

# Democratic Banner.

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## Correspondence Between Gen. Scott and the Secretary of War.

(As we purpose giving Secretary Mancy's answer to Gen. Scott's letter of accusation against the Government and War Department, we have thought it but fair that we should lay the General's complaints before our readers, in his own language. We therefore begin with his diary immediately after the fall of Vera Cruz. Those that allude to in the previous part of his letter are so fully quoted by the Secretary as not to require insertion here.)

The city and castle were captured March 29; and, with about one-fourth of the necessary means for a road-train, (no fault of mine,) the retreat, in pursuit of the enemy, was vigorously commenced April 29. The battle of Cerro Gordo soon followed; and we occupied Jalapa and Perote, where we were obliged to wait for supplies, from Vera Cruz. In these positions I was made to write under another cruel disappointment.

In my four memorials to the department, on the further prosecution of the war against Mexico, written at Washington, and dated, respectively, Oct. 28, Nov. 12, 16, and 21, (it was only intimated to me in the night of Nov. 18, that I might prepare myself for the field,) papers in which I demonstrated that Vera Cruz was the true base of operations, and that the enemy's capital could not, probably, be reached from the Rio Grande; I estimated that, after taking the great sea-port, 'about 20,000 men' or 'an army of more than 6,000 men' may be needed. 1. To beat in the field, and in passes, any accumulated force in the way. 2. To garrison many important points in the rear, to secure a free communication with Vera Cruz. 3. To make distant detachments, in order to gather in, without long halts, necessary subsistence. And that force, I supposed, including volunteers, and aided by land and money bounties, might be raised in time, by adding ten or twelve new regiments of regulars, and filling up the ranks of the old.

A bill was introduced for raising ten additional regiments; and I certainly do not mean to charge the department with the whole delay, in passing the bill thro' Congress. But it was passed February 11, 1847, and under it, by early in April, some few thousand men had been already raised and organized. My distress may be conceived, by any soldier, on learning at Jalapa, April 27, that the whole of that force had been sent, under Brig. General Cadwalader, to the Rio Grande frontier.

In my letter to the Department, written the day after, I said I had expected that—  
"Detachments of the new regiments would, as you had promised me, begin to arrive in this month, and continue to follow perhaps into June. Now many volunteers will re-engage, under the act approved March 3 (only received two days ago) I know not; probably but few. Hence the greater my disappointment, caused by sending the new troops to the Rio Grande; for, besides then keeping the road in our present rear open for many weeks by marches in successive detachments, I had intended, as I advanced, to leave strong garrisons in this place, (Jalapa,) in Perote, and Puebla, and to keep at the head of the movements a force equal to any probable opposition. It may now depend on the number of the old volunteers who may re-engage, and the number of new troops that may arrive from the Brazos in time, as also in some degree upon the advance of Major General Taylor, whether I shall find this army in strength to leave the garrisons and to occupy the capital."

I may add that only about fifty individuals of the old volunteers re-engaged under the provisions of the act of March 3; that the remainder were discharged, May 4th; that Major General Taylor made no movement in advance of Saltillo; and that the new regulars, including Cadwalader's Brigade, only began to come up with me at Puebla, in July, but not in sufficient numbers till August 6. The next day the army commenced its advance upon the capital with a little more than 10,000 effective men.

It is not extravagant to say that, if Brig. Gen. Cadwalader's forces had not been diverted from me to the Rio Grande, where he was made to lose, without any benefit to Major Gen. Taylor, much precious time, I might easily have taken this city in the month of June, and at one-fifth of the loss sustained in August and September. The enemy availed himself of my forced delay, at Puebla, to collect, to re-organize, and to discipline his forces, as, also, to erect numerous and powerful defences with batteries. Nearly all these extraordinary preparations for our reception were made after the middle of June. And it is known that the news of the victory of Buena Vista reached Washington in time to countermand Cadwalader's orders for the Rio Grande, before his departure from New Orleans. Two rifle companies, with him, received the countermand there, and joined me early.

I know that I had the misfortune to give offence to the Department, by expressing myself to the same effect—from Jalapa, May 6. In a report of that date I said:—"The subject of this order (No. 135—old volunteers) has given me long and deep solicitude. To part with so large and so respectable a portion

of this army, in the middle of a country, which, though in its power is not yet disposed to sue for peace; to provide for the return home of seven regiments, from this interior position, at a time when I find it quite difficult to provide transportation & supplies for the operating forces, which remain—and all this without any prospect of success or reinforcements, in perhaps the next seven months—beyond some 300 army recruits—present novelties utterly unknown to any invading army before. With the addition of ten or twelve thousand new levies, in April or May—asked for and until very recently expected—or even with the addition of two or three thousand new troops, destined for this army, but suddenly, by the orders of the War Department, diverted to the Rio Grande frontier, I might, notwithstanding the unavoidable discharge of the old volunteers—seven regiments, and two independent companies—advance with confidence upon the enemy's capital. I shall, nevertheless, advance; but whether beyond Puebla, will depend upon intervening information and reflection. The general panic given to the enemy at Cerro Gordo still remaining, I think it probable we shall go to Mexico; or, if the enemy recover from that, we must renew the consternation by another blow."

Thus, like Cortez, finding myself isolated and abandoned, and again, like him, always afraid that the next ship or messenger might recall or further cripple me, I resolved no longer to depend on Vera Cruz or home, but to render my little army 'a self sustaining machine'—as I informed every body, including the head of the War Department—and advanced to Puebla.

It was in reference to the foregoing serious causes of complaint, and others, to be found in my reports at large—particularly in respect to money for the disbursing staff officers, clothing, and Mr. Trist, commissioner, that I concluded my report from Puebla, June 4, in these words:

"Considering the many cruel disappointments and mortifications I have been made to feel since I left Washington, and the total want of support or sympathy on the part of the War Department, which I have so long experienced, I beg to be safe for any person to embark at Vera Cruz—which, I suppose, will be early in November. Probably all field operations will be over long before that time."

But my next report (July 26) from Puebla, has no doubt, in the end, been deemed more unpardonable by the Department. In that paper, after speaking of the 'happy change in my relations, both official & private, with Mr. Trist,' I continued:

"Since about the 26 ultimo, (June) our intercourse has been frequent and cordial, and I have found him (Mr. T.) able, discreet, courteous and amiable. At home it so chanced that we had but the slightest possible acquaintance with each other. Hence more or less reciprocal prejudice; & of the existence of his feelings towards me, I knew (by private letters) before we met, that at least a part of the cabinet had a full intimation. Still, the pronounced misunderstanding between Mr. Trist and myself could not have occurred but for other circumstances: 1. His being obliged to send forward your letter of April 14, instead of delivering it in person, with the explanatory papers which he desired to communicate; 2. His bad health in May and June; which I am happy to say has now become good; and 3. The extreme mystification into which your letter, and particularly an interlineation, unavoidably threw me. So far as I am concerned, I am perfectly willing that all I have heretofore written to the department about Mr. Trist should be suppressed. I make this declaration due to my present esteem for that gentleman; but ask no favor, or desire none, at the hands of the department. Justice to myself, however, I do not all take care to have done."

I do not acknowledge the justice of either of your rebukes contained in the letter of May 31. [In relation to Mr. Trist and the prisoners at Cerro Gordo,] and that I do not here triumphantly vindicate myself, is not from the want of will, means, or ability, but time. The first letter, dated Feb. 22, received from you, at Vera Cruz, contained a censure, and I am now rebuked for the unavoidable—may, wise, if it had not been unavoidable—release, on parole, of the prisoners taken at Cerro Gordo—even before one word of commendation from government had reached this army on account of its gallant conduct in the capture of those prisoners. [No such commendation has yet been received—February, 1848.] So, in regular progression, I may, should the same army gallantly bear me into the city of Mexico, in the next six or seven weeks, which is probable, if we are not arrested by a peace or my country? You will perceive that I am aware (as I have long been) of the dangers which hang over me at home; but I, too, am a citizen of the United States, and well know the obligations imposed under all circumstances by an enlightened patriotism. In respect to money, I beg again to report that the chief commissary (Captain Grayson) of this army has not received a dollar from the States, since we landed at Vera Cruz, March 9. He now owes more than \$200,000, and is obliged to purchase on credit, at great disadvantage. The chief quartermaster (Captain Irwin) has received perhaps \$60,000, and labors under like incumbrances. Both have sold draughts to small amounts, and borrowed largely of the pay department, which has received about half the money estimated for. Consequently, the troops have some four months pay due them. Our poverty, or the neglect of the disbursing departments at home, has been made known, to our shame, in the papers of the capital here, through a letter from Lieut. Col. Hunt, that was found on the person of the special messenger from Washington.

"The army is also suffering greatly from the want of necessary clothing, including blankets and great coats. The new troops (those who have just arrived) as destitute as the others, were first told that they would find abundant supplies at New Orleans; next at Vera Cruz, and finally here; whereas, we now have, perhaps, a thousand hands engaged in making shoes and pantaloons, out of bad materials, and at high rates. These articles, about 3000 pairs of each, are absolutely necessary to cover the nakedness of the troops. February 28, off Lobos, I wrote to Brigadier General Brooke to direct the Quartermaster at New Orleans to send me large supplies of clothing. March 16—23, General Brooke replied that the quartermaster at New Orleans had 'neither clothing nor shoes'; and that he was 'fearful that, unless they have been sent out to you direct, you will be much disappointed.' Some small quantities of clothing, perhaps one-fifth of our wants, came to Vera Cruz from some quartermaster, and followed us to Jalapa and this place."

I must here specially remark that this report, No. 30, though forwarded the night of its date, (July 25,) seems to have miscarried. Perceiving, about Nov. 27, that it was not acknowledged by the Department, I caused a duplicate to be made, signed it and sent it off by the same conveyance with my despatch, No. 36, and the charges against Brevet Major General Worth, Major General Pillow, and Brevet Lieut. Col. Duncan, together with the appeal against me of the former. All these papers are acknowledged by the Department, in the same letter—January 13—that recalls me.

It was that budget of papers which caused the blow of powder, so long suspended, to fall on a devoted head. The three arrested officers, and he who had endeavored to enforce a little necessary discipline against them, are all to be placed together before the same court; the innocent and the guilty, the accuser and the accused, the judge and his prisoners, are dealt with alike. Most impartial justice! But there is a discrimination with a vengeance! While the parties are on trial—if the appellant is to be tried at all, which seems doubtful—two of them are restored to their corps—one of them with his Brevet rank—and I am deprived of my command! There can be but one more step in the same direction; throw the rules and articles of war into the fire, and leave all ranks in the army free to engage in denunciations and a general scramble for precedence, authority and Executive favor. The pronouncement, on the part of my factious juniors, is most triumphant. My recall—under the circumstances, a severe punishment before trial, but to be followed by trial here, that may run into Autumn, and on matters that I am but partially permitted to know by the Department and my accusers—is, very ingeniously, placed on two grounds: 1st. My own request, meaning that of June 4th, (quoted above, and there was no other one before the Department) which had been previously (July 12) acknowledged and rebukingly declined. 2d. The arrest of Brevet Major General Worth, for writing to the Department, "under the pretext and form of an appeal!" an open letter, to be sent through me, in which I was grossly and falsely accused of "malice" and "conduct unbecoming an officer and gentleman," in the matter of the general order No. 349, on the subject of puffing letters, for the newspapers at home.

On that second point, the letter from the Department, of January 11, is more than ingenious; it is elaborate, subtle and profound; a professional dissertation, with the rare merit of teaching principles until now wholly unknown to military codes & treatises, and of course to all mere soldiers, however great their experience in the field.

I have not at this place, time to do more than hint at the fatal consequences of the novel doctrine in question. According to the Department, any factious junior may, at his pleasure, in the midst of the enemy—using "the form and pretext of an appeal" against his commander—in suit and outrage him to the grossest extent, though he be the general in chief, & charged with the conduct of the most critical operation; and that commander may not arrest the incipient mutineer until he shall have first laid down his own authority and submitted himself to a trial, or wait at least for a distant period of leisure for the judicial examination of the appeal! And this is precisely the case under consideration. The Department, in its eagerness to condemn me, could not take time to learn of the experienced that the general-in-chief who once submits to an outrage, from a junior, must lay his account to suffer the like from all the vicious under him—at least down to a rank that may be supposed without influence in high quarters, beyond the army. But this would not be the whole mischief to the public service. Even the great mass of the spirited, intelligent, and well affected, among his brothers in arms, would soon reduce such a commander to utter imbecility by holding him in just scorn & contempt for his recreancy to himself and country. And are discipline and efficiency of no value in the field?

But it was not my request of June 4, nor report No. 50 (of July 26) so largely quoted from above, nor yet the appeal of one pronouncement; that has, at length, bro't down upon me this visitation, so clearly predicted. That appeal, no doubt, had its merits—considering it came from an erratic brother—a deserter from the other extreme—who, having just made his peace with the true faith, was bound to signalize apostasy by acceptable denunciations of one for whom, up to Vera Cruz, he had professed, [and not without cause,] the highest obligations. [It was there he learned, from me, that I was doomed at Washington, and straightway the apostate began to seek, through a quarrel, the means of turning that knowledge to his own benefit.] No. There was [recently] still another element associated in the work—kept, as far as practicable, out of the letter of recall; an influence proceeding from the other arrested general—who is quite willing that it should generally be understood [and who shall gain say his significant acquiescence?] that all rewards and punishments, in this army were from the first, to follow his recommendations.

This, the more powerful of the pronouncements against No. 349, well knew at the time, as I soon knew, that he was justly

abnoxious—not only as to the animal verities of that order, but to other censures of a much graver character.

In respect to this general, the letter of recall observes, parenthetically, but with an acumen worthy of more than 'a hasty' notice, that some of my specifications of his misconduct are hardly consistent with "your [my] official reports and commendations."

Seemingly, this is a 'most just rebuke.'—But, waiting for the trials, I will here briefly state that, unfortunately, I followed that general's own reports, written and oral; that my confidence, lent him in advance, had been but slightly shaken as early as the first week in October; that up to that time, from our entrance into this city, I had been at the desk, shut out from personal intercourse with my brother officers, and that it was not till after that confinement that facts, conduct and motives began to pour in upon me.

A word as to the fifth article of war. I can truly say that, in this and other communications, I have not designed the slightest disrespect to the commander-in-chief of the army and navy of the United States. No doubt he, like myself and all others, may fall into mistakes as to particular men; and I cannot, having myself been behind the curtain, admit the legal fiction that all acts of a Secretary are the acts of a President. Yet, in my defensive statements, I have offered no wanton discourtesy to the head of the War Department, although that functionary is not in the enumeration of the above mentioned article.

Closing my correspondence with the Department until after the approaching trial, I have the honor to remain, respectfully,

Your most obed't serv't,  
WINFIELD SCOTT.  
To W. L. MARCY, Sec'y of War.

## Secretary Mancy's Reply.

WAR DEPARTMENT, Washington, April 21, 1847.

Sir: It would not be respectful to you to pass unnoticed your extraordinary letter of the 24th of February, nor just to myself to permit it to remain unanswered on the files of this department.

To attempt to dispel the delusions which you seem to have long pertinaciously cherished, and to correct the errors into which you have fallen, devolves upon me a duty which I must not decline; but, in performing it, I mean to be as cautious, as you profess to have been, to abstain from any 'wanton discourtesy'; and I hope to be alike successful. Your prudent respect for the '5th article of war' has induced you to hold me ostensibly responsible for many things which you are aware are not fairly chargeable to me. The device you have adopted to assail the President, by aiming your blows at the Secretary of War, does more credit to your ingenuity as an accuser, than to your character as a soldier. A premeditated contrivance to avoid responsibility does not indicate an intention not to do wrong.

The general aspect of your letter discloses an evident design to create a belief that you were drawn forth from your quiet position in a bureau of this department, and assigned to the command of our armies in Mexico, for the purpose of being sacrificed; and that, to accomplish this end, 'neglects, disappointments, injuries, and rebukes' were inflicted on you, and the necessary means of prosecuting the war with success withheld; or, in other words, the government, after preferring you to any other of the gallant generals within the range of its choice, had labored to frustrate its own plans, to bring defeat upon its own armies, and involve itself in ruin and disgrace, for an object so unimportant in its bearing upon public affairs. A charge so entirely preposterous, so utterly repugnant to all the probabilities of human conduct, calls for no refutation.

For other purposes than to combat this loudly-cherished chimera, it is proper that I should notice some of your specific allegations.

It is true that, after you were designated for the chief command of our armies, the President was desirous that your departure should not be unnecessarily delayed; but you were not restricted, as you allege, to 'only four days' to make the necessary preparations at Washington. You were not ordered away until you had reported that these preparations were so far completed that your presence here was no longer required. Then, instead of going directly to Mexico, you were permitted, at your own request, to take a circuitous route through New York, and there to remain a few days. You staid at New York nearly an entire week; and, not until the 19th of December, (twenty-six days after leaving Washington,) did you reach New Orleans, where you would have arrived in seven days if you had been required to take the direct route. This solicited indulgence, by which your arrival at New Orleans was delayed nearly three weeks, is incompatible with your allegation that you were allowed 'only four days at Washington, where twenty might have been most advantageously employed.' This complaint has relation to facts which you own knowledge; error, therefore, is hardly reconcilable with any solicitude to be accurate. As this is your opening charge against the War Department; and may be regarded as indicative of those which follow, I shall make the refutation

of it still more complete, for the purpose of showing, with what recklessness you have performed the functions of an accuser, and how little reliance, in the present state of your feelings, can be placed on your memory. You are the witness by whom your allegation is to be disproved.

On the day of your departure from Washington, you left with me a paper, in your own hand-writing, dated November 23, 1846, with the following heading:

"Notes suggesting topics to be embraced in the Secretary's instructions to Gen. S. drawn up (by busto) at the request of the former."

From that paper I extract the following paragraph:

"(The Secretary of War) has pledged to learn from you (Gen. Scott) that you have in a very few days already, through the general staff of the army here, laid a sufficient basis for the purposes, with which you are charged, and that you now think it best to proceed at once to the southwest, in order to organize the largest number of troops that can be obtained in time for that most important expedition"—(the expedition against Vera Cruz.)

Here is your own most explicit admission that you represented to the Secretary of War, before leaving Washington, that arrangements were so far completed, that you thought it best to proceed at once to the army in Mexico; and yet you make it your opening charge against the department, that you were forced away to Mexico before you had time for necessary preparations.

I present your next charge in your own language:

"I handed to you a written request that one of three of our accomplished captains, therein named, might be appointed assistant adjutant general, with the rank of major, for duty with me in the field, and there was a vacancy, at the time, for one. My request has never been attended to, and thus I have had no officer of the Adjutant General's Department with me in the campaign. Can another instance be cited of denying to a general-in-chief, in the field at the head of a large army—or even a small one—the selection of his chief of the staff—that is, the chief of the department of orders and correspondence?"

Were the case precisely as you have stated it to be, you have given too much prominence, as a matter of complaint, to the President's refusal to be controlled, in his exercise of the appointing power, by your wishes. Had there been a vacancy such as you mention for 'one of the accomplished captains' you named, no one knows better than you do that your request could not have been acceded to without departing from the uniform rule of selection for staff appointments, without violating the right of several officers to regular promotion, and offering an indignity to all those who held the position of assistant adjutant general with the rank of captain. The rule of regular promotion in the staff is as inflexible, and has been as uniformly observed, as that in the line. It must appear surprising that you, who were so deeply 'shocked and distressed' at the suggestion of appointing, by authority of Congress, a 'citizen lieutenant general,' or vesting the President with power to devolve the command of the army on a major general without regard to priority in the date of his commission, should, in your first request, after being assigned to command, ask the President to disregard the rights of at least four officers as meritorious as 'the three accomplished captains' named by you. The President's views on this subject, undoubtedly differ from yours. His regard for the rights of officers is not graduated by their rank. Those of captains and major generals have equal value in his estimation, and an equal claim to his respect and protection. I cannot admit that it is a just ground of censure and rebuke against the 'head of the War Department' that the President did not see fit, in order to gratify your feelings of favoritism, to disregard the claims and violate the rights of all the assistant adjutant generals of the rank of captain then in commission.

But, so far as it is made a ground of complaint and reproach, this is not the worst aspect of the case. You are entirely mistaken in the assertion that there was then a vacancy in the adjutant general's staff, with the rank of major, to which either of the captains recommended by you could have been properly appointed. There was no such vacancy. To show the correctness of this statement, and to demonstrate your error, I appeal to the Army Register, and the records of the Adjutant General's Office. Your mistake as to an obvious fact lying within the range of matters with which you are presumed to be familiar, has excited less surpris than the declaration, that by the non-compliance with your request, you 'have had no officer of the Adjutant General's Department with me (you) in the campaign.' Every officer of that department—at least eight—was as you well know, subject to your command.

When you arrived in Mexico, there were with the army at least five assistant adjutant general, all at your service. That you chose to employ none of them at your head quarters, and detached from other appropriate duties an officer, to act as an assistant adjutant general, may well be regarded as a slight to the whole of that staff then with you in Mexico, and a cause of complaint; but certainly not a complaint to emanate from you against the War Department. Willing, as I am to presume, though unable to conceive, that circumstances justified you in passing over all the assistant adjutant general then with the army, and in selecting an officer of the line to perform the duties of adjutant general at