first, because it supposes the possibility, if not the probability, of an interference in her affairs by other countries, if we were to retire without a treaty and without commercial arrangements, which it would be in our power to enforce. The President alluded to the subject in his annual message at the opening of Congress, and expressed an apprehension of danger from that source. I participate in it. I shall assign the grounds on which it rests; and I only regret that, in stating them with the minuteness necessary to make them fully understood, I shall be compelled to draw much more largely than I desire on the patience of the Senate.

Senators are doubtless aware that the right of intervention in the affairs of this continent was formally asserted in the French Chamber of Deputies, in the year 1845, by M. Guizot, Minister of Foreign Affairs, as the organ of the Government of France. He regarded the great powers on this continent as divided into three groups, namely; Great Brittian, the United States, and the States of Spanish origin; and he declared that it belonged to France "to protect, by the authority of her name, the independence of States, and the equlibrium of the great political forces in America." To this declaration, I have thought it not out of place, in connection with the subject under discussion, to call the attention of the Senate; not for the purpose of undertaking the formal refutation, of which I think the whole doctrine of intervention, as it has been practically enforced in Europe, is clearly susceptible, but for the purpose of denying it as founded upon any well established principles of international law, and, if it had such a foundation, of denying its applicability to the political condition of this continent. To enter fully into the examination of this important subject, would require more time than it would be proper for me to devote to it. I propose only to pass rapidly over a few of the principal considerations it suggests.

The declaration of M. Guizot was the first public and official intimation, by a European government, of an intention to interfere with the political condition of the independent communities on the continent of America, and to influence by moral, if not by physical agencies, their relations to each other. And if it had been presented in any other form than that of an abstract declaration, not necessarily to be followed by any overt act, it would have behooved us to inquire, in the most formal manner, whether this asserted right of interposition derived any justification from the usages of nations, or from the recognized principles of international law; or whether it was not an assumption wholly unsupported by authority, and an encroachment on the independence of sovereign States, which it would have been their duty to themselves and the civilized world to resent as an injury, a wrong.

Am I in error in supposing this subject derives new importance from our existing relations with Mexico, one of the states of Spanish origin, which M. Guizot grouped together as constituting one of the great political forces of this continent, among which the "equilibrium" was to pe maintained? Sir, more than once, in the progress of the war, the governments of Europe have been invoked, by leading organs of public opinion abroad, to interpose between us and Mexico. Is it not, then, appropriate briefly to state what this right of intervention is, as it has been asserted in in Europe, what it has been in practice, and what it would be likely to become, if applied to the States of this continent? I trust it will be so considered.

The doctrine of intervention to maintain the balance of power is essentially of modern origin. From the earliest ages, it is true, occasional combinations have been formed by particular States for mutual protection against the aggressions of a powerful neighbor. History is full of these examples. Such a co-operation is dictated by the plainest principles of self-preservation. for the purpose of guarding against the danger of being destroyed in detail; and it is founded upon such obvious maxims of common sense, that it would have been remarkable if it had not been resorted to from the moment human society assumed a regular form of organization. These defensive alliances were deficient in the permanence and methodical arrangements which distinguish the modern system of intervention. Hume saw, or fancied he saw, in them the principle of the right of intervention to preserve the balance of power which is asserted at the present day. But it could only have been the principle which was developed; they certainly never attained the maturity or the efficient force of a regular system.

The modern doctrine of intervention in the affairs of other States, which has sprung up within the last two centuries, is far more comprehensive in its scope. It has grown into a practical system of supervision on the part of the principal European powers over their own relative forces and those of the other States of Europe; and though it may, in some instances, have been productive of beneficial effects in maintaining the public tranquility, it has as frequently been an instrument of the grossest injustice and tyrany. From the first extensive coalition of this nature, which was formed during the long series of wars terminated by the peace of Westphalia, in 1648, down to the interference of Great Britain, Prussia, Austria, and France, in the contest between the Sultan and Mehemet Ali, in 1840, a period of nearly two centuries—an interference designed, in some degree, to prevent what was regarded as a dangerous protectorate over the affairs of the Porte by Russia—the exercise of the right has been placed, theoretically, on the same high ground of regard for the tranquility of Europe and the independence of States. Practically, it has often been perverted to the worst purposes of aggrandizement and cupidity.

If we look into the writers on international law, I think we shall find no sufficient ground for the right of intervention. Grotius, who wrote in the early part of the seventeenth century, denied its existence. Fenelon who wrote about half a century later, denied it, except as a means of self-preservation, and then only when the danger was real and imminent. Vattel, who wrote nearly a century after Fenelon, and a century before our own times, regarded the States of Europe as forming a political system, and he restricted the right of entering into confederacies and alliances for the purpose of intervention in the affairs of each other, to cases in which such combinations were necessary to curb the ambition of any power which, from its superiority in physical strength, and its designs of oppression or conquest, threatened to become dangerous to its neighbors. De Martens, who wrote half a century ago, acknowledges, with Vattel, the existence of the right under certain conditions, though he hardly admits it to be well settled as a rule of international law; and he limits its exercise to neighboring states, or states occupying the same quarter of the globe. But, according to the two last writers, who have perhaps gone as far as any other public jurists of equal eminence, towards a formal recognition of the right, it only justifies a union of inferior states within the same immediate sphere of action, to prevent an accumulation of power in the hands of a single sovereign, which would be too great for the common liberty.

I am confident, Mr. President, that no one can rise from a review of the history of Modern Europe, and from an examination of the writings of her public jurists, without being satisfied that the right of intervention, as recognized by civilized nations, is what I have stated it to be—a mere right, on the part of weaker states, to combine for the purpose of preventing the subversion of their independence, and the alienation of their territories, by a designing and powerful neighbor; a right to be exercised only in cases of urgent and immediate danger. It is simply a right of self-preservation, undefined, undefinable, having no settled or permanent foundation in public law, to be asserted only in extreme necessity, and when arbitrarily applied to practice, a most fruitful source of abuse, injustice, and oppression. One clear and certain limitation it happily possesses—a limitation which, amid all its encroachments upon the independence of sovereign States, has never until our day been overpassed. By universal consent, by the unvarying testimony of abuse itself, it is not to be exercised beyond the immediate sphere of the nations concerned. It pertains rigidly and exclusively to states within the same circle of political action. It is only by neighbors, for the protection of neighbors against neighbors, that it can, even upon the broadest principles, be rightfully employed. When it traverses oceans, and looks to the regulation of the political concerns of other continents, it becomes a gigantic assumption, which, for the independence of nations, for the interests of humanity, for the tranquillity of the Old World and the New, should be significantly repelled.

Mr. President, a review of the history of Europe during the last two centuries will bring with it another conviction in respect to the right of intervention—that no reliance can be placed on its restriction in practice to the objects to which it is limited by every public jurist who admits its existence at all; and that nothing could be so discouraging to the friends of free government as an extension of the system to this continent, if the power existed to introduce it here. Though the combinations it is claimed to authorize may, in some instances, have protected the coalescing parties from the danger of being overrun by conquering armies, the cases are perhaps as numerous, in which their interposition has been lent to break down the independence of states, and to throw whole communities of men into the arms of governments to which their feelings and principles were alike averse. The right, as has been seen—(and it cannot be too often repeated)—with the utmost latitude claimed for it by any public jurist, goes no further than to authorize a league on the part of two or more weaker states to protect themselves against the designs of an ambitious and powerful neighbor. In its practical application, it has more frequently resulted in a combination of powerful states to destroy their weaker neighbors for the augmentation of their own dominions or those of their allies. From a mere right to combine for self-preservation, they have made it in practice a right to divide, dismember, and partition states at their pleasure—not for the purpose of diminishing the strength of a powerful adversary—but under the pretence of creating a system of balances, which is artificial in its structure, and, in some degree, incongruous in its elements, and which a single political convulsion may overturn and destroy. Do we need examples of the abuse of the power, I will not call it a right? They will be found in the dismemberment of Saxony, the annexation of the republic of Genoa to the kingdom of Sardinia, and the absorption of Venice by Austria. There is another and a more aggravated case of abuse to which recent events have given new prominence. In 1772, Russia, Prussia, and Austria, under the pretence that the disturbed condition of Poland was dangerous to their own tranquillity, seized upon about one-third of her territories, and divided it among themselves. In 1793, notwithstanding her diminished proportions, she had become more dangerous, and they seized half of what they had left to her by the first partition. Sir, she continued to grow dangerous as she grew weak; and in two years after the second partition, they stripped her of all that remained. In 1815, the five great Powers, at the Congress of Vienna, from motives of policy, and not from a returning sense of justice, organized the city of Cracow and a portion of the surrounding territory, with a population of about one hundred thousand souls, into a republic, under the protection of Austria, Russia, and Prussia, with a guaranty of its independence in perpetuity. Russia pledged herself, at the same time, to maintain her share of the spoil, as the kingdom of Poland in name and form, with a constitutional government. She kept her pledge seventeen years, and then virtually incorporated it as an integral part into the Russian empire. The little republic of Cracow was all that remained as a monument of the dismembered kingdom. A year ago, it was obliterated as an independent state by the three great powers of eastern and northern Europe, in violation of their solemn guaranty, and assigned to Austria. The name of Poland, the fountain of so many noble and animating recollections, is no longer to be found on the map of Europe. The three quarters of a century which intervened from the inception to the consummation of this transaction are not sufficient to conceal or even to obscure its true character. The very magnitude of the space over which it is spread only serves to bring it out in bolder and darker relief from the pages of history.

If the United States, in the progress of these usurpations, has not remonstrated against them, and contributed by her interposition to maintain the integrity of the states thus disorganized and dismembered in violation of every rule of right, and every suggestion of justice and humanity, it is because we have been faithful, against all movements of sympathy, against the very instincts of nature, to the principle of abstaining from all interference with the movements of European powers, which relate exclusively to the condition of the quarter of the globe to which they belong. But when it is proposed or threatened to extend to this continent and to ourselves a similar system of balances, with all its danger of abuse and usurpation, I hold it to be our duty to inquire on what grounds it rests, that we may be prepared to resist all practical application of it to the independent states in this hemisphere.

Mr. President, the declaration of M. Guizot could hardly have been made without the previous approbation of the government, of which he was the organ. The same sovereign occupies the throne of France—the same minister stands before it as the exponent of his opinions. Is the declaration to be regarded as a mere idle annunciation in words of a design never intended to be carried into practice? Let me answer the question by the briefest possible reference to circumstances. France was the coadjutor of England in the attempt to induce Texas to decline annexation to the Union. Failing in this, she attempted to accomplish the same object indirectly, by persuading Mexico to recognize the independence of Texas, on condition that the latter should remain an independent state. These terms were offered to Texas, and rejected. In the year 1844, I believe less than twelve months before M. Guizot's declaration was made, (and the coincidence in point of time is remarkable,) a book on Oregon and California was published in Paris by order of the King of France, under the auspices of Marshal Soult, President of the Council, and M. Guizot, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and written by M. de Mofras, who was attached to the French legation in Mexico. The first part of the work is devoted to Mexico, and certainly contains some remarkable passages. He speaks of the establishment of a European monarchy as a project which has been suggested as the only one calculated to put an end to the divisions an annihilate the factions which desolated that beautiful country* He says the Catholic religion and family relations, with the ancient possessors of the country, would be the first conditions required of the princes, who should be called to reconstruct there a monarchical government. He then adds:

"The infantas of Spain, the French princes, and the archdukes of Austria, fulfil these conditions, and we may affirm that, from whichever quarter a competitor should present himself, he would be unanimously welcomed by the Mexican people.

"What, then, are the interests of France in these questions?

"The establishment in Mexico of a monarchy of any description whatever, resting upon a solid basis, should be the first object of our policy; for we know that the instability attached to the actual form of its government, brings with it disadvantages for our commerce, and inconveniences for our people."

He adds, that if Mexico is to prevserve her republican form of government, her incorporation into the Union of the North would seem more favorable to France than her existing condition, on account of the development of commerce and all the guaranteis of liberty, security, and justice, which his compatriots would enjoy; and that England would lose, under such an order of things, what France would gain. Thus, though the dismemberment and absorption of Mexico by the United States, are regarded by M. de Mofras as preferable to the commercial monopoly and the "species of political sovereignty," as he denominates it, which England has exercised in that country, the first object of France, according to him, should be a reconstruction of monarchy in Mexico, with a foreign prince on the throne, and this prince from some branch of the Bourbon family. The opinions contained in this book are not put forth as the mere speculations of a private person. They are the opinions of an agent of the government: the publication is made by order of the king, and under the auspices of his two chief ministers, and so stated in the title page. I do not mean to hold the government of France responsible for all the opinions contained in that work; but, can we believe that those I have quoted, concerning as they do so grave a subject as the international relations of France with Mexico, and of Mexico with the United States, would have been put forth without modification under such high official sanctions, if they had been viewed with positive disfavor? It appears to me, that we are constrained to view them, like the declaraton of M. Guizot, though certainly to a very inferior extent, as possessing an official character, which we are not at liberty wholly to disregard, when we consider the one in connection with the other.

And now, sir, I ask, do not these opinions and declarations, especially when we look to the open and direct interference with Great Britain and France, by the force of arms, in the domestic affairs of some of the South American republics within the last two years, furnish a just ground of apprehension, if we should retire from Mexico without a treaty and as enemies, that it might become a theatre for the exercise of influence of a most unfriendly character to us? With the aid of the monarchical party in Mexico, would there not be danger that the avowed design of establishing a throne, might be realized? The chances of open interposition are unquestionably diminished by the results of the war: but I am constrained to believe the chances of secret interference are increased by the avidity imputed to us for territorial extension. Ought not this danger to influence, to some extent, our own conduct, at least so far as to dissuade us from abandoning, until a better prospect of a durable peace shall exist, the advantages we have gained as belligerents? We know a great majority of the Mexican people are radically averse to any other than a republican form of government: but we know, also, the proneness of a people among whom anarchy reigns triumphant, to seek any refuge which promises the restoration of tranquility and social order.

Mr. President, any attempt by a European power to interpose in the affairs of Mexico, either to establish a monarchy, or to maintain, in the language of M. Guizot, "the equilibrium of the great political forces in America," would be the signal for a war far more important in its consequences, and inscrutable in its issues, than this. We could not submit to such interposition if we would. The public opinion of the country would compel us to resist it. We are committed by the most formal declarations, first made by President Monroe in 1823, and repeated by the present Chief Magistrate of the Union. We have protested, in the most solemn manner, against any further colonization by European powers on this continent. We have protested against any interference in the political concerns of the independent states in this hemisphere. A protest, it is true, does not imply that the ground it assumes is to be maintained at all hazards, and if necessary, by force of arms. Great Britain protested against the interference of France in the affairs of Spain in 1823; she has more recently protested against the absorption of Cracow by Austria as a violation of the political order of Europe, settled at Vienna by the allied sovereigns, and against the Montpensier marriage as a violation of the treaty of Utrecht: but I do not remember that in either case she did anything more than to proclaim to the world her dissent from the acts against which she entered her protest. It has always seemed to me to be unwise in a government to put forth manifestoes without being prepared to maintain them by acts, or to make declarations of abstract principle until the occasion has arrived for enforcing them. The declarations of a President having no power to make war without a vote of Congress, or even to employ the military force of the country except to defend our own territory, is very different from the protest of a sovereign holding the issues of peace and war in his own hands. But the former may not be less effectual when they are sustained, as I believe those of Presidents Monroe and Polk are, in respect to European interference on the American continent, by an undivided public opinion, even though they may not have received a formal response from Congress. I hold, therefore, if any such interposition as that to which I have referred should take place, resistance on our part would inevitably follow, and we should become involved in controversies, of which no man could foresee the end.

Before I quit this part of the subject, I desire to advert to some circumstances recently made public, and, if true, indicating significantly the extent to which Great Britain is disposed to carry her other encroachments on this continent, as in every other quarter of the globe. On the coast of Honduras, in Central America, commonly called the Musquito coast, there is a tribe of Indians bearing the same name, numbering but a few hundred individuals, and inhabiting some miserable villages in the neighborhood of Cape Gracias a Dios, near the fifteenth parallel of north latitude. Several hundred miles south is the river San Juan, running from Lake Nicaragua to the Caribbean Sea, a space of about two degrees of longitude, with the town of Nicaragua at its mouth, and a castle or fort about midway between the town and lake. The lake is only fifteen leagues from the Pacific, and constitutes, with the river San Juan, one of the proposed lines for a ship canal across the isthmus. Great Britain has recently laid claim to the river San Juan and the town of Nicaragua, if she has not actually taken possession of the latter. I have seen a communication from the British consul-general at Guatemala, asserting the independence of the Mosquitos as a nation. I have also seen a communication from the British consul at Bluefield, on the Mosquito shore, asserting that "the Mosquito flag and nation are under the special protection of the crown of Great Britain," and that "the limits which the British Government is determined to maintain as the right of the King of the Mosquitos" "comprehend the San Juan river." By Arrowsmith's London Atlas, published in 1840, the Mosquito territory covered about 40,000 square miles, nearly as large an area as that of the State of New York; but it did not extend below the twelfth parallel of latitude, while the river San Juan is on the eleventh. I have seen the protest of the State of Nicaragua against the occupation of the town of Nicaragua on the river San Juan, which, as the protest declares, has been from time immemorial in her quiet and peaceable possession. The state of San Salvador, one of the Central American republics, also unites in the protest, and declares her determination, if the outrage shall be carried into effect, to exert her whole power until the usurper "shall be driven from the limits of Central America."

I understand, for I speak only from information, that Great Britain has for some time claimed to have had the Mosquitos, a mere naked tribe of Indians of a few hundred persons, under her protection.*—Through her influence they appointed a king, who was taken to Belize, a British station on the bay of Yucatan, and there crowned. It is said, also, that on the decease of the king, he was found to have bequeathed his dominions to her Britannic Majesty. It appears to be certain that she has, under this pretence of protection, extended her dominion over an immense surface in Central America; that she has at least one vessel of war, the Sun, commanded by an officer bearing an English name, "Commander Trotter, of the Mosquito navy," as he is styled in a letter written by the British consul at Bluefield, and that she is still further extending herself, against the remonstrance of the Central American States. But these States, besides being physically weak, are distracted by internal feuds; and if the proceedings complained of be not the unauthorized acts of British agents, which Great Britain will disavow, it is hardly to be expected that a usurpation, so unjustifiably consummated, will be abandoned on an appeal to the justice of the wrongdoer. Whether our government should remain quiescent under this encroachment upon near and defenceless neighbors, is a question worthy of consideration. Under any circumstances, it seems to me to afford little assurance of non-interference with the affairs of Mexico, if our forces were to be withdrawn without a treaty.

There is another consideration which ought not to be overlooked. In July last, Lord George Bentinck made a motion for an address to her Britannic Majesty, praying her to take such measures as she might deem proper to secure the payment of the Spanish government bonds held by British subjects. Those bonds amount to about three hundred and eighty millions of dollars, and on about three hundred and forty millions no interest whatever has been paid; and including this debt nearly seven hundred and thirty millions of dollars are due to British subjects by foreign governments—a sum equal to about one fifth of her national debt. He contended, that "by the law of nations, from time immemorial, it has been held that the recovery of just debts is a lawful cause of war, if the country from which payment is due refuses to listen to the claims of the country to whom money is owing." He quoted authorities to show that the payment of the debt, or the interest on it, might be enforced without having recourse to arms, though asserting the right to resort to force to compel it. He referred to the rich colonies of Spain, and especially Cuba, to show that there was wealth enough in its annual produce and revenue "to pay the whole debt due by Spain to British bond-holders." He referred to the naval force which Spain possessed to show that there would not be "any very effective resistance," and that "the most timid minister" need not fear it. Having, in the course of his remarks, called the attention of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the subject, Lord Palmerston, in responding to his call, entered into an extended statement in respect to the foreign debt due to British subjects. He drew a distinction between transactions by one government with another, by British subjects with the subjects of another government, and between debts and acts of injustice and oppression. This distinction, however, he treated as matter of expediency and established practice. He assented to the doctrine laid down by the noble lord who made the motion for an address, and he said, if it were the wise policy of England to lay down a rule that she would enforce obligations of this character with the same rigor as those of a different character, she would have a full right, according to the laws of nations, to do so. And he concluded by saying that England had not refrained from taking the steps urged by his noble friend, because she was "afraid of these states, or all of them put together;" that it was not to be supposed the British Parliament, or the British nation, would long remain patient under the wrong, and that they had ample power and means to obtain justice.

[*See inside.*]

*The reference alluded to is contained in the following extract:

"I will not detain the Senate by entering into any detailed review of these events with a view to enforce the appeal contained in the petition on the attention. I hope, however, I may be indulged in saying, in justice to those who bore a part in them, that the first conquest of Mexico cannot, as it appears to me, be compared with the second, either as to the obstacles overcome, or as to the relative strength of the invaders. The triumphs of Cortez were achieved by policy and by superiority in discipline and in the implements of warfare. The use of fire-arms, until then unknown to the inhabitants of Mexico, was sufficient in itself to make his force, small as it was, irresistible. In the eyes of that simple and superstitious people he seemed armed with superhuman power. Other circumstances combined to facilitate his success. The native tribes, by whom the country was possessed, were distinct communities, not always acknowledging the same head, and often divided among themselves by implacable hostility and resentments. Cortez, by his consummate prudence and art, turned these dissensions to his own account; he lured the parties to them into his own service, and when he presented himself at the gates of the city of Mexico, he was at the head of four thousand of the most warlike of the natives, as auxiliaries to the band of Spaniards, with which he commenced his march from Vera Cruz. Thus his early successes were as much the triumph of policy as of arms. General Scott, and the gallant band he led, had no such advantages. The whole population of the country, from Vera Cruz to Mexico, were united as one man against him, and animated by the fiercest animosity. He was opposed by military forces armed like his own, often better disciplined, occupying positions chosen by themselves, strong by nature, and fortified according to the strictest rules of art. These obstacles were overcome by his skill as a tactician, aided by a corps of officers unsurpassed for their knowledge in the art of attack and defence, and by the indomitable courage of their followers. With half his force left on the battle-field or in the hospital, and with less than six thousand men, after a series of desperate contests, he took possession of the city of Mexico, containing nearly two hundred thousand inhabitants, and defended by the remnant of an army of more than thirty thousand soldiers. I confess I know nothing in modern warfare which exceeds in brilliancy the movements of the American army from the Gulf to the city of Mexico. I shall not attempt to speak of them in the language of eulogium. They are not a fit theme for such comment. I like the achievements of General Taylor and his brave men on the Rio Grande, at Monterey and Buena Vista, the highest and most appropriate praise is contained in the simplest statement of facts."

*The day after this speech was delivered, Mr. D. received from a friend in New York, who could have had no knowledge of his intention to speak, much less of the topics he designed to discuss, a translation from a speech delivered to the Cortes of Spain on the 1st of December, 1847, by Senor Olozoga, a man of distinction, and supposed to be the same individual who was a few years since first minister of the Crown. By this speech it appears that as recently as 1846, a year after M. Guizot's declaration was made, and two years after M. de Mofras's book was published, large sums were expended by Spain for the purpose of establishing a monarchy in Mexico, and of placing a Spanish prince on the throne. The close connection of the governments of France and Spain by the marriage of the Duke of Montpensier, the son of Louis Phillippe, to the sister of Queen Isabella, gives additional importance to these developments:

"No one, either on this floor or elsewhere, can deny that the project has been entertained of establishing a monarchy in Mexico, and to place a Spanish prince on the throne. This project, conceived in the time of the Conde Aranda, would have saved our colonies from the sad fate they have suffered; but brought forward on this occasion, it was the most absurd idea that could have been conceived. But we have not only to deplore having excited political animosities and the consequences this has produced in that country; we have also to lament the money lost and thrown away upon Mexican soil. And in order that the Cortes may not believe I am about to make accusations of so grave a character without possessing proofs to corroborate them, I now hold in my hand a statement of the sums expended and drawn from the treasury in Havana in the year 1846, signed by the Senor Navarro as auditor, and Mugica as treasurer. In this statement there is an item which says: 'Paid bills of exchange remitted by the minister plenipotentiary of her Majesty in Mexico for matters belonging to the service, $100,000.' But much greater than this was the authority our minister in Mexico possessed for disposing of the public funds. I do not know whether he has made use of it. I do not even know his name. I suppose he will employ them with scrupulous honesty; but is the Spanish people so bountifully supplied with millions that they can afford to send them to the New World, for the purpose of sustaining political intrigues in that distant region? How many meritorious military men, who have shed their blood for the good of their country, and whose means of support have been cut down to the lowest possible point, might have been aided by these large sums? How much misery might have been alleviated by the money which has been thrown away in this manner? And where do they find authority for squandering millions to foster foreign intrigues?"

Extract of a letter from the Supreme Government of the State of Nicaragua to the Supreme Government of the State of San Salvador.

"A tribe with no recognized form of government, without civilization, and entirely abandoned to savage life, is suddenly made use of by enlightened England for the purpose of planting one of her feet upon the Atlantic coast of this State; or rather, for the purpose of taking possession of the port for communication between Europe, America and Asia, and other important countries at the point where the grand inter-oceanic canal is most practicable."

GOLD MINES IN RUSSIA.—The mines of Russia have become the great source for the supply of gold to the world, as the mines of America for the supply of silver. But the circumstance which has recently attracted much attention to these mines, was the investment by the Emperor of Russia of twenty-four millions of dollars in precious metals, in the securities of England and France. The Paris Journal des Debats, has entered fully into the subject and given full particulars of the proceeds of these mines. The gold mines are situated in the chain of the Ural mountains, and more to the east, in the heart of Siberia. These are immense alluvions stretched out at the foot of the Ural mountains, or in the vallies of the more elevated chain of the Altai mountains. Gold is there in its native state, disseminated as usual in very small quantities in the midst of sand and gravel. The zone in which the auriferous deposits are distributed has a mean width of about nine hundred kilometres, (rather more than half a mile) and a length of several thousand kilometres. The presence of gold on so great an extent of soil is one of the most general of the mineralogical phenomena which can be pointed out on the face of the globe.

The working of the mines was not regularly carried on until 1823. Till then all the gold furnished by boreal Russia was reduced to about fourteen hundred pounds weight, which was separated as an accessory production, from the silver, of which the country has some mines. This amount represents,—according to the tariff of French money, which gives to gold fifteen times and a half the value of silver—a sum of about 450,000 dollars. In 1845 the production as officially stated, was about 40,000 pounds of fine gold. Allowing for what passes off clandestinely, in order to avoid the impost, the production may be placed at 46,000 pounds, which represents 15,540,000 dollars. In 1840 the amount obtained was not two fifths of this sum, but during these last years the increase has been very great.

Compared with the quantity of gold furnished from other parts of the world, it is estimated that Russia yields about double the amount.

A more exact idea of the importance of this product may be formed by comparing it with silver. At the beginning of the century, America yielded over thirty-five millions of dollars of fine silver. The Spanish republics, almost all of them made desolate by anarchy, have seen this product fall to 27,000,000 dollars. The general production of silver was, at the beginning of the century, 40,000,000 dollars. America then furnished nine-tenths of this metal. There was then produced in the world 2 francs 33 centimes in silver against one franc in gold. At present the total product of silver may be estimated at nearly 39,000,000 of dollars, against more than 41,000,000 dollars of gold. The old proportion is thus overturned, and must be attributed to Russia.

The rate which was presented at the beginning of the century was nearly the mean rate of the product of the two metals since the discovery of America. Till more recent times America had had almost the exclusive privilege of supplying the world with gold and silver. What it had produced from its discovery to the first of January, 1846, may be computed to amount to 7 milliards 120,000,000 dollars, of which 5 milliards 340,000,000 were in silver, and 1 milliard 980,000,000 of gold. It is in consequence of this great extraction of silver that the gold had acquired so much value in relation to that metal, and that one kilogram, or about two pounds of gold, which in commerce was formerly exchanged for ten kilograms of silver, had reached the value of 15 1-2 or 15 3-4. In process of time, if, as there is reason to believe, the produce of gold continues to be in Russia what it is now, the comparative value of the two metals will not be slow in approaching more or less what it was three centuries ago.—*N. Y. Post.*

Dreadful Shipwreck.

Intelligence has been received from Malta of the total loss of her Majesty's steam frigate Avenger, on the Sorelle rocks, off the Northern coast of Africa. The Avenger had on boad 270 persons, all of whom, it is learned, were drowned, with the exception of a lieutenant and four men. The vessel was commanded by a son of Admiral Napier; and among the victims was Lieut. Marryatt. It appears from a statement in the Malta Times, that when the Avenger struck, two boats were lowered, one containing Lieut. Rooke, the surgeon, the second master, and five seamen; but they were at once carried away from the ship, which they saw thrown upon her beam ends, the sea making a clean breach over her. The boat reached the coast of Africa at Bizerta, but was swamped in the attempt to land; only five persons, including Lieut. Rooke, gained the shore. By the aid of some friendly Arabs, they were enabled to reach Tunis. The Avenger was a first class steamer, of 1444 tons, and 650 horse power.

ANOTHER FATAL SHIPWRECK.—The ship Helena, of Dundee, bound to that port with a cargo valued at £20,000, was wrecked on North Ronaldsha, on the 15th of December, and six of the crew drowned. The cargo will be partly saved. It is insured one-half in London, and the other in New York.

DEATH OF THE U. S. CONSUL AT BELFAST.—The English papers announce the sudden and unexpected death of Thomas W. Gilpin, Esq., the United States consul at Belfast. Mr. G. was the brother of our respected townsman, Henry D. Gilpin, Esq.—*Philadelphia Bulletin.*