Mr. Castillo y Lanzas to Mr. Slidell.

National Palace, Mexico, March 12, 1846.

The undersigned, minister of foreign relations and government of the republic, has the honor to acknowledge receipt of the note addressed to him from Jalapa, under date of the 1st instant, by his excellency John Slidell, appointed minister plenipotentiary and envoy extraordinary of the United States of America.

So soon as the said communication was received by the undersigned, he proceeded to communicate it to his excellency the President ad interim; and he, after deliberately considering its contents, and maturely meditating upon the business, has seen fit to order the undersigned to make known to Mr. Slidell, in reply, as he now has the honor of doing, that the Mexican government cannot receive him as envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to reside near it.

And here the undersigned might terminate his note, if reasons of great weight did not convince him of the necessity of making some reflections in this place; not through fear of the consequences which may result from this decisive resolve, but through the respect which he owes to reason and to justice.

It is true that this warlike display with which the American Union presents herself—by sea, with her squadrons on both coasts; by land, with her invading forces advancing by the northern frontiers;
at the same time that, by her minister plenipotentiary, propositions are made for conciliation and accommodation—would be a sufficiently powerful reason for not listening to them, so long as all threatening shall not be withdrawn, even to the slightest appearance of hostility. But even this is waived by the government of the republic, in order that it may in all frankness and loyalty enter into the discussion, relying solely upon reason and facts. A simple reference to the truth plainly stated, suffices to show the justice by which Mexico is upheld in the question now under discussion.

The vehement desire of the government of the United States to extend its already immense territory, at the expense of that of Mexico, has been manifest for many years; and it is beyond all doubt that, in regard to Texas at least, this has been their firm and constant determination; for it has been so declared categorically and officially by an authorized representative of the Union, whose assertion, strange and injurious as was its frankness, has nevertheless not been belied by the United States.

Putting out of view, now, all the events to which this marked intent has given rise through a long series of years—events which have served not only to prove it more strongly, but also to show that no means, of whatever kind they may be, were to be spared for its accomplishment—it is sufficient to attend to what occurred last year. This is the important part to the present case.

Considering the time as having come for carrying into effect the annexation of Texas, the United States, in union and by agreement with their natural allies and adherents in that territory, concerted the means for the purpose. The project was introduced into the American Congress. It was at first frustrated, thanks to the prudential considerations, the circumspection, and the wisdom with which the Senate of the Union then proceeded. Nevertheless, the project was reproduced in the following session, and was then approved and sanctioned in the form and terms known to the whole world.

A fact such as this, or, to speak with greater exactness, so notable an act of usurpation, created an imperious necessity that Mexico, for her own honor, should repel it with proper firmness and dignity. The supreme government had beforehand declared that it would look upon such an act as a *casus belli*; and, as a consequence of this declaration, negotiation was by its very nature at an end, and war was the only resource of the Mexican government.

But before it proceeded to recover its outraged rights, propositions were addressed to it from the so called President of the republic of Texas, which had for their object to enter into an amicable accommodation upon the basis of her independence; and the government agreed to hear them, and consented to receive the commissioners who with this view were sent to it from Texas.

Moments so precious were not thrown away by the agents of the United States in Texas. Availing themselves of the *status quo* of Mexico, they so prepared matters and directed affairs, that the already concerted annexation to the American Union should follow almost immediately.
Thus, this incorporation of a territory which had constituted an integral part of that of Mexico during the long period of the Spanish dominion, and after her emancipation for so long a term, without any interruption whatever, and which moreover had been recognized and sanctioned by the treaty of limits between the Mexican republic and the United States of America—this annexation was effected by the reprobated means of violence and fraud. Civilized nations have beheld with amazement, at this enlightened and refined epoch, a powerful and well consolidated State, availing itself of the internal dissensions of a neighboring nation, putting its vigilance to sleep by protestations of friendship, setting in action all manner of springs and artifices, alternately plying intrigue and violence, and seizing a moment to despoil her of a precious part of her territory, regardless of the incontrovertible rights of the most unquestionable ownership, and the most uninterrupted possession.

Here, then, is the true position of the Mexican republic: despoiled, outraged, contemned, it is now attempted to subject her to a humiliating degradation. The sentiment of her own dignity will not allow her to consent to such ignominy.

After the definite and clear explanations rendered to his excellency Mr. Slidell, in the note of the 20th December last, referred to by him, it is not easy to comprehend how the Executive of the United States should still think it can find reasons for insisting upon that which was then refused upon grounds the most conclusive.

The consul of the United States in this capital addressed on the 13th of October to the then minister of foreign relations a confidential note, wherein, referring to what he had previously stated to the minister in an interview of the same character, he says:

"At the time of the suspension of the diplomatic relations between the two countries, General Almonte was assured of the desire felt by the President to adjust amicably every cause of complaint between the governments, and to cultivate the kindest and most friendly relations between the sister republics. He still continues to be animated by the same sentiments. He desires that all existing differences should be terminated amicably, by negotiation, and not by the sword.

"Actuated by these sentiments, the President has directed me to instruct you, in the absence of any diplomatic agent in Mexico, to ascertain from the Mexican government whether they would receive an envoy from the United States, entrusted with full power to adjust all the questions in dispute between the two governments. Should the answer be in the affirmative, such an envoy will be immediately despatched to Mexico."

To this the ministry now in the charge of the undersigned replied on the 15th of the same month, "that, although the nation is gravely offended by that of the United States, by reason of the acts committed by the latter towards the department of Texas, the property of the former, my government is disposed to receive the commissioner who may come from the United States to this capital with full powers from his government to arrange in a pacific, reasonable, and
decorous manner, the present controversy; thereby giving a new
proof that, even in the midst of injuries, and of its firm determina-
tion to exact the adequate reparation, it does not repel nor despise
the part of reason and of peace to which it is invited by its ad-
versary."

From these extracts it is manifest that it was the firm intention
of the Mexican government to admit only a plenipotentiary from
the United States clothed with powers ad hoc—that is to say, spe-
cial powers to treat upon the question of Texas, and upon this
alone, as preliminary to the renewal of friendly relations between
the two countries, if the result should be such as to admit of their
restoration, and then, but not before, of the reception of an envoy
extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary near the same govern-
ment.

Nor could the government of the republic, on that occasion ex-
tend its engagement beyond this: for to admit any person sent by
the United States in the character simply of the ordinary agents
between friendly nations, whilst the grave question of Texas was
still pending, directly and immediately affecting, as it does, the in-
tegrity of the Mexican territory, and the very nationality itself,
would be equivalent to an acknowledgment that this question was
at an end, thus prejudging it without even touching it, and to a
recognition that the relations of friendship and harmony between
the two nations were from that moment in fact re-established.

So very simple a truth is this, that the appointment of an envoy
extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary by the Executive of the
United States, and the subsequent ratification of this appointment,
notwithstanding all that was set forth on the subject by the gov-
ernment of Mexico, cause this act to appear as an attempt which
the undesigned does not permit himself to qualify.

If good faith presides, as is to be supposed, over the dispositions
of the government of the United States, what motive could exist
for so anxiously repelling the indispensable restriction with which
Mexico has acceded to the proposal spontaneously made by the
former? If it was really and positively desired to tie up again the
bonds of good understanding and friendship between the two nations,
the way was very easy: the Mexican government offered to admit
the plenipotentiary or commissioner who should come clothed with
special powers to treat upon the question of Texas.

Upon this point the resolve of the Mexican government is immu-
table. And since in the extreme case it is the rights of the Mexican
nation which will have to be affirmed, for it is her honor which has
been outraged, and which will have to be avenged, her government
will, if this necessity arise, call upon all her citizens to fulfil the
sacred duty of defending their country.

A lover of peace, she would wish to ward off this sad contingency;
and without fearing war, she would desire to avoid so great a
calamity for both countries. For this she has offered herself, and
will continue to offer herself, open to all honorable means of con-
ciliation, and she anxiously desires that the present controversy
may terminate in a reasonable and decorous manner.
In the actual state of things, to say that Mexico maintains a position of quasi hostility with respect to the United States, is to add a new offence to her previous injuries. Her attitude is one of defence, because she sees herself unjustly attacked; because a portion of her territory is occupied by the forces of a nation intent, without any right whatever, to possess itself of it; because her ports are threatened by the squadrons of the same power. Under such circumstances, is she to remain inactive, without taking measures suited to so rigorous an emergency?

It is then not upon Mexico, seeing her present state, that it devolves to decide if the issue shall be a friendly negotiation or an open rupture. It is long since her interests have made this necessary, and her dignity has demanded it; but in the hope of an accommodation at once honorable and pacific, she has silenced the clamor of these imperative exigencies.

It follows that, if war should finally become inevitable, and if in consequence of this war the peace of the civilized world should be disturbed, the responsibility will not fall on Mexico. It will all rest upon the United States; to them will the whole of it belong. Not upon Mexico, who, with a generosity unequalled admitted the American citizens who wished to colonize in Taxes, but upon the United States, who, bent upon possessing themselves, early or late, of that territory, encouraged emigration thither with that view, in order that, in due time, its inhabitants, converting themselves from colonists into its masters, should claim the country as their own, for the purpose of transferring it to the United States. Not upon Mexico, who, having in due season protested against so enormous a transgression, wished to remove all cause for controversy and hostilities, but upon the United States, who, to the scandal of the world, and in manifest violation of treaties, gave protection and aid to those guilty of a rebellion so iniquitous. Not upon Mexico, who, in the midst even of injuries so great and so repeated, has shown herself disposed to admit propositions for conciliation, but upon the United States, who, pretending sincerely to desire a friendly and honorable accommodation, have belied by their acts the sincerity of their words. Finally, not upon Mexico, who, putting out of view her own dearest interests, through her deference for peace, has entertained as long as was wished, the propositions which, with this view, might be made to her, but upon the United States, who, by frivolous pretexts, evade the conclusion of such an arrangement, proposing peace at the very moment when they are causing their squadrons and their troops to advance upon the ports and frontiers of Mexico, exacting a humiliation impossible to be submitted to, in order to find a pretext, if no reason can be found, which may occasion the breaking out of hostilities.

It is, therefore, upon the United States, and not upon Mexico, that it devolves to determine in the alternative presented by Mr. Slidell—that is, between a friendly negotiation and an open rupture.

The undersigned doubts not that he makes his excellency Mr. Slidell sensible that, in view of what is set forth in the present
note, the Mexican government trusts that the Executive of the United States, in coming to the determination which it shall deem proper, will act with the deliberation and mature consideration demanded by the exceedingly grave interests involved in this very thorny question.

The Mexican government, preparing for war, should circumstances require it, will keep alive its flattering hope that peace will not be disturbed on the new continent; and in making this declaration in the face of the world, it emphatically disclaims all responsibility for the evils which may attend a struggle which it has not provoked, and which it has made every effort to avoid.

In communicating all this (by order of his government) to his excellency John Slidell, the undersigned avails himself of the opportunity to offer to him the assurance of his very distinguished consideration.

J. M. DE CASTILLO Y LANZAS.

His Excellency John Slidell.