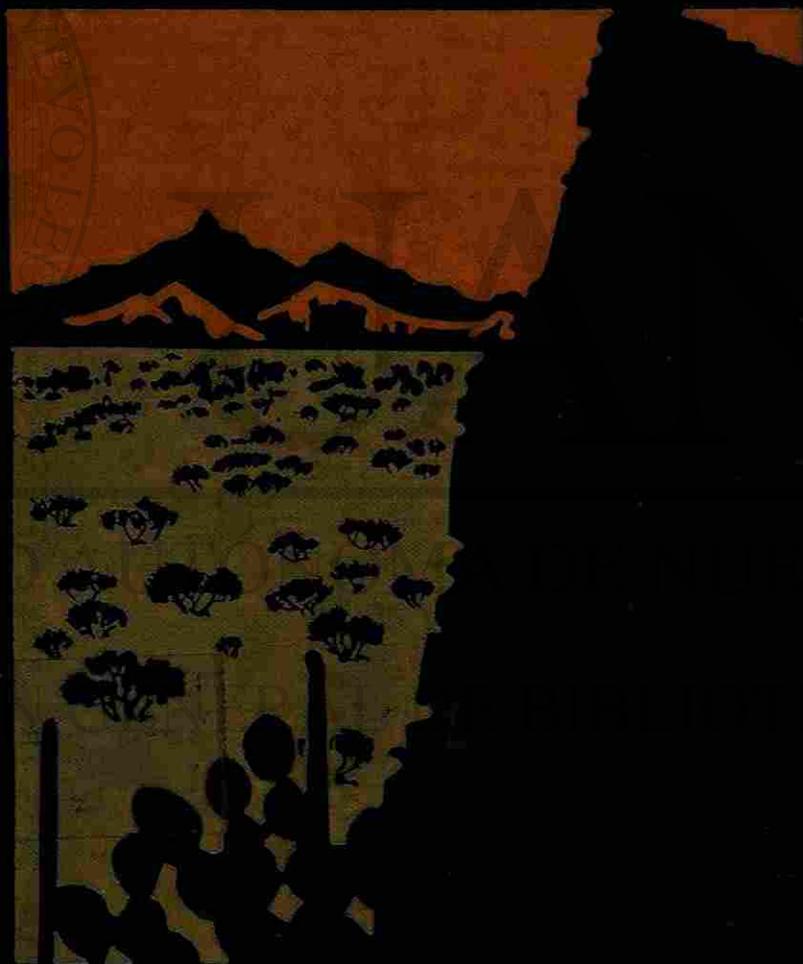


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Cyrus Townsend Brady



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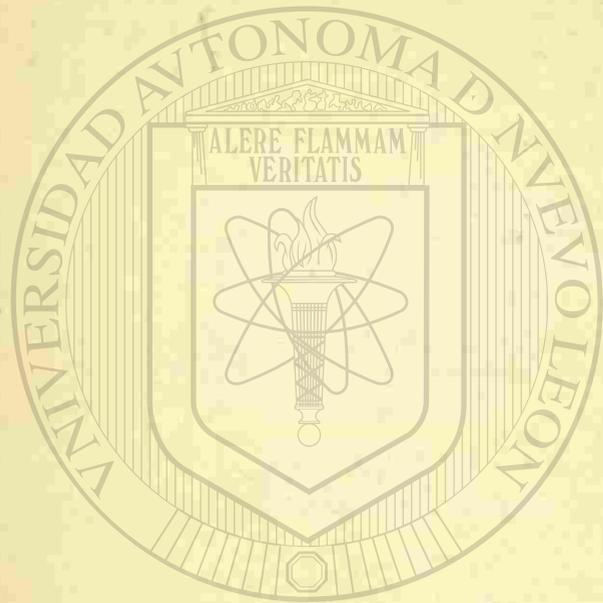
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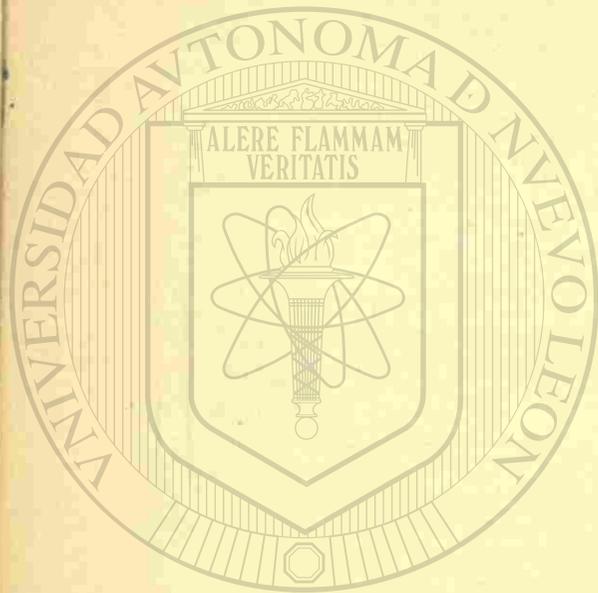
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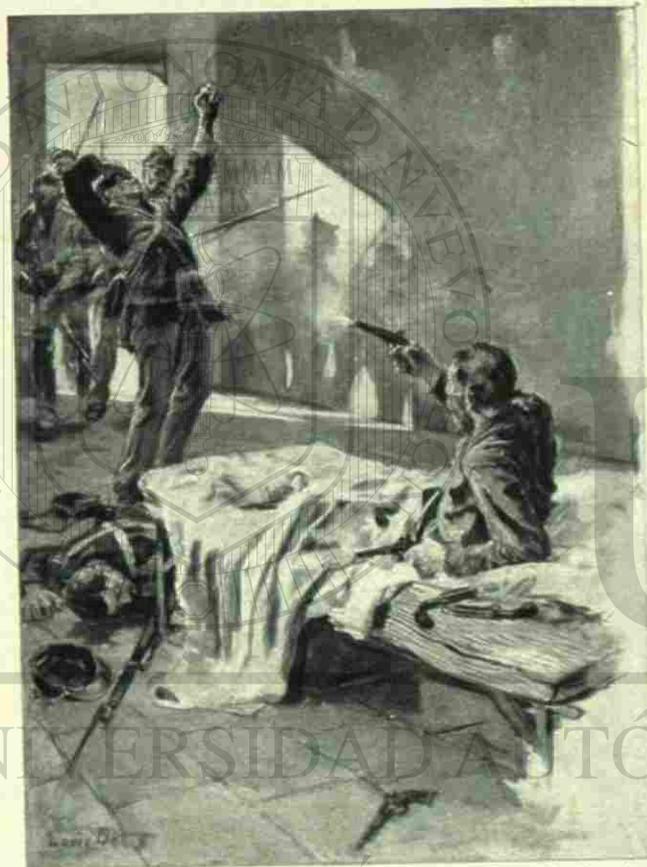
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THE DEATH-STRUGGLE IN THE ALAMO—BOWIE'S LAST SHOT.

# THE CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

THE STORY OF A  
GREAT SPOILIATION

BY

CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY, LL. D.

AUTHOR OF

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"AMERICAN FIGHTS AND FIGHTERS SERIES,"  
"REUBEN JAMES," ETC.

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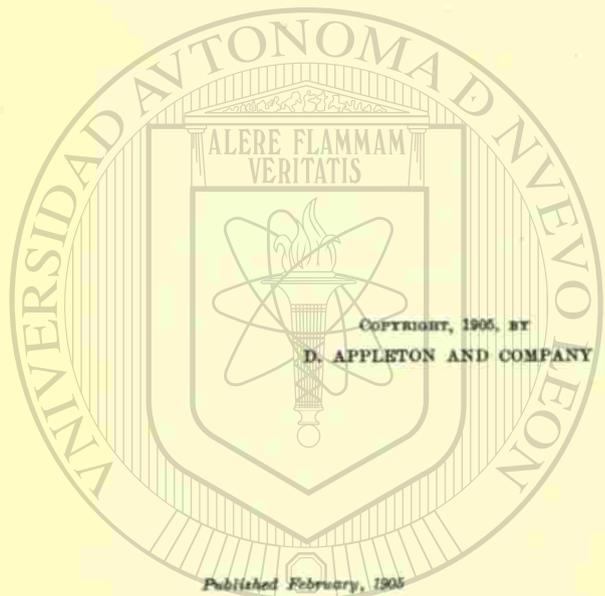
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MY WARM-HEARTED AND GENEROUS  
FRIEND  
JOHN FRANCIS NICHOLS

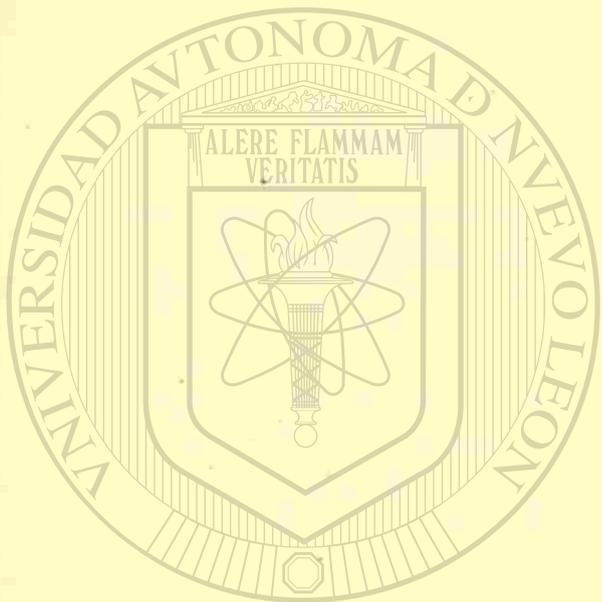
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## PREFACE

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So far as I know there is no book devoted entirely and specifically to the subject of this monograph, unless it be Jay's Review, referred to below, which has long been out of print. We have general histories in which the subject is treated at more or less length; and special histories, as of Texas or of the Mexican War, or of Slavery, in great number; as well as many biographies of the principal actors in the transactions hereinafter described. But there is no book with which I am acquainted which begins with the Treaty of 1819 and closes with the Compromise of 1850.

Of the four most memorable periods in our

## PREFACE

national history, including (1) the Revolution and the foundation of the Government, (2) the Conquest of the Southwest, (3) the Civil War, and (4) the new complexion put upon our relations with the rest of the world by the Spanish-American War and its immediate results, of which we are still a part, with the future not quite determined, the one here under discussion was not the least interesting or important. I hope, therefore, amid the many books on American history a place and a welcome may be found for this one.

In the preparation of this essay I have ransacked a vast number of books and documents, published and unpublished. In notes in the body of the work I have taken care to give references to the authorities for statements about which there is liable to be any question or dispute. A complete bibliography of the period would include so great a num-

## PREFACE

ber of titles that it would be out of place in a book of this kind. I may, however, call attention especially to several publications of great value, in addition to the widely known general histories.

First and foremost of these is The American Statesmen Series, perhaps the noblest in plan, and the ablest in results, of all the different series of books dealing with American history which have yet appeared. Another series of great importance, especially to the student of military matters, is The Great Commanders Series. For Texas affairs a monumental, if little known, work in two immense volumes, entitled A Comprehensive History of Texas from 1685 to 1897, edited by Dudley G. Wooten and published by William H. Scarff at Dallas in 1898, is indispensable. It contains a wealth of reminiscence, personal memorabilia, and valuable documents and papers, besides sev-

## PREFACE

eral histories of Texas not otherwise available. I have found it of great service.

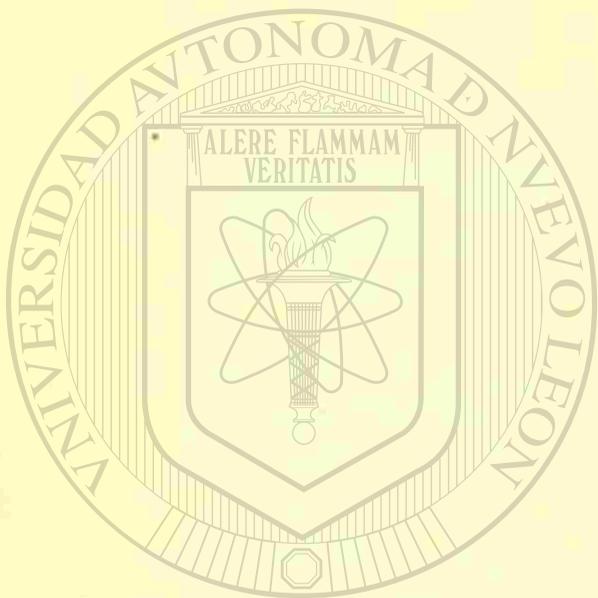
To these I may add William Jay's unique and invaluable Review of the Causes and Consequences of the Mexican War, Alfred M. Williams' Sam Houston and the War of Independence in Texas, General Cadmus M. Wilcox's History of the Mexican War, and The Messages and Papers of the Presidents of the United States, as being helpful and interesting. In conclusion, I take advantage of this opportunity to acknowledge valuable assistance, in searching records and verifying quotations and calculations, from my son, Cyrus Townsend Brady, Jr.

C. T. B.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., December 7, 1904.

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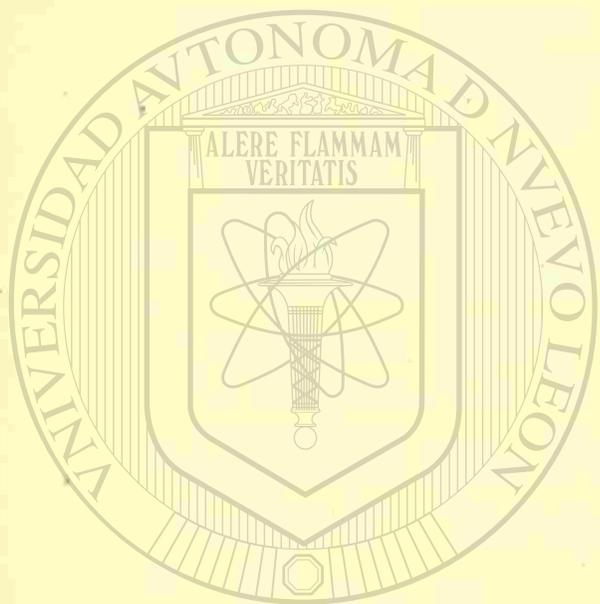


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PART I

TEXAS AND ITS INDEPENDENCE

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

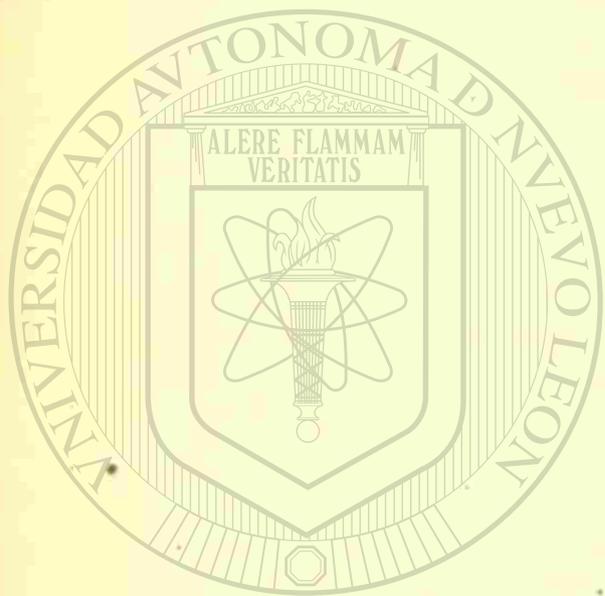
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## CHAPTER I

### PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

FROM that Treaty of Paris in 1783 whereby our Independence was formally acknowledged by Great Britain, to that other Treaty of Paris in 1898 which terminated the War with Spain, the territory of the United States, with one notable exception, was increased by the peaceful method of negotiation and purchase. Viewing the series of operations which began with the colonization of Texas and closed with the Gadsden Purchase as a single transaction, this one exception to the usual mode of procedure—which I call the Conquest of the Southwest—added the largest single increment to the original territory, not even excepting the Louisiana Purchase.

The whole proceeding may be described as

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

the story of the spoliation of a weaker power by a stronger, and is the one serious blot upon our national history. The conduct of the United States was wholly indefensible in a large part of the operations about to be discussed, and no truly patriotic citizen can think of it without an abiding sense of shame. Nor can our mortification be diminished by our recognition of the fact that in many particulars the conduct of Mexico during the period was an affront to civilization.

There are three methods of accounting for the Conquest of the Southwest, which is the general name under which I include all of the various acts hereafter to be described. Each of these methods pointedly ignores the others. After much study and a careful consideration of the evidence, I have come to the conclusion that each is in large measure correct. Briefly stated, one cause for the conquest was the desire on the part of the slave-holding states to add new territory to the Union out of which other slave-holding states could be constituted

## PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

from time to time as needed, thus preserving the balance of power as between the slave-holding and the free states.

The second cause was the jealousy, tyranny and misgovernment of the Mexican state of Texas by the Mexican authorities; their refusal to permit the American settlers to enjoy those privileges to which from time immemorial they had been accustomed in England and the United States under the common law; the attempt to keep them under the operation of the Roman or civil law; and the anarchical confusion and instability of the Mexican general government. These brought about the inevitable revolution of Texas against Mexico, in which the sympathy and more material assistance of the United States were freely given to Texas, in violation of international comity, but in conformity to natural relationship. The independence of Texas being assured, thereafter the resulting boundary line on the west was ill defined, and the attempt by the United States, after Texas had been annexed, to de-

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

limit its territory by maintaining the extreme Texan claim, naturally produced war.

The third cause is admirably expressed by Theodore Roosevelt, who says, with regard to our encroachments upon the boundaries of neighboring powers, especially beyond the Mississippi and beyond the somewhat indefinite lines of the Louisiana Purchase:

“ The general feeling in the West upon this last subject afterward crystallized into what became known as the ‘ Manifest Destiny ’ idea, which, reduced to its simplest terms, was: that it was our manifest destiny to swallow up the land of all adjoining nations who were too weak to withstand us; a theory that forthwith obtained immense popularity among all statesmen of easy international morality. . . . Recent historians, for instance, always speak as if our grasping after territory in the Southwest was due solely to the desire of the Southerners to acquire lands out of which to carve new slave-holding States, and as if it was merely a move in the interests of the slave power. This is true enough so far as the motives of Calhoun, Tyler, and the other public leaders of the Gulf and Southern Seaboard States were concerned. But the hearty

## PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

Western support given to the government was due to entirely different causes, the chief among them being the fact that the Westerners honestly believed themselves to be created the heirs of the earth, or at least of so much of it as was known by the name of North America, and were prepared to struggle stoutly for the immediate possession of their heritage.”<sup>1</sup>

Thomas H. Benton voiced the popular feeling of his section in these fiery words, quoted by Roosevelt:

“ The magnificent valley of the Mississippi is ours, with all its fountains, springs, and floods; and woe to the statesman who shall undertake to surrender one drop of its water, one inch of its soil to any foreign power.”

To the mind of Benton, who was accustomed to point westward and say, “ There is the East, there is India,” the Mississippi Valley doubtless transcended the Rocky Mountains and extended to the Pacific.

<sup>1</sup> American Statesmen, vol. xxiii. Thomas H. Benton, by Theodore Roosevelt.

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

For this spoliation, the United States has been condemned absolutely on the one hand, while on the other, with equal zeal, it has been entirely justified. It does not seem to have occurred to any one that all these motives for action worked together to bring about the end achieved. And it is undoubtedly true that, while the preponderance of wrong-doing was with us, we were not entirely to blame, for there were some extenuating circumstances.

It is absolutely certain—indeed, it is nowhere authoritatively denied, but on the contrary it has been affirmed many times by the people of the South, through their representatives, that they did most earnestly desire to acquire territory south of the line of the Missouri Compromise out of which to create slave-holding states; that their desire for the annexation of Texas was based primarily upon that possibility; that they prosecuted the war with Mexico for the avowed purpose of securing the territory between 36° 30' (the line of the compromise) and the Rio Grande, clear to the Pacific,

## PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

in order that they might have some place of overflow for their slave-holding population, to counterbalance the possible free states in the upper portion of the Louisiana Purchase in which the bulk of that vast increment lay.<sup>1</sup>

It is equally obvious that such vacillation, such misgovernment, such exploitation of the public for private ends, as was exhibited by the Mexican government and the successive adventurers who assumed the Dictatorship during the earlier years of Texan history, inevitably would have produced a revolution among a people trained under the free and orderly democratic institutions of America, as the Texans had been. This revolution would have

<sup>1</sup> The solidarity and the political domination of the South in our affairs for the first eighty years of our national existence is one of the most remarkable facts in our history—an *Imperium in Imperio!* The solidarity still remains; if a charge is brought against an Alabamian, for instance, the whole South is affronted and resentful! When a New Yorker or a Chicagoan is faulted, the North or the West do not feel that they have been insulted. It will be good for the South, and the country, when the solidarity is broken; but that will never be, I fear, until the negro question is settled definitely in some way. The political domination is ended long since.

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

occurred entirely independent of the question of slavery. The Texan Republic must inevitably have been established if there had not been a slave in the United States, although the action of the Mexican government—one of the few good things to its credit, by the way—on the question of slavery, undoubtedly greatly increased the irritation of Texans. Nor could the United States be justly blamed for the subsequent annexation of the Texan territory, even though the prime reason for annexation was the possible creation of slave states, *if the United States had stopped with annexation.* As a matter of fact, the possession of Texas whetted the desire of the United States for the acquisition of further territory which, in pursuance of that "Manifest Destiny," we took iniquitous and unjust means to acquire, the indefinite boundary line and certain shadowy and fictitious claims furnishing the necessary pretext. The utter helplessness of Mexico after the war, rendered the seizure of California easy, and that without any pretext at all.

## PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

In the whole transaction, from a legal and moral standpoint, Mexico occupied the correct position, but—and it is a singular commentary on that fact—Mexico had largely forfeited her claim to consideration by the hideous crimes and excesses of which she had been guilty, and the frightful punishments she had inflicted upon her victims, as well as by her failure to establish a stable and efficient government. I am sure that in the minds of the people of the United States there was a contempt for her vacillation only surpassed by the positive hatreds engendered by her unspeakable cruelties in Texas. For the former we might have had charity; to the true patriots among her citizens—and there were not a few—we might, we should, have given the help and encouragement a weak and struggling country seeking independence and stability has a right to expect from a great, a free, and an enlightened people.

But all these considerations were lost sight of in a righteous indignation over the butchery

### CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

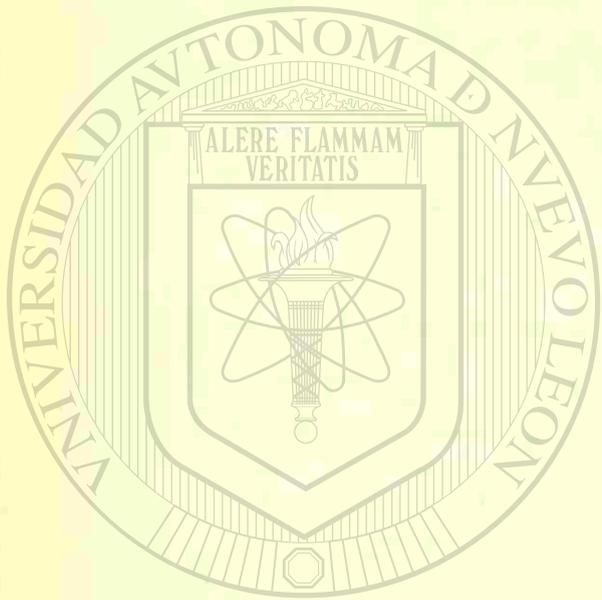
of the Alamo and the massacre at Goliad; and it was felt that Mexico should be punished, and punished she accordingly was—by conquest and robbery. In other words, the gross misconduct of Mexico had to a large extent obscured the moral issue, and by many of our citizens the issue therefore was not seen clearly. That is one of the extenuating circumstances to which I have alluded, and perhaps the principal one. A nation may have a righteous cause and yet forfeit the good opinion of its neighbors by unrighteous conduct in its endeavor to maintain it.

Nor may it be gainsaid, in the light of subsequent developments, that it was vastly better for humanity in general and for the conquered section in particular, that it should become a part of the United States rather than remain a part of Mexico. Mexico probably never could have administered and developed California and the West as we have done. And Mexico, now a homogeneous state south of the Rio Grande, has probably become

### PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

much better able to work out her destiny without the lost territory—just as Spain really profited by the loss of her rebellious colonies in 1898.

All this, however, does not condone our method of acquiring the territory in question.



CHAPTER II

TEXAS TO THE CLOSE OF THE  
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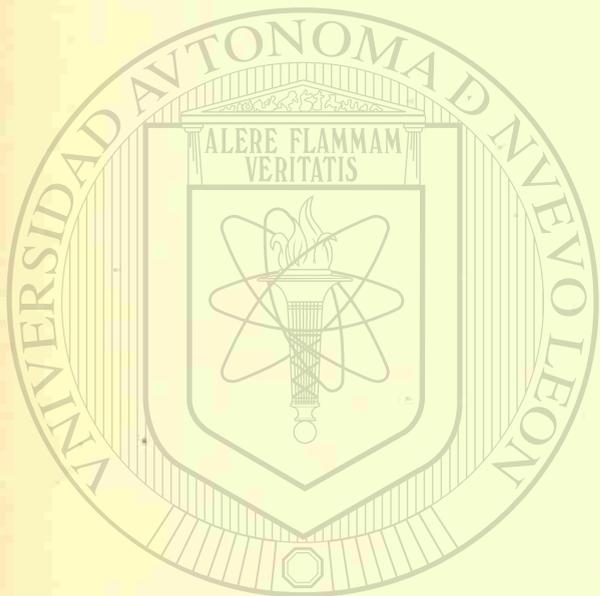
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## CHAPTER II

### TEXAS TO THE CLOSE OF THE FREONIAN WAR

TEXAS is the only portion of our territory which has been under six flags—the Spanish, French, Mexican, Texan, Confederate and United States ensigns. “The name of Texas is said by some to have had its origin in the greeting given De Leon by the Indians, who called the Spaniards ‘Tejia’ or ‘Tejas,’ meaning friends. On the other hand, the origin of the name has been ascribed by others to the covering of the tents or wigwams of the Indians, which was called Tejia (plural, Tejas). Hence Tejas or Texas—‘The land of Tents.’ A more correct derivation is, perhaps, that which traces the name to the Tejas Indians, a tribe formerly living between the Neches and the Trinity Rivers.”<sup>1</sup>

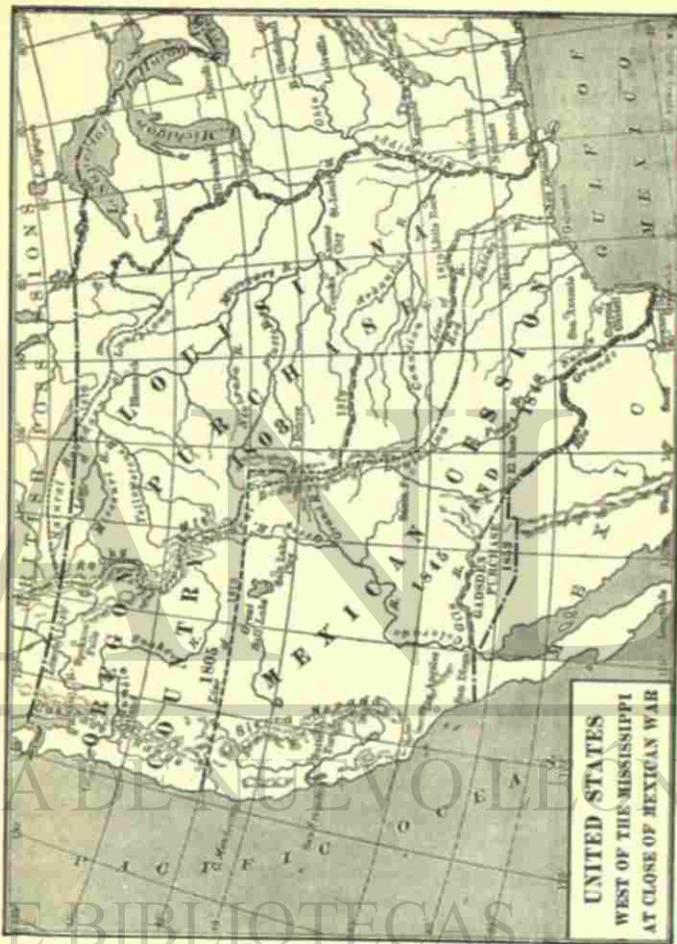
<sup>1</sup>Seth Shephard: Introduction to A Comprehensive History of Texas.

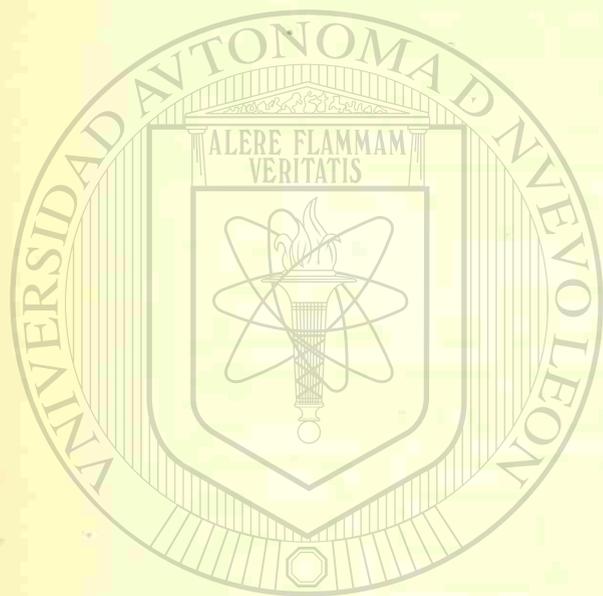
## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

" If the evidence of one of the missionaries can be accepted—and there seems no good reason to the contrary—Tejas was the name, not of a single tribe, but of a confederacy of nearly thirty including nine tribes of the Asinai or Cenis. It was but natural that this name should be extended to the whole region, theretofore without one of its own. Neuyas Filipinas, which was for some time the official designation, was not sufficiently upon the popular tongue, and was at length displaced entirely by Texas."<sup>1</sup>

The first European to set foot upon the territory between the Mississippi and the Rio Grande was a Spaniard, Alonzo Alvarez de Piñeda, in 1519. The wanderings of Cabeza de Vaca led him through it in 1528. Vasquez de Coronado crossed it in 1540. Hernando de Soto entered it in 1542, and Franciscan Missions were established among the Indians in 1580-83 by Spanish priests. The first white colony was planted on its shores in Matagorda Bay by the heroic and unfortunate Frenchman,

<sup>1</sup> American Commonwealths: Texas, by George P. Garrison.





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### TEXAS TO THE FREDONIAN WAR

Robert Cavalier, Sieur de la Salle, in 1685. Actual settlement of the country was effected by the Spaniards who continually thereafter held the territory west of the Sabine in spite of the expeditions and claims of France.

In 1762 the Louisiana territory had been ceded to Spain by Louis XV; but in 1801 it was receded to France by Carlos IV, and in 1803 was purchased by the United States. In these successive changes of ownership the western limits of this purchase were nowhere accurately defined. The claims of Spain extended to the Mississippi River, those of the United States to the Rio Grande. A vast zone was thus in dispute. Practically the boundary was the Sabine River. West of that the Spanish held title, east of it the Americans. There was no question but that the Spaniards were in actual possession of the greater part of the territory, but that counted for little in the final settlement of the question.

Several expeditions west of the Sabine, which were neither more nor less than filibusters

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

tering enterprises, were undertaken by Americans during the first quarter of the last century. Among them the most notable were those of Nolan in 1801, Magee in 1812, and Long, who in 1821 actually declared a republic at the Spanish settlement of Nacogdoches—one of the three oldest towns in Texas, the two others being San Antonio de Bexar and Goliad, or La Bahia. These three at that time were practically the only towns in the territory. Some of these expeditions were of considerable magnitude, that of Magee, an officer in the United States Army, who had resigned his commission to lead this adventure, being the largest and most important. These filibustering expeditions had but one result, the utter devastation and ruin of the country.

Desperate battles were fought. Magee's forces won several important victories, but after his death they were defeated with great slaughter; out of eight hundred Americans in the final battle only ninety-three returned to the United States.

## TEXAS TO THE FREDONIAN WAR

As there were Mexicans on both sides of these affairs, many having espoused the cause of the American adventurers, and thus being in rebellion against the Spanish government, the contests were marked by frightful atrocities and were, in effect, wars of extermination. So ruthlessly were the laws of war broken, that many of the American officers in Magee's following withdrew in disgust from further participation in a campaign, the excesses and cruelties of which they were unable to moderate or to prevent, and which they were not willing to countenance. Prisoners were usually murdered. Long's Republic was quickly put down. Long himself was captured, taken a prisoner to Mexico and while in captivity assassinated.

Various military commanders had attempted to come to some temporary *modus vivendi* about the boundary. Generals Wilkinson and Herrera had agreed, for instance, to consider the territory between the Sabine and Arroyo Hondo as neutral ground, the Spanish gov-

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

ernor being moved thereto by fear of Aaron Burr's proposed enterprise.

Wilkinson, one of the meanest characters in our history, can not be held innocent of encouraging and even inciting some of these expeditions. He was commander-in-chief of the American army, and, as he was stationed in the Southwest, he might and should have prevented them. The country had been devastated. In 1820 it is estimated that in the whole vast extent of Texas there were not above four thousand people exclusive of aborigines. The Franciscans, with heroic courage and devotion to the church, had established a chain of mission stations, whose chapels, churches and other buildings remain to-day as evidence of their consecration; but their missionary work had largely come to naught, owing to the frightful disorders in the country.

The boundary question continued in the indeterminate state in which Wilkinson and Herrera had left it, until the Adams-Onis Treaty with Spain in 1819. By this, in return

## TEXAS TO THE FREDONIAN WAR

for the substantial cession of Florida to the United States, the United States relinquished vague and indefinite claims to certain territory west of the Mississippi. The boundary between Louisiana and the Spanish possessions was established by Article III as follows:

"The boundary line between the two countries, west of the Mississippi, shall begin on the Gulph of Mexico, at the mouth of the river Sabine, in the sea, continuing north, along the western bank of that river, to the 32d degree of latitude; thence, by a line due north, to the degree of latitude where it strikes the Rio Roxo of Nachitoches, or Red River; then, following the course of the Rio Roxo westward, to the degree of longitude 100 west from London and 23 from Washington; then, crossing the said Red River, and running thence, by a line due north, to the river Arkansas; thence, following the course of the southern bank of the Arkansas, to its source, in latitude 42 north; and thence, by that parallel of latitude, to the South Sea. The whole being as laid down in Melish's map of the United States, published at Philadelphia, improved to the first of January, 1818. But if the source of the Arkansas River shall be found to fall north or south of latitude 42, then the line shall run from

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

the said source due south or north, as the case may be, till it meets the said parallel of latitude 42, and thence, along the said parallel, to the South Sea: All the islands in the Sabine, and the said Red and Arkansas Rivers, throughout the course thus described, to belong to the United States; but the use of the waters, and the navigation of the Sabine to the sea, and of the said rivers Roxo and Arkansas, throughout the extent of the said boundary, on their respective banks, shall be common to the respective inhabitants of both nations.

“The two high contracting parties agree to cede and renounce all their rights, claims, and pretensions to the territories described by the said line, that is to say: The United States hereby cede to His Catholic Majesty, and renounce forever, all their rights, claims, and pretensions, to the territories lying west and south of the above-described line; and, in like manner, His Catholic Majesty cedes to the said United States all his rights, claims, and pretensions to any territories east and north of the said line, and for himself, his heirs, and successors, renounces all claim to the said territories forever.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Treaties and Conventions Between the United States and Other Powers Since July 4, 1776: Government Printing Office, 1871.

## TEXAS TO THE FREDONIAN WAR

The treaty was signed on February 22, 1819, at Washington, by John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State, on the part of the United States, and Don Luis de Onís, Spanish Minister, on the part of Spain. Adams was justly proud of his work, and noted in his diary that it was “perhaps the most important day of my life.” This treaty was not ratified by Spain until October 24, 1820, nor by the United States until March 3, 1821.

About this time the attention of a Connecticut Yankee named Moses Austin was attracted to the possibilities of Texas as a home for colonies composed of men who were already American citizens. Austin was born in Durham, Connecticut, about 1764. He emigrated to Wythe County, Virginia, while yet a young man, and engaged in mining, but without much success. There, in 1793, his son Stephen Fuller was born. Moses Austin was a slaveholder. In 1797, with his family and slaves, he moved to the Louisiana territory and continued in the mining business with somewhat

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

better success than before, at Mine-a-Burton, afterward Potosi, about forty miles west of St. Genevieve in what is now Missouri.

Austin had the Puritan passion for education and the means to gratify it. He sent his son to the best schools and colleges in that part of the country in which he lived. In 1820 he went to Texas to obtain permission, if possible, to introduce American colonists. He applied to the Spanish provincial governor at Bexar, but was rebuffed and ordered to return immediately to the United States.

Preparing to comply with this command, he happened to meet an acquaintance who knew him personally and by reputation as a man of honor and probity. This was a German soldier of fortune, the Baron de Bastrop, who was then in the service of the Spanish government. The meeting was a chance one. Here again, we see how much depends upon accident! The discouraged American promoter and the German free-lance, running across each other without design, changed the course

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of history in that part of the continent. Through the influence of the Baron de Bastrop, Austin got a further hearing from the Spanish governor, when his project was received with favor and a message was despatched to the Spanish viceroy at Mexico asking his consent. Austin waited a long time for his reply, and as it did not come, and as his affairs at home needed his attention, he left the country for Missouri. On his return journey he suffered great hardships and died shortly after he reached his home, but not until he learned that his petition had been granted.

Austin's son Stephen at that time had gone to New Orleans to look after the affairs of the colonists whom it was hoped he and his father might be able to introduce into Texas, when to him was brought the news that the desired permission had been given. It was decreed by the Spanish government that all the colonists should be of the Roman Catholic religion, and that they should be people of good character who would make worthy subjects of

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the King of Spain, to whom they were required to take the oath of allegiance. Each male colonist over twenty-one years of age was to be allowed six hundred and forty acres. If he were married, he was to have three hundred and twenty additional acres for his wife, one hundred and sixty for each child, and eighty for each slave. Thus the introduction of slavery into the territory was legally permitted at the very beginning. The promoter of the enterprise, who was called the Empresario, was to have large grants of land, which were to become his own holdings, and depending in area upon the number of families he introduced. Each family was required to pay the Empresario a trifling sum per acre for the grants he received, in order to provide for the necessary expenses of the undertaking, which the Empresario himself assumed.

Austin, who was a man of parts and energy, took up his father's project vigorously and led his first colonists into Texas in December, 1821. In the spring of 1822, Mexico

## TEXAS TO THE FREDONIAN WAR

threw off her allegiance to Spain and became an independent country. It was necessary, therefore, for Austin to go to the capital at once in order to secure a reaffirmation of his grant from the new government. By the time he reached the city of Mexico, Augustin de Iturbide had made himself Emperor. On February 18, 1823, after some difficulty, the decree was reaffirmed, with such alterations as had been made necessary by the political changes of the country, but in all the essential particulars it was confirmed by Iturbide.

Before Austin could leave for Texas, there occurred another revolution in Mexico, and Iturbide was deposed. Mexico became a republic with a triumvirate, composed of Negrete, Bravo and Guadalupe Victoria, as the temporary executive, while the congress busied itself with making a constitution under which the government should be established and conducted. As the sessions of this congress were protracted, Austin realized that it would be some time before he could get anything from

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it, and so appealed to the triple executive for a second reaffirmation of his charter, which he received on the 14th of April, 1823.

There was one difference between the first charter of the Spanish government and that issued by the Emperor Iturbide and confirmed by the triumvirate. In the latter it was stated that in Texas there should be "no sale or purchase of slaves and that children of slaves born in the Empire were to be free at fourteen years of age." This provision would have brought about the gradual and orderly abolition of slavery. The colonists do not appear to have been greatly troubled by these restrictions.

Having thus made himself secure against any contingency, Austin went back and founded the town of San Felipe de Austin in the summer of 1823 on the Little Brazos River. Thereafter he busied himself in introducing settlers as rapidly as possible. It is not pretended that these settlers were all Roman Catholics. In fact, it is certain that the great majority were not. But they quietly submit-

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ted to the official ministrations of the jolly and complaisant Irish priests, who did not scrutinize their conduct too closely, and meanwhile unobtrusively practised their own religion, if Protestant it was, unmolested. They brought slaves with them too, and bought and sold them as they deemed proper.

Meanwhile, the Mexican Federal Constitution had been completed and adopted on the 31st of January, 1824, although it was not promulgated until the following October. With certain important differences, it was patterned largely after that of the United States. There was a failure, on the one hand, to provide for the right of trial by jury; and, on the other, the Roman Catholic religion was established as the only religion permitted in the Republic, while congress was made the interpreter of the constitution instead of the courts. The old province of Texas was joined to that of Coahuila, and the whole created a state under the name of Coahuila-Texas. A very unfortunate junction this turned out to be, since the

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seat of government naturally was placed in Coahuila, whose population greatly exceeded that of Texas, and Texas was thereby made a dependency of the Mexican half of the joint state. The Texans, with only two delegates in the state legislature, had practically no voice in their own government, even under the constitution, such as it was.

In the mean time, encouraged by Austin's success, other Empresarios had solicited and received similar charters and grants, and a steady stream of colonists was rapidly poured into Texas. Over twenty-five hundred families entered in one year alone (1825); and by 1830 it is estimated that there were twenty thousand Americans in Texas, most of whom had come from the Southern States and had brought slaves with them.

On the 13th of January, 1824, the Mexican government forbade the further importation of slaves from foreign states; in 1827, the state constitution of Coahuila-Texas gave freedom to children born of slave parents after

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that date, and reaffirmed the national law of 1824. On September 15, 1829, Guerrero, then the President or Dictator, published a decree abolishing slavery in the territory of the Mexican Republic, which was immediately ratified by the congress then in session. The Texans protested against this decree, and in consequence the department of Texas was exempted from its operation on December 2, 1829. In passing, it may be remarked that all these enactments regarding slavery were aimed at Texas, inasmuch as the only slavery worth mentioning in Mexico existed in Texas among the American colonists.

These various restrictions produced great dissatisfaction among the Texans. Indeed, a similar dissatisfaction had culminated several years before in what had been called the Fredonian War—an earnest of what might be expected later on.

Hayden and Benjamin Edwards, Empresarios, who had received their grants not from the general government, but from Coahuila-

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Texas, had endeavored to establish a colony near Nacogdoches. Grave dissensions occurred among the colonists, because of which, and of the conflicting claims of Mexican and other settlers, who had already become established in the territory when it was granted to Edwards, the Edwards grant was arbitrarily withdrawn. The trouble thus engendered culminated at Nacogdoches on December 16, 1826, in the proclamation by Benjamin Edwards and fifteen of his adherents, of an independent republic which they called Fredonia.

The old stone fort in the town was taken possession of without resistance; a government was organized and an alliance with the Indians against Mexico was made. These allies were to share between them the territory to the Rio Grande. Appeals were made to American settlers in Texas and to the United States for countenance and support.

Austin's colonists at that time had no cause for complaint against Mexico. No general

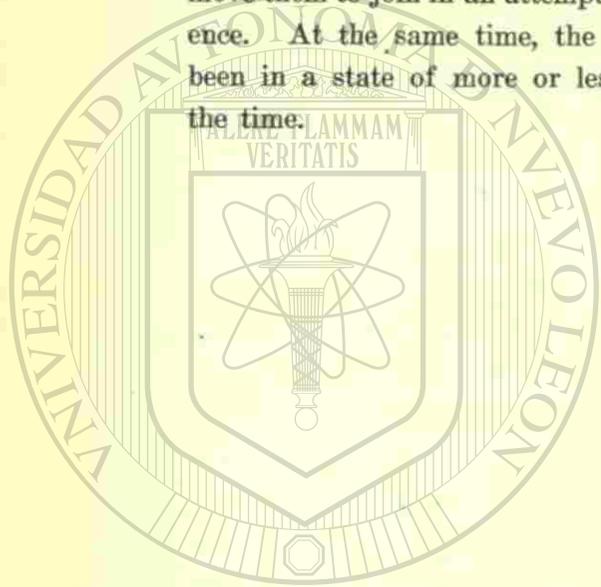
### TEXAS TO THE FREDONIAN WAR

sympathy, indeed, was aroused in behalf of the abortive attempt at revolution. Austin, in fact, as commander of the militia, gathered a force to cooperate with the Mexican authorities in putting it down. There occurred a skirmish on January 4, 1827—the first conflict between the colonists and the Mexican government—in which the Fredonians had one man wounded, and the Mexicans one killed and several wounded. The Mexicans were defeated, but returned with reinforcements accompanied by Austin's men. In the face of such a force and without public opinion to sustain them, there was but one thing for the Fredonians to do. Nacogdoches had to be abandoned and the republic dissolved. The war was soon over, and at the instance of Austin, the Mexicans released the few prisoners taken, doing them no harm—the one case of such clemency on record.

The Fredonian Republic had been a premature movement. The body of colonists in Texas had not yet felt the effects of Mexican

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misgovernment in ways sufficiently serious to move them to join in an attempt for independence. At the same time, the territory had been in a state of more or less ferment all the time.



CHAPTER III

BEGINNINGS OF THE TEXAN  
REVOLUTION

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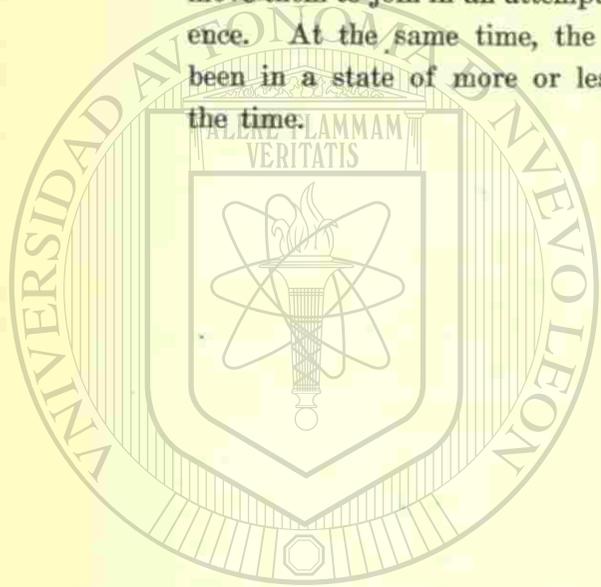
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DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE BIBLIOTECAS

*CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST*

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CHAPTER III

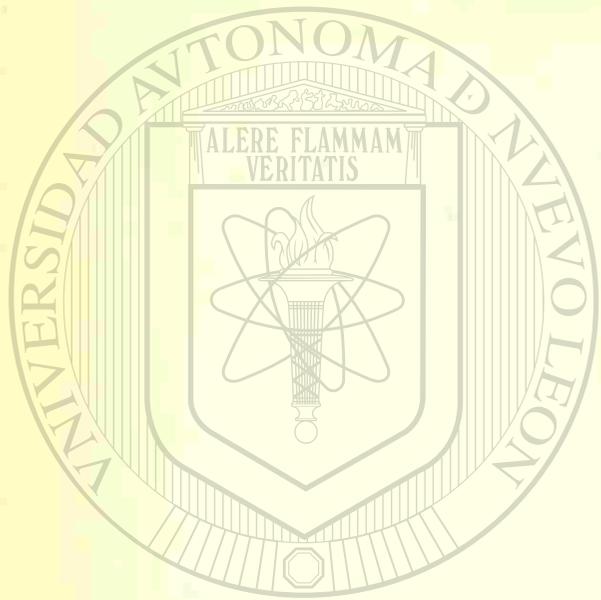
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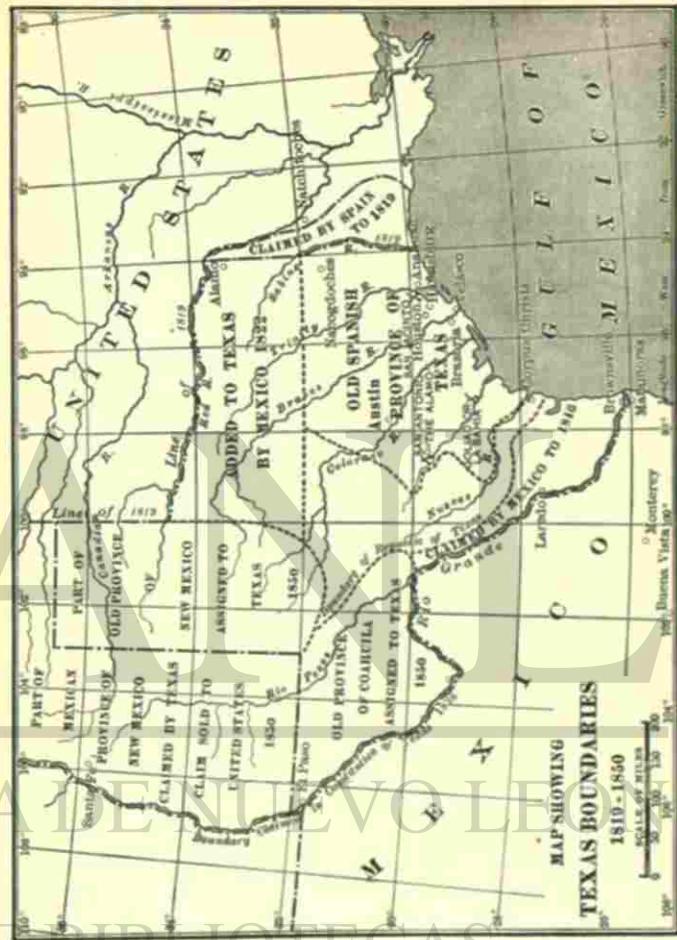
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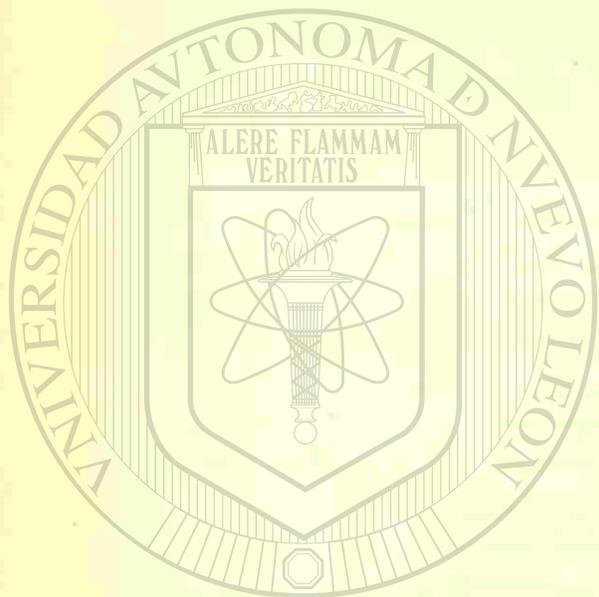
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### CHAPTER III

#### BEGINNINGS OF THE TEXAN REVOLUTION

LATE in 1829 General Bustamante, then the Vice-President of Mexico, deposed President Guerrero, and on January 1, 1830, took the reins of government. Bustamante was a strong centralizationist and determined to reduce the states of the republic to the level of provinces, ruled by military governors who were devoted to himself. Especially did he desire to curb the restive Texans. On April 6, 1830, the Mexican congress, on the initiative of Secretary of State Alaman, passed a decree, the terms of which were felt by the Texans to be unusually oppressive. It was a measure to raise revenue by import duties and to colonize Texas with Mexicans by making it a penal settlement, giving the convicts the privilege of citizenship when their terms of punishment

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had expired, thus introducing a class of citizens entirely unworthy of civic honors and utterly repugnant to the colonists. Its most drastic and irritating provisions, however, were that it stopped further colonization from the United States and forbade the introduction of slaves into Mexico. In pursuance of this design and to enforce this decree, General Teran, with a considerable body of troops, was sent to Texas for an armed occupation of the territory. Garrisons were established throughout the country and every Mexican military outpost at once became a constant source of irritation to the colonists. The decree was rigorously enforced.

The six-year limit, during which supplies for the colonists, by the terms of the original grants, might be imported free of duty, had now expired. It was determined that Texas thenceforth should make large contributions to the revenues of the necessitous general government. It usually happens that a privilege habitually enjoyed soon becomes regarded as

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a right. The Texans objected to paying duties—as modern travelers do!—but in vain. Texan ports of entry were closed with the exception of Anahuac, over which one Bradburn, a renegade Kentuckian, was made commander. This was an inconvenient port for most colonists, and by threats and appeals they succeeded in having Brazoria reopened.

Bradburn conducted himself in Anahuac with shocking brutality and unwarranted license, going at last so far as to imprison, for alleged insubordination, a number of settlers including William B. Travis, who afterward immortalized himself at the Alamo. Bradburn actually assumed, in May, 1832, to put the whole coast under martial law. To add to the irritation, the legislature of Coahuila-Texas, which was all Mexican, passed certain highly obnoxious laws, granting allotments of territories to Mexicans over the heads of Americans who already occupied the ground under previous concessions.

The situation was rapidly becoming impos-

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sible of continuance. The growing anger of the people, in May, 1832, culminated in the investment of Anahuac and an attack upon Velasco. The latter town was held by Colonel Ugartechea with one hundred and twenty-five men, and it was attacked by one hundred and twelve Texans and a small schooner, the Brazoria, commanded by John Austin, a Connecticut Yankee, who was not related to the great Empresario. Although Ugartechea displayed magnificent courage in defense of his charge, the place was stormed, with a loss to the Mexicans of thirty-five killed and fifteen wounded, and to the Texans of seven killed and twenty-seven wounded. Texas had been divided into three military departments, and the commander of the department of Nacogdoches, Colonel Piedras, finally took over Bradburn's command, and, at the demand of the colonists, released Travis and his fellow prisoners. Bradburn fled for his life to the United States, and the siege of Anahuac was raised.

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Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, who was destined to play so great and yet so ignoble a part in the Southwest, now enters the history of Texas. As I have said elsewhere, "this petty 'Napoleon of the West,' as he loved to style himself, was a scoundrel as black-hearted as any that ever schemed himself into power. Born at Jalapa, in Mexico, in 1795, he had been successively a lieutenant-colonel in the Spanish Army, an adherent of and traitor to Iturbide, the *diabolus ex machina* of successive revolutions with different presidents and dictators. In short, he was a sort of subtropic Warwick! He was not without some of the qualities of a soldier, and certainly knew how, again and again, to win the confidence of his countrymen, in spite of their frequent repudiations of him, in his long and eventful career."<sup>1</sup>

Santa Anna professed to be the champion of the constitution of 1824, which Bustamante

<sup>1</sup> In my book *American Fights and Fighters—Border*. McClure, Phillips & Co.

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had practically abolished. When the colonists rose in arms, therefore, they seized the opportunity, and in resolutions declared themselves adherents of Santa Anna and the constitution. These resolutions were passed on June 13, 1832, at a place called Turtle Bayou, and are therefore known as the Turtle Bayou Resolutions. When Santa Anna's commissioner, Mexia, reached the country, this proclamation stood the colonists in good stead. Santa Anna was fighting for supremacy and wanted help; he was more than gratified at the position of the Texans. The struggle between him and Bustamante also affected the Texans favorably in that the troops of Teran, with the exception of Piedras' command at Nacogdoches, declared in favor of Santa Anna and withdrew from Texas to participate in the struggle in Mexico. Piedras' troops finally deposed him, handed him over to the Texans, and marched to join Santa Anna, thus leaving no Mexican troops in Texas.

The opportunity was too good to be neg-

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lected. A convention to consider local affairs was called on August 22, 1832, and met at San Felipe de Austin on the first of October following. Fifty delegates were present, and Austin was elected President. Austin represented the conservatives and those who were called the Peace Party. His principal antagonist was William H. Wharton, who represented the War Party. Austin's influence, however, was paramount, and the measures proposed by him were carried. The convention repudiated the idea that Texas was seeking independence from Mexico; petitioned for the recall of the decree of 1830, which forbade immigration; asked for free trade for three more years, and finally requested a separate state government for Texas.

The struggle between Santa Anna and Bustamante had been terminated by mutual agreement and the temporary election of General Pedraza as President of the Mexican Republic. This was substantially a victory for Santa Anna, and when the time for the

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regular election arrived he was made President of the Republic on January 19, 1833. The Texans, believing that Santa Anna represented what he professed, now called a second convention which met on the first of April, 1833, and drafted a state constitution. The chairman of the committee on the constitution was Samuel Houston.

As indicating the changed spirit of the people at this time, Wharton, representing the former War Party, was made president of the convention. Austin, who was the best bred, best educated and most influential man in the colonies, and the only one probably who could speak Spanish with fluency and facility, was appointed chairman of a committee to go to the City of Mexico and lay the constitution before Santa Anna and the Mexican congress—which the new President was expected to reestablish in its proper relation to the government—for ratification. The only one of the committee who went to the capital was Austin. He tried for six months to get

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Santa Anna or the congress to take action, but without success. In December, 1833, he wrote home that he had met with no success and advised Texans to meet and establish the constitution on their own account.

This letter, unfortunately, fell into the hands of Vice-President Farias, who was acting as President during a temporary and voluntary withdrawal of Santa Anna from the seat of government. Austin, who had started on his return to Texas, was pursued and arrested at Saltillo, and then taken back to the City of Mexico and placed in close confinement. He was actually imprisoned in a dungeon of the ex-Inquisition for three months, without being allowed to communicate with any one, and was even denied the use of books and writing materials. He was then imprisoned for nine months in the state prison, and thereafter detained for one year in Mexico under bail of three hundred thousand dollars. During these imprisonments he with difficulty survived an attack of cholera. Austin was finally

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released under a general amnesty act, and at once set out for Texas, his petition, of course, having been refused.

Austin reached the mouth of the Brazos on the first of August, 1835, in the schooner *San Felipe* from New Orleans. The Mexican armed schooner *Correo*, commanded by one Thompson, an Englishman in the service of Mexico, at that time was cruising off the mouth of the river. Thompson had already made himself thoroughly obnoxious to the colonists, and now fired on the *San Felipe*. Captain Hurd, of the American vessel, who had armed his crew and passengers with muskets, opened fire on the *Correo* and drove from the decks the crew, with the exception of Thompson, who put up his helm and ran off. Austin having landed, a little steamboat called the *Laura*, which was coming out from Quintana, was impressed and directed to tow the *San Felipe* after the *Correo*. The *Correo* having been becalmed, the *San Felipe* was hauled alongside of her and the Mexican

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schooner captured. Thompson was sent to New Orleans to be tried for piracy.

It has been affirmed<sup>1</sup> that during Austin's detention in Mexico Anthony Butler, the United States Minister to Mexico, who was associated with a powerful land company of Americans and English, also tried to get a territorial government established in Texas, but for purposes with which the majority of the colonists could not be in sympathy. If this had been brought about, the Mexican government would naturally have controlled all the vacant land, placing it at the disposal of congress. The company referred to had proposed to purchase this land and Butler had been instructed to offer as much as ten million dollars for it, with the understanding that no previous titles to any portion of it should be respected, except those of Austin and his colonists. This, if carried out, would arbi-

<sup>1</sup> Private Papers of Anthony Butler, quoted by Colonel Guy M. Bryan in *A Comprehensive History of Texas*, vol. i, p. 500. I give the story for what it is worth. It certainly seems somewhat improbable on several counts.

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trarily and unjustly have dispossessed the majority of the colonists who in good faith had settled in Texas. It was further to be understood between the contracting parties that, on the final payment of this sum of money, the Texan territory was to be ceded to the United States, and when the United States took possession all land except that of Austin and his colonists should remain in possession of the said company.

Austin opposed the creation of a territorial government on this basis. Although his own colonists were to be exempt from any ill consequences, he knew that cruel injustice would result to colonists who had been brought in by other empresarios, and he managed through his influence to defeat the bill. It is alleged that he was offered one million dollars for his interest in Texas if he would withdraw his opposition. The offer was indignantly refused.

The United States had been most anxious to acquire the territory between the Sabine and the Rio Grande. On the 15th of March

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1827, through the American Minister, Joel R. Poinsett, it had offered Mexico one million dollars for it. Mexico promptly refused the offer and insisted upon the limits of the Adams-Onis Treaty of 1819 before entering into any relation whatever with the United States. In 1829 this formal offer had been increased to five million dollars, and subsequently ten millions was proposed as a loan, with Texas as security. All this time Butler, under the explicit directions of Andrew Jackson, was openly working for the purchase.

Austin's return had been awaited with the greatest interest by the colonists. It is probable that, had they not feared to endanger his life while he was imprisoned in Mexico, they would long since have broken out in open rebellion. Indeed, in 1835, the irrepressible Travis had actually expelled by force the new garrison of Anahuac, commanded by one Tenorio. On arrival home, Austin was immediately invited to address the citizens of Texas at Brazoria. There, on September 13th, he

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reported the result of his negotiations. He described the treatment he had received; disclosed what he had been able to discern of the intentions of the Mexican government; advised the Texans, through regularly appointed deputies, to meet in consultation at some central point and decide upon a course of action; and that meanwhile a state military force be organized, equipped and placed in the field ready for action. In his impressive address at Brazoria Austin used these significant words: "War is our only recourse. There is no other. We must defend our rights, ourselves, and our country by force of arms."

It was Santa Anna's purpose, so far as anybody could discover it, to abrogate the Constitution of 1824, whose protector he had formerly posed to be; to make himself Dictator and reduce the states to the level of dependencies, which were to be held under military garrisons commanded by creatures of his own. His program differed from that of Bustamante, whom he had supplanted,

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only in being more drastic. The only local government then in Texas was that of Coahuila, which was busily engaged in selling Texan land to irresponsible parties at two cents per acre—notwithstanding the existing grants and colonists in actual possession. At the same time nothing was being done for the protection of Texas from the Indians, nor for its educational development.

There had been a bitter struggle going on for some time between Saltillo and Monclova as to which should be the capital of Coahuila-Texas. In this contest Texas had little interest and took no part, although in its final settlement she suffered greatly. Santa Anna, taking advantage of the dissension, despatched a force under General Cos, his brother-in-law, to regulate matters. The legislature of Coahuila was promptly abolished and Viesca, the governor, was imprisoned. This left Texas without even the semblance of a state government. It was the first step in Santa Anna's plan for the establishment of military

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satrapies. The colonists at once organized committees of safety and enrolled themselves into companies to withstand the Indians, who were becoming bold and troublesome. The whole state was in a condition of unrest, and even of ferment.

Santa Anna's reply to the Texans was prompt. About the middle of September General Cos landed at Corpus Christi and marched to Bexar with five hundred troops. Affairs moved rapidly. A decree had been promulgated by the Mexican Dictator, requiring the immediate disarmament of Texas. To take their rifles away from men who lived largely by hunting, and whose sole defense against the Indians lay in their weapons, was to ask them to commit suicide. The Texans refused positively to give up their guns. The Mexicans were determined. By direction of Cos, Colonel Ugartechea sent a demand to the people of the settlement of Gonzales for the immediate surrender of a six-pounder cannon, which had been given them by the authorities

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at Bexar to fight Indians with. The Texans replied to the Mexicans as Leonidas did to a similar request from the Persians. If Ugartechea wanted the cannon he must come and take it. Ugartechea thereupon sent a troop of cavalry to take it by force.

On the second of October, at four o'clock in the morning, these soldiers, numbering perhaps a hundred, were attacked by one hundred and sixty-eight Texans, under the command of John H. Moore, who had become famous for his skill in fighting the Indians. The battle was a mere skirmish. The Texans fired and charged. The Mexicans fired and fled. The Texan loss was nothing, and the Mexicans had a small number killed. The war of independence had begun. Singularly enough, it was precipitated exactly as the war of independence in the United States had been, by an effort to seize munitions of war in the possession of colonists. The skirmish at Gonzales was to Texas what the skirmish at Lexington was to the United States.

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

The news of the Gonzales affair spread rapidly throughout western Texas. The first blow had been struck, and enthusiastic bodies of men at once repaired to the seat of war. The several military companies already assembled under command of Colonel Moore, and those other companies which joined them, established a sort of military council, consisting of one representative from each company, somewhat as the Greeks did before Marathon! On the 11th of October, this council elected Stephen F. Austin commander-in-chief of the Texan forces.

Before this election the fort at Goliad, sometimes called La Bahia, had been seized by a handful of Texans under Captain Chillingworth, with whom Benjamin R. Milam was associated as a volunteer. This capture was very fortunate, as it put the Texans in possession of three hundred stand of arms and valuable military supplies worth at least ten thousand dollars.

Austin, although he was a sick man, and in

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no condition to stand the fatigues of a campaign, at once assumed command, despatched parties in various directions to seize different points held by Mexicans, and with a constantly increasing army numbering now about three hundred and fifty, moved eastward toward San Antonio de Bexar, where General Cos had his headquarters. On the 27th of October, Austin despatched Colonel James Bowie and Captain J. W. Fannin with ninety-eight men to select a suitable spot for a permanent camp whence he could prosecute his operations against San Antonio.

James Bowie was a Georgian, who has become famous as the inventor of the terrible knife which bears his name. He had acquired great notoriety from a duel fought with Major Norris Wright, on a Mississippi sand-bar, where the seconds and spectators became involved in a general mêlée, in the course of which Bowie killed his antagonist with a weapon made from a large file. Bowie himself was desperately wounded, as were other

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participants in the fight, and a second man was killed. After the battle, a blacksmith, or cutler, shaped this sanguinary file into the weapon which became known as the Bowie knife. Shortly after this duel, Bowie came to Texas. Yoakum, in his History of Texas, thus describes him:

"He was about six feet high, of fair complexion, with small blue eyes, not fleshy, but well-proportioned; he stood quite erect, and had a rather fierce look; was not quarrelsome but mild and quiet, even at the moment of action. He was quite sociable, and somewhat disposed to intemperance, but never drunk. He had a wonderful art in winning people to him, and was extremely prodigal of his money. His muscular power was as great as his daring; his brother says he had been known to rope and ride alligators! His great speculation was in purchasing negroes from Lafitte and smuggling them into Louisiana. This is the most unpleasant feature in his history. He had married a daughter of Veramendi, and under his auspices went to Saltillo to establish a cotton and woolen manufactory. With this view, the legislature naturalized him, and granted him a charter."

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J. W. Fannin was an enthusiastic young man, and likewise came from Georgia, of which he was a native. He had gone to Texas in 1834, seeking his fortune, and at the outbreak of the war had proffered his services to assist Texas in gaining her independence.

The detachment commanded by Bowie and Fannin was attacked by a force of four hundred men at Concepcion, an old Mission station a mile and a half south of San Antonio. The fighting was close and severe. The Mexicans were overwhelmingly defeated with a loss of sixty-eight killed, including many officers, and a large number of wounded. The Texan loss was small. Austin and the main body of his army thereafter occupied Concepcion and the siege of San Antonio was prosecuted, but in a desultory fashion—such bodies of troops not being well adapted to sustained investments of fortified positions.

Austin's suggestion at Brazoria that there should be a consultation as to the future of Texas had met with a prompt response.

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

Elections had been held in the several municipalities and a meeting had been appointed for the middle of October at San Felipe de Austin, which at that time was regarded as the natural capital of Texas. There were three political parties in Texas. The War Party was resolved on an appeal to arms which it was hoped would bring about independence. A second party, known as the Submission Party, was for peace at any price. The third party advocated consultation before taking any active measures, and, having right on their side in this crisis, had carried the day.

The delegates assembled on the 1st of November. A quorum not being present, the meeting was adjourned until a sufficient number of delegates appeared. On the 3rd of November the consultation organized with fifty members representing thirteen municipalities—another parallel to the thirteen original colonies of the United States!

Branch T. Archer was elected president of the consultation, which, on the 7th of Novem-

## THE TEXAN REVOLUTION

ber, proceeded to declare the formal adherence of Texas to the Mexican Constitution of 1824. There was a bitter struggle between the War Party and the two others over this point, in which the War Party was overwhelmingly defeated. The Texans were preparing to fight; they were in fact actually engaged in warfare against the country of which they were a part and in which, like Louis XIV, Santa Anna was the state; but like their American prototypes, they were not at that time contemplating, at least officially, severance from the Mexican Republic—so called. The causes of their action are succinctly set forth in the following declaration:

“Whereas, General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna and other military chieftains have, by force of arms, overthrown the federal institutions of Mexico, and dissolved the social compact which existed between Texas and the other members of the Mexican Confederacy, now the good people of Texas, availing themselves of their natural rights, solemnly declare:

1. That they have taken up arms in defense of

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

their rights and liberties, which were threatened by the encroachments of military despots, and in defense of the republican principle of the Federal Constitution of Mexico of eighteen hundred and twenty-four.

"2. That Texas is no longer, morally or civilly, bound by the Compact of Union; yet, stimulated by the generosity and sympathy common to a free people, they offer their support and assistance to such members of the Mexican Confederacy as will take up arms against military despotism.

"3. That they do not acknowledge that the present authorities of the nominal Mexican Republic have the right to govern within the limits of Texas.

"4. That they will not cease to carry on war against the said authorities while their troops are within the limits of Texas.

"5. That they hold it to be their right, during the disorganization of the Federal system and the reign of despotism, to withdraw from the Union, to establish an independent government, or to adopt such measures as they may deem best calculated to protect their rights and liberties; but that they will continue faithful to the Mexican government so long as that nation is governed by the Constitution and laws, which were formed for the government of the Political Association.

## THE TEXAN REVOLUTION

"6. That Texas is responsible for the expenses of her armies now in the field.

"7. That the public faith of Texas is pledged for the payment of any debts contracted by her agents.

"8. That she will reward by donations of land all who may volunteer their services in her present struggle, and receive them as citizens.

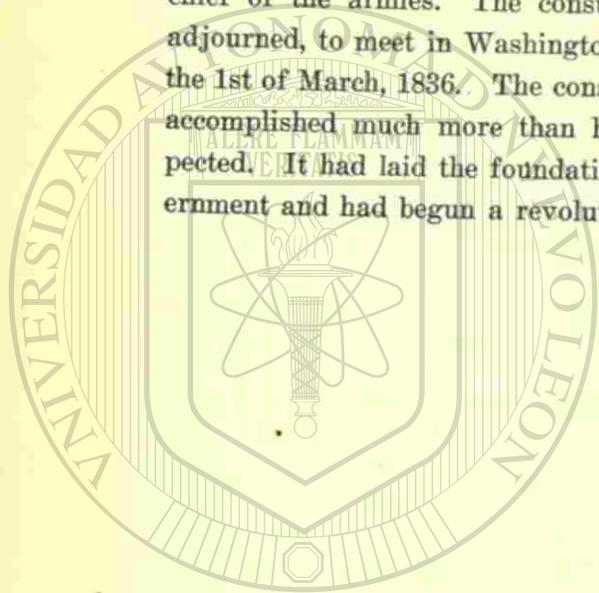
"These declarations we solemnly avow to the world, and call God to witness their truth and sincerity; and invoke defeat and disgrace upon our heads should we prove guilty of duplicity."<sup>1</sup>

The Texans proceeded further. On the 13th they passed a decree establishing a local state government. H. W. Smith was elected governor and Messrs. Archer, Wharton and Austin were appointed commissioners to the United States. Austin would have been elected governor, had it not been felt that he could do the state better service in the United States on account of his ability, reputation, and wide acquaintance.

<sup>1</sup> Sam Houston and the War of Independence in Texas, by Alfred M. Williams.

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

Sam Houston was elected commander-in-chief of the armies. The consultation then adjourned, to meet in Washington, Texas, on the 1st of March, 1836. The consultation had accomplished much more than had been expected. It had laid the foundation of a government and had begun a revolution.



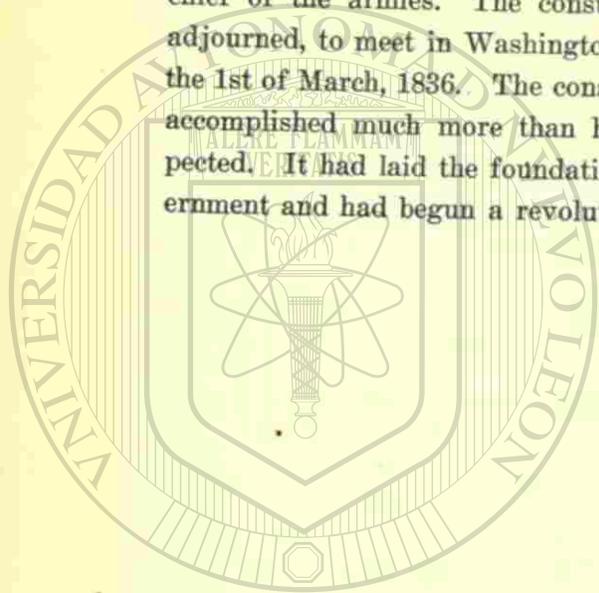
## CHAPTER IV GENERAL SAM HOUSTON

UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE NUEVO LEÓN

DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE BIBLIOTECAS

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

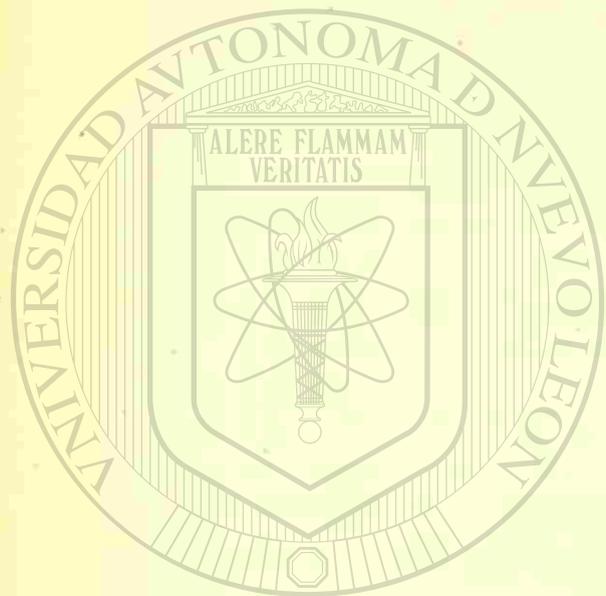
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## CHAPTER IV GENERAL SAM HOUSTON

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## CHAPTER IV

### GENERAL SAM HOUSTON

As Houston played so great a part in the future history of Texas his previous history requires more than a passing notice.<sup>1</sup> The Houston family was one of consideration, entitled to wear armor in the old country—the North of Ireland. One of them had been among the redoubtable defenders of Londonderry in 1689. They had settled in Virginia. While not belonging to the landed gentry of the Old Dominion, they were large and prosperous farmers.

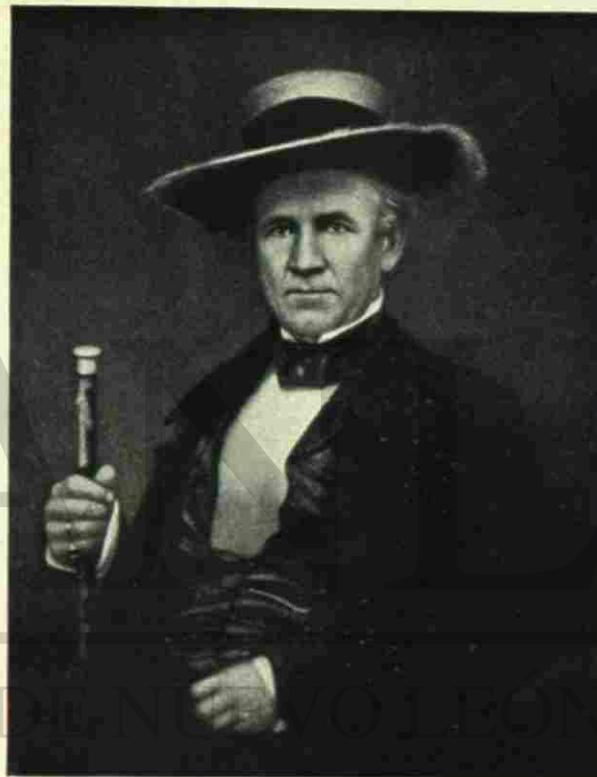
Houston's father was an officer in the famous brigade of riflemen that Morgan led to Wash-

<sup>1</sup> This biography of Sam Houston is abridged from my book *American Fights and Fighters—Border*, by permission of the publishers, McClure, Phillips & Co. The curious will find some of the more important battles in the Texan War of Independence, which are briefly referred to here, from lack of space, treated at great length in the book cited.

### CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

ington's assistance "from the right bank of the Potomac." His mother was one of those pioneer women of superb physique, high principle, and strength of mind and courage. After the death of her husband, when young Sam, who was born in 1783, was but thirteen years old, she took the family far over the Alleghany Mountains and settled in western Tennessee, on the borders of the Cherokee Nation.

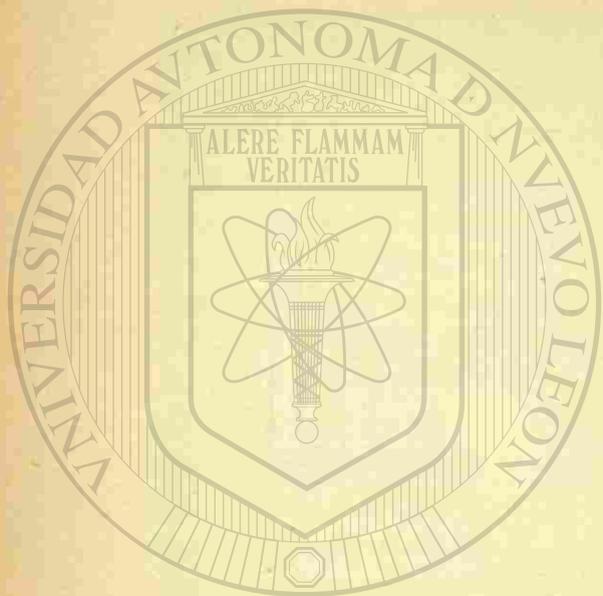
Such schooling as the neighborhood afforded was given to Sam. His educational opportunities were meager, but he made the best of his limited advantages, and with such books as the Bible, the Iliad, Shakespeare, The Pilgrim's Progress, and later, when he was commander-in-chief of the Texan army, Cæsar's Commentaries—in translation, of course—he gave himself a good grounding. He was a close student in his way, and in manner and ability, when he became Governor of Tennessee, President of Texas, Senator of the United States, Governor of Texas, etc., he had no cause to



GENERAL SAM HOUSTON.

From an old daguerreotype.





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### GENERAL SAM HOUSTON

blush when placed by the most distinguished men of his time.

According to some authorities, his unwillingness to be a clerk in a country store, according to others, the refusal of his older brothers to allow him to study Latin, caused him to abandon civilization and cast his lot in with the Cherokees, whose territory lay adjacent to his home. He was adopted into the family of one of the sub-chiefs of the tribe, and for a long period lived a wild, savage life among them. At different intervals during his long career he resumed his relations with them, on one occasion taking from among them a wife, who afterward died, leaving no children.

When he was asked to come back to civilization, he remarked in his grandiloquent way, that he preferred "measuring deer tracks to measuring tape." After several years with the Cherokees, at the age of eighteen, finding himself in debt for some barbaric finery, he returned to the settlement and opened a country school. His pluck was greater than his

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attainments, which yet appear to have been sufficient to make the school a success, for it included all the children of the neighborhood, and he was enabled to raise the tuition fee from six to eight dollars per year, one-third payable in corn at thirty-three and one-half cents per bushel, one-third in cash, and one-third in cotton goods or other kind. He once said, after he had filled almost every elective position except that of President of the United States, that he experienced a higher feeling of dignity and self-satisfaction when he was schoolmaster than at any period of his life.

Tired of school-teaching he enlisted in the army as a private and soon won promotion to the rank of ensign. He distinguished himself greatly under the command of Andrew Jackson by his desperate courage at the battle of Tohopeka, or Horseshoe Bend, where he was so severely wounded in the performance of a deed of headlong valor, that his life was despaired of for a long time. After these early exploits he resigned from the service;

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one of his reasons being a severe and well-merited rebuke which he received for appearing before Calhoun, the Secretary of War, dressed like an Indian. He was usually a dandy in his dress, although at times he affected peculiar and striking costumes, which his great height and imposing presence enabled him to wear without inspiring that ridicule which would have attended a similar performance on the part of a less splendid man.

When he was inaugurated Governor of Tennessee, August 2, 1827, he wore "a tall bell-crowned, medium-brimmed, shining black beaver hat, shining black patent-leather military stock, or cravat, incased by a standing collar, ruffled shirt, black satin vest, shining black pants gathered to the waistband with legs full, same size from seat to ankle, and a gorgeous, red-ground, many colored gown, or Indian hunting shirt, fastened at the waist by a huge red sash covered with fancy bead work, with an immense silver buckle, embroidered silk stockings, and pumps with large silver

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

buckles. Mounted on a superb dapple gray horse he appeared at the election unannounced, and was the observed of all observers."<sup>1</sup> I should think he might have been.

When he was United States Senator, it was his habit to wear, in addition to the ordinary clothing of a gentleman of the time, an immense Mexican sombrero and colored blanket, or serape, and his appearance naturally excited attention in Washington.

While candidate for re-election as Governor of Tennessee, he separated from his young wife after three months of married life, gave over his campaign, and once more sought asylum with the Cherokees. The reason for this separation has never been discovered, although Houston explicitly stated that no reflection upon the character or the conduct of the lady in question was implied or expressed by his conduct.<sup>2</sup> Championing the Indians when he

<sup>1</sup> Statement of Colonel D. D. Claiborne quoted in Sam Houston, etc., by Alfred M. Williams.

<sup>2</sup> Sam Houston, by Sarah Barnwell Elliott in the Beacon Biographies.

## GENERAL SAM HOUSTON

came back to civilization, he became involved in a quarrel with Representative Stansberry, whom he publicly caned. For his conduct he was formally censured at the bar of Congress. This quarrel brought him into public notice again. It is shrewdly surmised that he provoked it for that purpose, for he said: "I was dying out once, and had they taken me before a justice of the peace and fined me ten dollars for assault and battery, it would have killed me; but they gave me a national tribunal for a theater and that set me up again."

Like many men of great physical vigor he was much given to excess. In his last sojourn among the Cherokees, the Indians expressed their contempt for his dissipated habits by naming him the "Big Drunk"; but drunk or sober, there was something about him that inspired respect. Whatever he did he was always "Sam Houston." People used to say that he really signed his name "I am Houston." After he was converted, however—and in a large measure before that time, at

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

the instance of his third wife, a woman of noble character, who married him to reform him and did so—he entirely stopped drinking and demeaned himself to the end of his life as a sincere and humble Christian of the highest type. When he got drunk, he got thoroughly drunk, and when he became converted to the Baptist faith, he did it with the same completeness; a thorough-going man, indeed.

In one particular he was remarkable among his contemporaries. He had great reluctance to resort to the duel, which was then the usual method of settling differences between gentlemen. He had to endure many sharp remarks and bitter criticisms on this account; his courage was even impugned, at times, although we now realize that this was not only beyond question, but that its high quality was actually established by these very refusals. Sometimes his wit enabled him to escape. On one occasion, after counseling with his secretary, he informed a gentleman who brought him a challenge that his principal was number four-

## GENERAL SAM HOUSTON

teen on the list, and that he could hold out no hope of meeting him until he had disposed of the previous thirteen.

His grandiloquent mind invested the slightest occurrence with majesty. When he started for Texas in 1832, with a commission from President Jackson to negotiate treaties between the United States and the Indians, and with, in all probability, a secret commission to examine into, and report upon, the local condition with regard to Mexico, and the feeling of the colonists with regard to annexation to the United States,<sup>1</sup> a friend of his gave him a razor, which he received with these words:

“Major Rector, this is apparently a gift of little value, but it is an unestimable testimony to the friendship which has lasted many years, and proved steadfast under the blasts of calumny and injustice. Good-by. God bless you. When next you see this razor it shall be shaving the President of the Republic, by G—d.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sam Houston, etc., by Alfred M. Williams.

<sup>2</sup> A rather singular indication, not only of his ambition, but also of the desire of his principals, and the opinion of the United States!

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

His manner toward ladies was as magnificent as his person, his dress, his oratory. His habitual word of address to them was "lady"; a very courtly, distinguished old fellow was he.

After his supersession as Governor of Texas, because of his unwillingness to allow the state to go out of the Union, when the officers of the Confederacy established a stringent law requiring all men over sixteen years to register and obtain a pass, Houston paid no attention to the order. When he was halted by an officer who demanded his pass, the old man waved him aside in his most Olympian manner, frowning as he remarked, "San Jacinto is my pass through Texas." Small wonder that the people loved him.

He had a sense of humor and the dramatic such as few men enjoyed. He was one of the best campaigners among thousands of brilliant specimens that America has produced. His witty and epigrammatic speech may be illustrated. A friend once betrayed him. When the man's character was assailed in his pres-

## GENERAL SAM HOUSTON

ence, Houston remarked: "You mustn't be too hard on S. I was always fond of dogs and S. has all the virtues of a dog except his fidelity." One of his remembered phrases describing a certain great personage is: "Ambitious as Lucifer and cold as a lizard." He may fairly be called a statesman. He most certainly can be styled an orator. A little verse, which he wrote to a relative, illustrates that he was not deficient in the arts and graces, and is worth quoting:

Remember thee? Yes, lovely girl,  
While faithful memory holds its seat,  
Till this warm heart in dust is laid,  
And this wild pulse shall cease to beat.  
No matter where my bark is tost,  
On life's tempestuous, stormy sea,  
My anchor gone, my rudder lost,  
Still, cousin, I will think of thee.

Houston did everything in his power to prevent the secession of Texas in 1861, but when she left the Union he went with her. We can understand him. Texas was like his own child. He died in reduced circumstances in

CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

1863, his last years embittered by the too evident failure of the Confederacy and the discords which tore his beloved country in twain. The world is familiar with the events of his strange, romantic and useful career, few Americans have been more written about, and few men deserved it more. While he did not rise to the solitary heights of greatness, he was one of the most eminent men of his time, and his valuable services to Texas are held in undying remembrance.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following is a summary of his career: "Born near Lexington, Va., March 2, 1793; died at Huntsville, Texas, July 25, 1863. An American gentleman and statesman. He served in the War of 1812; was a member of Congress from Tennessee, 1823-27; was Governor of Tennessee, 1827-29; as commander-in-chief of the Texans, defeated the Mexicans at San Jacinto, April, 1836; was President of Texas, 1836-38 and 1841-44; was United States Senator from Texas, 1845-59; and was Governor of Texas, 1859-61."—*Century Dictionary of Names.*

CHAPTER V

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE  
—THE CONSTITUTION

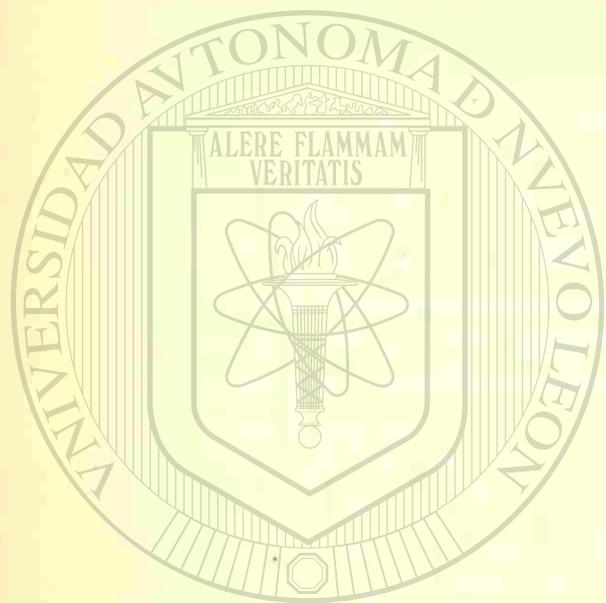
CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

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CHAPTER V

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE  
—THE CONSTITUTION



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## CHAPTER V

### THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE—THE CONSTITUTION

BEFORE Houston assumed command, the Texan forces in the field had been more or less busy, although little that was decisive was accomplished after the first successes. General Cos had peremptorily declined to surrender San Antonio. He had refused even to treat with those whom he regarded as rebels. The siege had made languid progress. Division, want of harmony, lack of discipline, insubordination, and jealousy prevailed—all the faults of an unorganized volunteer force—among the different Texan commands, and when Austin left the army at the summons of the consultation, turning the command over to Burlison temporarily, Houston also being busily engaged at the consultation of which

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

passioned speech closing with these words: "Who will go into San Antonio with old Ben Milam?"

The effect was electrical. The erstwhile recalcitrant men now clamored tumultuously to be led to the attack. The assault began in earnest the next morning and continued for five days. The Texans stormed the place, fighting in the streets, carrying the barricades, dislodging the enemy in a series of hand-to-hand conflicts from house to house until finally on the evening of the 9th General Cos hoisted the white flag. Milam had been killed while recklessly exposing himself in one of the assaults. The Texan loss was one man killed—Milam—and twenty-seven wounded. Milam was about forty-five years of age. The Mexican loss is variously estimated; it was probably over one hundred and fifty killed and twice as many wounded.

Five hundred stand of arms, twenty-one pieces of artillery, besides an immense quantity of supplies, all of great value, fell into

## DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

the hands of the Texans. Honorable terms were granted to Cos, who was permitted to leave Texas with his regular troops retaining their arms. A large number of convicts whom the Mexicans had impressed as soldiers and ordered to the assistance of Cos were deprived of their arms and sent back under guard of the regular troops.

Meanwhile, the Mexican government had not been idle. It had despatched a large body of troops to succor Cos and raise the siege of San Antonio, but this reinforcement met the troops of Cos returning from the capitulation and the whole party withdrew into Mexico. There was, therefore, not a single Mexican soldier left east of the Nueces River. Texas so far was free. Various expeditions were projected by the Texans, but owing to the lack of organic coherency among the different detachments, and to petty jealousy and distrust of one another among the leaders, they came to nothing. An attempt was made to send a force to the Rio Grande to capture Matamoras,

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but the question of command could not be settled and the expedition never got off.

The volunteers, having seen the last Mexican leave Texan limits, naturally desired to go home to attend to their various duties. The regular Texan troops were in a state of confusion and disorganization. There was no money with which to pay them. The temporary government had not been sufficiently well established to command recognition and obedience, and its requisitions were often disregarded. Yet the case was not hopeless; money and supplies, together with volunteers, had been poured into Texas from the United States, which was openly used as a recruiting ground for the Texan army. Most of the regular troops, in fact, were recruited from the United States, and actually called themselves after their home locality; as, "The New Orleans Battalion," "The Cincinnati Company," etc. Mexico protested vehemently against this, but received no satisfaction.

Among other flagrant breaches of neutrality

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on our part, was a filibustering expedition formed in and despatched from New Orleans, to attack Tampico, Mexico, which had no connection whatever with Texas, save as a diversion, and which was, in fact, unless disavowed and apologized for with suitable reparation made, an act of open war, more especially since the bulk of the adventurers were American citizens. The expedition failed lamentably and most of the participants were shot—as they deserved to be. It had no bearing on this struggle, but it is interesting, as indicating the attitude of the United States.

The finest body of troops in the Texan army was a New Orleans company, which had been enlisted and uniformed for the purpose of fighting Mexico. During the Texan war it was most preposterously but gravely urged by the United States that so long as the government officially did not actively and directly interfere between Texas and Mexico, it could take no cognizance of the doings of private individuals. We have made progress since

### CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

that day. I am certain that our government would not now allow such things even in the case of the weakest and feeblest power; indeed, our course in the Cuban revolt against Spain is a case in point.

The period between the departure of the Mexicans from Texas and their return—for it was evident to every one that Mexico would not tamely submit to the loss of her most promising province without making an effort to regain it—was a time which should have been employed by the Texans in strengthening their army and in making suitable preparation for the next campaign. Little or nothing was accomplished, however. Santa Anna, on the contrary, assembled a force of some six thousand men of which he took personal command, having under him as second in command, General Filisola, with Generals Cos, Sesma, Gaona, Tolsa, Ampudia, and others, as brigadiers. His force had been amply provided with everything necessary to prosecute the war. It rendezvoused at Monclova early in 1836.

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The Texans had been fully informed of the storm which was about to break upon them. They prepared to meet it from one point of view with firmness, but from another, they did nothing. Their courage was beyond all question. The population of Mexico at that time was estimated to be about eight millions of people, of which four millions were Indians; two millions half-breed Indians and negroes; one million two hundred thousand pure blooded Mexicans of Spanish descent; six hundred thousand mulattoes or half-breed Indians and negroes; and one hundred thousand full-blooded negroes. The remainder, including one thousand Spanish subjects, was divided among other nationalities. The population of Texas was about forty-five thousand, including thirty thousand Americans, thirty-five hundred Mexicans, four thousand Indians and five thousand negroes.

Back of the Texans, however, lay the United States, and between the United States and Mexico, from a material point of view, there

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

could be no comparison. The United States had already taken action under the pretense that the Indians were troublesome. It had despatched General Gaines with a strong force to the Sabine River. This constituted a moral demonstration of undoubted value to the Texans.

The consultation reassembled on the 1st of March, 1836, at Washington, on the Brazos. The spirit of the delegates had changed for they now declared themselves a convention, and on the 2nd of March the following Declaration of Independence was proclaimed:

THE UNANIMOUS  
DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE  
MADE BY THE  
DELEGATES OF THE PEOPLE OF TEXAS  
IN GENERAL CONVENTION  
AT THE TOWN OF WASHINGTON  
ON THE 2ND DAY OF MARCH 1836.

“When a government has ceased to protect the lives, liberty and property of the people, from whom its legitimate powers are derived, and for the advancement of whose happenings it was instituted,

## DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

and so far from being a guarantee for the enjoyment of those inestimable and inalienable rights, becomes an instrument in the hands of evil rulers, for their oppression: When the Federal Republican Constitution of their country, which they have sworn to support, no longer has a substantial existence, and the whole nature of their government has been forcibly changed without their consent, from a restricted federative republic, composed of sovereign states, to a consolidated central, military despotism in which every interest is disregarded but that of the army and the priesthood—both the eternal enemies of civil liberty, the eve-ready minions of power, and the usual instruments of tyrants: When, long after the spirit of the Constitution has departed, moderation is at length, so far lost, by those in power that even the semblance of freedom is removed, and the forms, themselves, of the Constitution discontinued; and so far from their petitions and remonstrances being regarded the agents who bear them are thrown into dungeons; and mercenary armies sent forth to force a new government upon them at the point of the bayonet: When in consequence of such acts of malfeasance and abdication, on the part of the government, anarchy prevails, and civil Society is dissolved into its original elements. In such a crisis,

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

the first law of nature, the right of self-preservation—the inherent and inalienable right of the people to appeal to first principles and take their political affairs into their own hands in extreme cases enjoins it as a right towards themselves and a sacred obligation to their posterity to abolish Such Government and create another, in its stead, calculated to rescue them from impending dangers, and to secure their future welfare and happiness.

“ Nations; as well as individuals, are amenable for their acts to the public opinion of mankind. A statement of a part of our grievances is, therefore, submitted to an impartial world, in justification of the hazardous but unavoidable step now taken of severing our political connection with the Mexican people, and assuming an independent attitude among the nations of the earth.

“ The Mexican government, by its colonization laws, invited and induced the Anglo-American population of Texas to colonize its wilderness under the pledged faith of a written Constitution that they should continue to enjoy that constitutional liberty and republican government to which they had been habituated in the land of their birth, the United States of America. In this expectation they have been cruelly disappointed, inasmuch as the Mexican nation has acquiesced in the late changes

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made in the government by General Antonia Lopez de Santa Anna, who, having overturned the Constitution of his Country, now offers us the cruel alternative either to abandon our homes, acquired by so many privations, or submit to the most intolerable of all tyranny, the combined despotism of the Sword and the priesthood.

“ It has sacrificed our welfare to the State of Coahuila, by which our interests have been continually depressed through a jealous and partial course of legislation carried on at a far distant seat of government, by a hostile majority, in an unknown tongue; and this too, notwithstanding we have petitioned in the humblest terms, for the establishment of a separate State Government, and have, in accordance with the provisions of the national Constitution, presented to the general Congress a republican Constitution, which was, without just cause contemptuously rejected.

“ It incarcerated in a dungeon, for a long time, one of our citizens, for no other cause but a zealous endeavor to procure the acceptance of our Constitution and the establishment of a State Government.

“ It has failed and refused to secure on a firm basis, the right of trial by jury; that palladium of Civil liberty, and only safe guarantee for the life, liberty, and property of the Citizen.

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

" It has failed to establish any public system of Education, although possessed of almost boundless resources (the public domain) and, although, it is an axiom, in political science, that unless a people are educated and enlightened it is idle to expect the continuance of civil liberty, or the Capacity for Self-Government.

" It has suffered the Military Commandants stationed among us to exercise arbitrary acts of oppression and tyranny; thus trampling upon the most Sacred rights of the citizen and rendering the military superior to the civil power.

" It has dissolved by force of arms, the State Congress of Coahuila and Texas, and obliged our representatives to fly for their lives from the Seat of government; thus depriving us of the fundamental political rights of representation.

" It has demanded the surrender of a number of our Citizens, and ordered military detachments to seize and carry them into the Interior for trial; in contempt of the civil authorities, and in defiance of the laws and the Constitution.

" It has made piratical attacks upon our Commerce; by commissioning foreign desperadoes, and authorizing them to seize our vessels, and convey the property of our Citizens to far distant ports for confiscation.

## DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

" It denies us the right of worshipping the Almighty according to the dictates of our own conscience; by the support of a national religion calculated to promote the temporal interest of its human functionaries rather than the glory of the true and living God.

" It has demanded us to deliver up our arms; which are essential to our defense, the rightful property of freemen, and formidable only to tyrannical Governments.

" It has invaded our Country, both by sea and by land, with intent to lay waste our territory and drive us from our homes; and has now a large mercenary army advancing to carry on against us a war of extermination.

" It has, through its emisaries, incited the merciless Savage, with the Tomahawk and Scalping-knife, to massacre the inhabitants of our defenseless frontiers.

" It hath been, during the whole time of our connection with it, the contemptible Sport and victim of Successive Military Revolutions; and hath continually exhibited every characteristic of a weak, corrupt and tyrannical Government.

" These, and other grievances, were patiently borne by the people of Texas until they reached that point at which forbearance ceases to be a vir-

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

tue. We then took up arms in defense of the national Constitution. We appealed to our Mexican brethren for Assistance. Our appeal has been made in vain. Though months have elapsed, no sympathetic response has yet been heard from the Interior. We are, therefore, forced to the melancholy conclusion that the Mexican people have acquiesced in the destruction of their liberty, and the substitution therefor of a Military Government—that they are unfit to be free and incapable of Self Government.

“The necessity of self-preservation, therefore, now decrees our eternal political separation.

“We, therefore, the delegates, with plenary powers, of the people of Texas, in solemn convention assembled, appealing to a Candid World for the necessities of our Condition, do hereby resolve and declare that our political connection with the Mexican Nation has for-ever ended; and that the people of Texas do now constitute a free Sovereign and independent Republic, and are fully invested with all the rights and attributes which properly belong to independent nations; and, conscious of the rectitude of our intentions, we fearlessly and confidently commit the issue to the decision of the Supreme Arbiter of the destinies of nations.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced as to spelling, capitalization, etc., from a facsimile in Comprehensive History of Texas.

## DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

On the 4th of March, Sam Houston, who had received his rank from the consultation, was again elected commander-in-chief of the armies of the Texan Republic. On the sixteenth, a constitution was adopted, and, so far as could then be done, the independence of Texas was assured.

The constitution had been drawn up on the lines of that of the United States, with such changes as were rendered necessary by the fact that Texas included only a single state, as has been said, and “provided for the establishment of an Executive, a Legislature to consist of two bodies, Senate and House of Representatives, and a Judiciary, to be governed by the common law of England. Slavery was established, and owners were forbidden to manumit their slaves without the consent of Congress. Free negroes were forbidden to reside in the territory. The importation of slaves, except from the United States, was punishable as piracy. . . . Freedom and equality for all forms of religious belief were decreed; the

*CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST*

rights of trial by jury and writ of habeas corpus, except in cases of treason, and the freedom of the press were established. No man was to be imprisoned for debt, and titles of nobility and monopolies were forbidden." <sup>1</sup>

David G. Burnet was elected president of the provincial government, which was to administer affairs until the people could express themselves constitutionally. Lorenzo de Zavala, an enlightened, liberty-loving Mexican, was elected vice-president.

<sup>1</sup> Sam Houston, etc., by Alfred M. Williams.

CHAPTER VI

THE ALAMO AND GOLIAD

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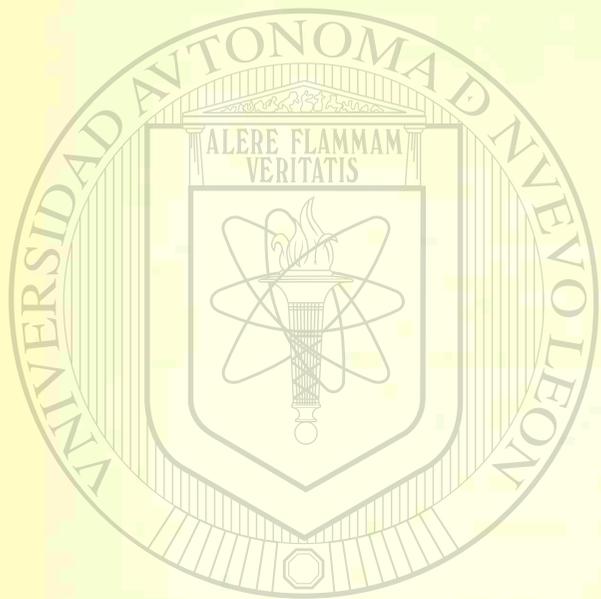
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## CHAPTER VI

### THE ALAMO AND GOLIAD

MEANWHILE, the Mexicans had been busy. On the 23rd of February, 1836, after a desperate march of one hundred leagues, from Monclova to San Antonio, across a desert country, in the depth of a Texas winter, Santa Anna with five thousand regular soldiers of the Mexican army, accompanied by a large number of camp followers and others, appeared before San Antonio. The garrison had withdrawn from the town and taken refuge in the buildings of the old Spanish Mission Del Alamo under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel William Barrett Travis, of North Carolina, a young lawyer just twenty-eight years of age. Travis was "six feet in height, erect and manly in figure, with blue eyes, reddish hair and round face."<sup>1</sup> South Carolinian

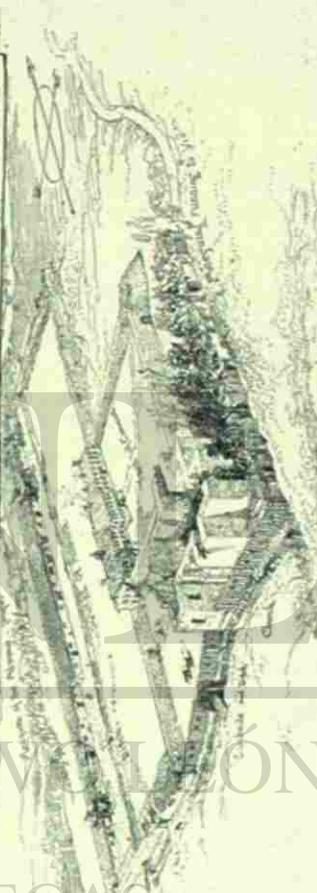
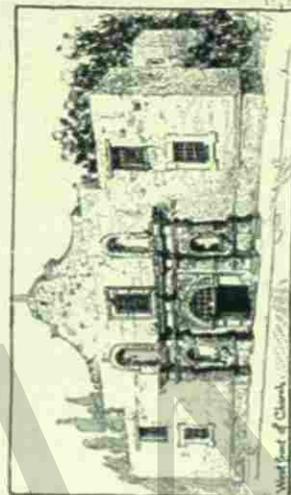
<sup>1</sup> Sam Houston, etc., by Alfred M. Williams.

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historians claim that Travis should be accredited to their state, instead of North Carolina. It is a tradition that he was a foundling, and was discovered tied to the bars of a gate on the farm of a man named Travis, who adopted him and named him William Barr, not William Barrett. The Travis farm was situated between Saluda and Johnston, in South Carolina.<sup>1</sup> However, Travis signed his name William Barrett, and to whatever state he belonged he honored it signally.

With Travis in the Alamo was James Bowie, who, with Fannin, had commanded at the battle at Mission Concepcion. Bowie was seriously ill. He had been disabled by a fall and was also suffering from a severe attack of pleuropneumonia. Therefore, he could contribute little to the defense. Under Travis' command eventually were upward of one hundred and eighty men. His original garrison had been about one hundred and forty. Early in Feb-

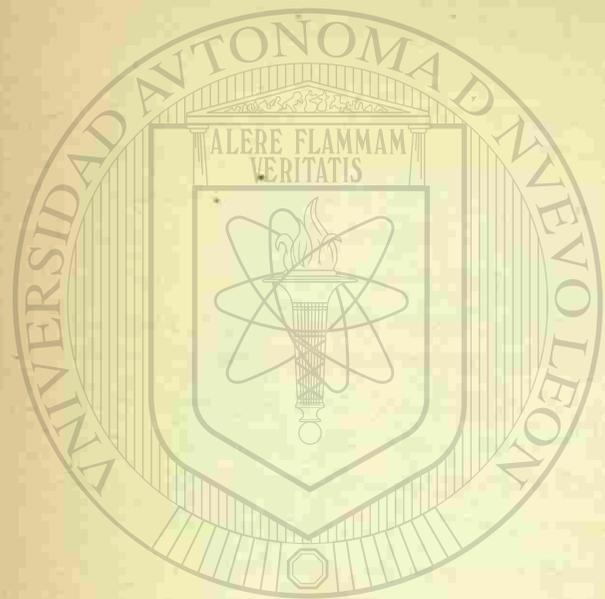
<sup>1</sup> See note on pp. 315-16, my book *American Fights and Fighters—Border*.



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A VIEW OF THE ALAMO.





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### THE ALAMO AND GOLIAD

ruary there came to him a certain David Crockett, with twelve other men from Tennessee, anxious and willing to help Texas gain her independence and incidentally to indulge in their natural proclivity for any kind of a fight.

David Crockett, renowned as a pioneer, hunter, and politician, is one of the most interesting characters in our early history. The son of an Irish emigrant, who had proved his devotion by fighting gallantly at King's Mountain during the Revolution, he was born at Limestone, Green County, Tennessee, on the 17th of August, 1786. His parents were very poor. He received no education save in hard work and in pioneering experiences, and at the age of twelve was apprenticed to a teamster and thereafter to a hatter. He returned home at the age of fifteen, determined to get some education. He did not at that time know the "first letter in the book." Six months completed his schooling. He served with credit under Jackson in the Creek War in 1813.

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He was a big, brawny, genial, splendid man, the best shot in Tennessee, and very popular with his associates, who elected him a magistrate and colonel of militia in 1821. Thereafter he was successively elected to the State Legislature, and then for two terms to the National Congress, where his humor, his bravery and his shrewdness, made him a figure of national prominence. Failing of re-election because of his hostility to some of the projects of his whilom friend, President Jackson, and finding his political career in Tennessee closed on that account, he determined to go to Texas and help her win her freedom.<sup>1</sup>

After Santa Anna appeared Travis dispatched messengers in all directions for help, and thirty-two men from Gonzales, under Captain J. W. Smith, broke through the Mexican lines on the 1st of March and joined him. Fannin was at Goliad with some four or

<sup>1</sup> See my book, *American Fights and Fighters—Border*, for a sketch of Crockett.

## THE ALAMO AND GOLIAD

five hundred men. Accompanied by Colonel James Butler Bonham, an intimate friend of Travis, who had brought his appeal to Goliad, Fannin made an effort to join Travis in the Alamo. His ammunition wagons broke down, his transportation failed, he could not get his artillery over the rivers, and he was forced to abandon the attempt. Fannin tried to persuade Bonham to stay with him. "I will report to Travis or die in the attempt!" was brave Bonham's answer. He got through the Mexican lines at one o'clock on the morning of March 3rd. On the 6th of March one of Travis' messengers reached the convention assembled at Washington and laid before it this ringing appeal:

*"To the People of Texas and all Americans in the World—Commandancy of the Alamo.*

*"BEXAR, February 24, 1836.*

**FELLOW-CITIZENS AND COMPATRIOTS:**

"I am besieged by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna. I have sustained a continual bombardment for twenty-four hours and

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

have not lost a man. The enemy have demanded a surrender at discretion; otherwise the garrison is to be put to the sword if the place is taken. I have answered the summons with a cannon shot and our flag still waves proudly from the walls.<sup>1</sup> *I shall never surrender or retreat.* Then, I call upon you, in the name of liberty, of patriotism, and of everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid with all despatch. The enemy are receiving reinforcements daily, and will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. Though this call may be neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible, and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor and that of his country.

*"Victory or Death!"*

W. BARRETT TRAVIS,

Lieutenant-Colonel, Commanding."

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"P. S.—The Lord is on our side. When the army appeared in sight we had not three bushels of corn. We have since found in deserted houses eighty or ninety bushels and got into the walls twenty or thirty beeves."

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<sup>1</sup> That flag was the familiar vertical green, white and red bars of Mexico with the number 1824 in the white bar, to signify allegiance to the Mexican Constitution of that date.

## THE ALAMO AND GOLIAD

It was moved that the convention suspend its functions and that its members should take arms, and march immediately to the relief of Travis. Such counsel was gallant but injudicious. Important as was the relief of Travis, the work of the convention was much more so, and by the influence of Houston, who declared that the passage of the motion would mean suicide to the state, the members were prevailed upon to remain in session and complete their legislative business. Under such trying circumstances did that convention establish its constitution.

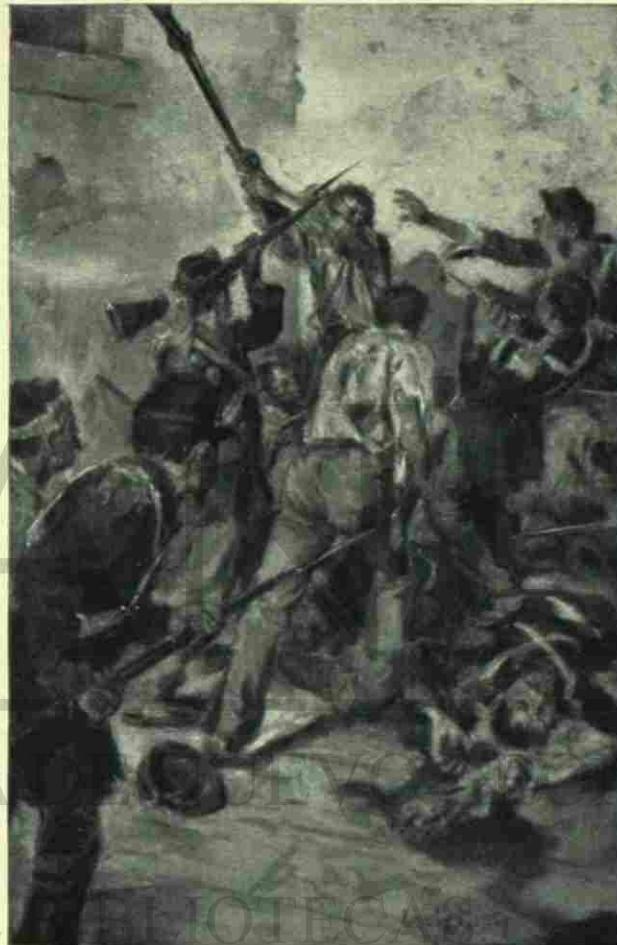
Travis, in other letters, declared his intention of holding the Alamo until he got relief from his countrymen or perished in its defense. There is little doubt that he could have cut his way out and have escaped with his men had he elected to do so. It would have required a thousand men properly to man the exterior line of the Alamo. Travis and his lone hundred and eighty did the best they could for eleven days. Finally the

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

Alamo fell, after a desperate hand-to-hand battle, on Sunday morning, the 6th of March. The defenders died fighting. Bowie, too ill to rise, lay on his bed in the hospital, and emptied his pistols at his assailants before he was killed. Travis was shot early in the storm, which was undertaken by some twenty-five hundred men. Old Crockett was bayoneted after a supreme struggle in front of the Mission Church. Six people who were in the fort at the beginning of the battle were spared by the Spanish, two women, two children and two slaves—but no soldiers.

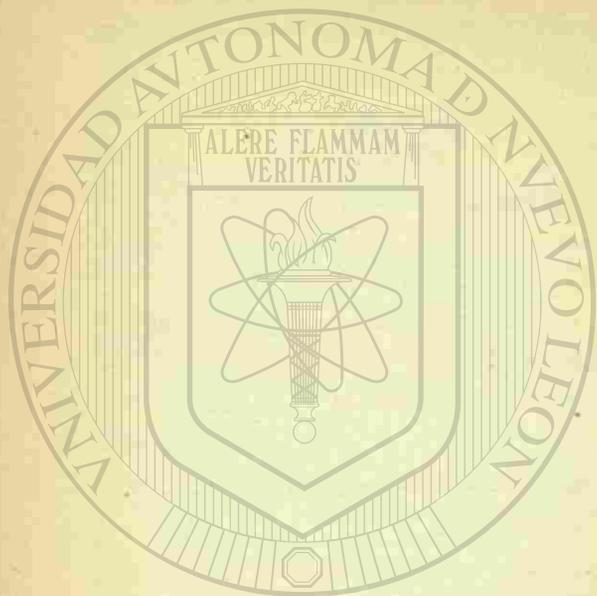
The dead, to the number of about one hundred and eighty-two, were gathered into a huge pyramid, layers of wood and layers of bodies in alternation, and the torch applied. The Spanish casualties are variously estimated from five hundred to one thousand, most of their loss being sustained in the final hand-to-hand fighting.

The defense of the Alamo was the most heroic exploit in American history, and one of



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THE DEATH OF DAVID CROCKETT.



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### THE ALAMO AND GOLIAD

the most heroic exploits in any history. Santa Anna was universally execrated for his ruthless conduct. Dark stories were prevalent that some of the Texans had asked for quarter, had been refused, and had been ruthlessly butchered by his orders. We may hold him guiltless of this graver charge. The Texans, or the Americans, as they should be called, did not ask for quarter. They died arms in hand. The inscription on the monument erected afterward to the defenders of the Alamo, at the state capital at Austin, is entirely true:

“Thermopylæ had its messenger of defeat,  
The Alamo had none.”

Santa Anna and the Mexicans were to appear in even worse light. A body of troopers under General Urrea had been despatched to operate against Fannin at Goliad. Fannin's command had been concentrated for the purpose of invading Mexico. His was that Matamoras expedition which had come to naught. Urrea had been completely success-

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

ful in isolating and overwhelming small detachments, which were invariably put to death. The Mexican Republic had decreed that any foreigners—that is, Americans, of course—captured under arms in Texas and bearing arms against Mexico, should be put to death, and Urrea executed his captives as fast as he took them. His advance was no mere butchering excursion, however, for in each instance he only succeeded after desperate fighting.

After the fall of the Alamo, Houston sent peremptory orders to Fannin to withdraw toward Victoria and join the general force with the commander-in-chief. Fannin had the best of the Texan troops under his command. They were nearly all regularly organized and well equipped bodies from various parts of the United States. It was vitally necessary for the Texans to assemble their forces in the presence of the overwhelming army of Santa Anna. Failing to do this, they would be beaten in detail.

## THE ALAMO AND GOLIAD

Fannin did not obey immediately; in fact, at first he positively refused to do so, and notified Houston to that effect,<sup>1</sup> but on more mature reflection, he concluded that it would be best for his force to comply with the orders—sad commentary on the discipline of the Texan army, all this! He had despatched one or two parties in different directions, very unwisely, and he felt it necessary to wait for their return. So imperative in Houston's mind was the necessity for quick action that he had directed Fannin to bury his cannon and destroy or conceal such stores as would impede his rapid movements.

Fannin was a brave, capable officer, but military discipline was not strongly enforced and he concluded to wait for the return of his scouting parties. Indeed, he had even despatched some others after the receipt of Houston's orders. The parties never joined

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<sup>1</sup> Personal Narrative of General Sam Houston, quoted in *American History Told by Contemporaries*, vol. iii. Edited by Albert Bushnell Hart.

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

him. They were attacked and beaten in severalty by Urrea. Those who were captured were put to death and the others were driven in headlong flight to the eastward, only to be captured later on and ultimately to share the melancholy fate of Fannin's command. They did not retreat in any ease until practically they were completely out of ammunition, and then they fled for their lives.

Fannin wasted several precious days in trying to assemble these detachments, and finally on Saturday, the 19th of March, he dismantled Fort Defiance and started for Victoria. Again he failed to obey Houston's orders, for he took with him a great train of artillery and supply wagons, drawn by oxen, which was absolutely fatal to rapid motion. That same morning, while on the march, he was surrounded on an open prairie by an overwhelming force of Mexicans under Urrea. At the time Fannin was about four miles from the Coleta River, on which he had hoped to camp for the night. Where he then was

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neither water nor wood could be had, nor was there any natural protection. In fact, the army, when caught, happened to be in a depression of land some six feet below the level of the prairie. The Mexicans had hidden in the woodland on the banks of the Coleta and had galloped thence and surrounded them.

A short distance away was a little hillock which offered better defensive possibilities. Fannin unlimbered his cannon, opened fire on the Mexicans and then endeavored to reach this hill, but the breaking down of his ammunition wagons forced him to stay where he was. He drew up his men to the number of three hundred in a hollow square. The oxen and wagons were placed in the middle of the square with the few women and children. There was a four- or six-pounder at each corner. The Georgia battalion carried a flag with a single blue star in its field with these words, "Liberty or Death." There were plenty of rifles and an abundance of ammuni-

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

tion. The cavalry, being some miles in advance, was prevented from joining the main body by the interposing Mexicans.

Between two and three o'clock in the afternoon the formal battle began. The Mexicans, under cover of a rapid and well-sustained fire, tried to break the American square by bayonet charges. The attacks were repulsed with frightful loss to the assailants, whose artillery had not yet come up. The courage of the Mexicans was remarkable. They came on again and again. The attack culminated in a dashing cavalry charge, led by Urrea in person, which was repulsed with great difficulty. The defenders suffered severely in the fighting. Many were killed and wounded in the Americans' yet unbroken square. The men generally lay down until the enemy were close upon them, when they rose and delivered their fire. Fannin and his officers remained standing.

Toward early evening the Mexican sharpshooters crept close to the Americans, and,

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covered by the tall grass, opened fire, inflicting terrible damage. As soon as it grew dark enough for the Texans to mark the position of the sharpshooters by the flashes of their guns, they succeeded in driving them off. Thereafter they were left unmolested during the remainder of the night. Their situation was indeed desperate. It was intensely hot. There was not a drop of water, and there were many wounded. Through some mistake it was found that no food had been brought along. Nevertheless, they kept up a stout heart during the night, and threw up a light line of entrenchments further to protect themselves. They thought they had decisively beaten the Mexicans.

Reinforcements, however, reached Urrea during the night, bringing heavier guns than those of Fannin, which were rendered more or less useless from lack of water with which to sponge them. The Mexican artillery opened fire at daybreak. The Americans replied as well as they could with small arms

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until their ammunition gave out, when there was nothing left for them but to surrender. They did not give up until they had passively endured the Mexican fire for some time and observed them making preparations for storm. Fannin, who had been wounded, even then did not wish to raise the white flag, but he was overborne by his officers. Indeed, there was nothing else to do.

This surrender was made in the most formal manner. A solemn convention was drawn up in writing in triplicate, by which the Americans were given favorable terms, the officers' side-arms and private baggage were to be retained, and the whole body of men was to be sent back to the United States under an agreement that none of them should bear arms against Mexico. The men were to be treated as prisoners of war until the agreement could be carried out. The Americans were well aware of Santa Anna's decrees and the treatment which in other respects they might expect to have meted out to them. They took every

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precaution possible to pledge their antagonists before they capitulated.

The Mexicans brought them back to Goliad. Urrea seems to have been acting in good faith. In spite of his wound, he allowed Fannin to go to Matagorda to seek for a schooner or other vessel to take his men back to New Orleans. None being immediately available, the American captain, after making arrangements for the future, returned to Goliad. Meanwhile, Santa Anna had been apprised of the capture, and despatched an order to the commanding officer at Goliad, one Colonel Portilla—Urrea being absent in the field—peremptorily directing him to enforce the decree of the government—Santa Anna himself was the government!—with regard to foreigners caught in arms against the Mexican government.

Portilla, to his credit, would fain have disobeyed this order, but he had no alternative. He determined, however, to spare the lives of Captain Miller and a body of Americans, cap-

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

tured just as they landed in Texas, who had not participated in the battle of the Coleta. He did this on the representation of Colonel Garay, one of his subordinates, an honorable and gallant soldier, who protested vehemently against compliance with the decree in any event.

With the American troops were eight surgeons, who, after the battle, had been of great assistance to the Mexican wounded, and their services were still valuable. These were marched to Garay's headquarters on the morning of Palm Sunday, March 27, 1836, and with them two other men to whom Garay was personally attached. The wife of one of the officers, Señora Alvarez, secreted several other Americans. Of the other prisoners, those who were not wounded were marched out to the parade, and by the Mexican guards divided into three companies. They were then taken to different fields outside the walls and there ordered to sit down with their backs to the soldiers. Most of them did this in bewil-

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derment, no one having the slightest inkling of the fell purpose of the Mexicans. Volleys were then poured into these helpless men at close range. Those not instantly killed fled for their lives, pursued by the soldiers. Some twenty-seven of them finally made good their escape, most of them more or less severely wounded. The soldiers then went back to the barracks, where the wounded Americans were, and murdered the helpless men in the hospital.

Fannin was the last man to be killed. He handed the officer in charge of the butchers his watch, and, asking that his ruthless executioners spare his face, struggled to his feet, opened his shirt and was instantly shot in the face in spite of his appeal. His body, with those of the others of his command, was thrown into a brush heap and burned. Some three hundred and thirty prisoners, who had trusted to the solemn word of their captors, were thus ruthlessly slaughtered. Those who escaped numbered less than forty. Coming on top of the bloody work at the Alamo, this brutal and

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

ferocious act, for which Santa Anna is directly responsible, awakened such a storm of indignation throughout Texas—and what was possibly more important, throughout the United States as well—that all questions of right, wrong, or expediency were lost in a wild desire for revenge. All this culminated in a stern determination to expel the bloody Dictator from Texas, free it from Mexican rule and establish it as an independent state.

The justice of the Mexican contention in the subsequent differences with the United States became obscured and was disregarded, seen as it was, through the butchery of the Alamo and the massacre at Goliad. Mexico, in the end, paid a bitter price for the cold-blooded and inhuman ferocity of her ruler.

## CHAPTER VII

SAN JACINTO—THE NEW REPUBLIC  
—STEPHEN F. AUSTIN

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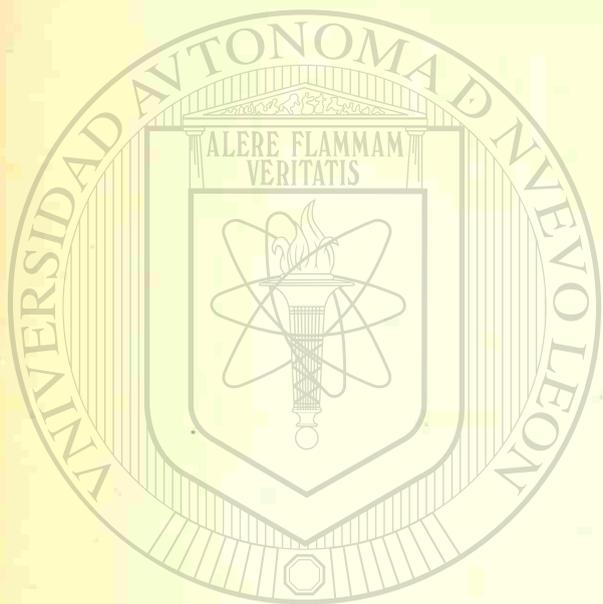
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## CHAPTER VII

SAN JACINTO—THE NEW REPUBLIC—STEPHEN F.  
AUSTIN

SANTA ANNA was now practically supreme in Texas. He believed the revolt had been crushed hopelessly and that he had definitely established his ascendancy. He thereupon determined to send the most of his troops back to Mexico. It was only upon the urgent representations of his generals that he agreed to delay their departure, in order to march further eastward and absolutely scatter and destroy the last vestige of armed resistance.

Houston lay on the Colorado River with the main Texan army, numbering less than a thousand men. Santa Anna marched upon him with some two thousand regular soldiers. The rest of his army was in garrison at various points, engaged in small expeditions against

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and ruthless Mexican invaders. The whole population fled before Houston, therefore, who continually interposed his army between the fugitives and Santa Anna. This exodus was known in local Texas history as "The Runaway Scrape." In spite of every effort Santa Anna could not overtake the retreating Texans and bring them to battle.

Obloquy and contempt were heaped upon Houston for not giving battle. His courage was impugned, his capacity questioned, and everything was done by his enemies to deprive him of the command. To all this he paid no attention. He knew what he was about and resolutely held to his course. When he got ready and he saw a fair opportunity, he would strike. Till then nothing could alter his stubborn determination.

Suddenly Santa Anna quitted the immediate pursuit of Houston, who was then somewhat to the northward of him on the Brazos, and crossing that river with a heavy cavalry detachment turned southward for a dash at Har-

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risburg, where the President and the Cabinet had their temporary headquarters. Houston had been reenforced by a small body of men and two six-pounders called the "Twin Sisters." These had been sent to Texas by the citizens of Cincinnati. The President and his Cabinet escaped from Santa Anna's rapid raid with great difficulty. Waiting till his infantry joined him, the Mexican general despatched one regiment toward Galveston to pursue the flying legislators, and then marched on New Washington.

Houston was now ready to assume the offensive. Several mutinous and recalcitrant companies, which had withdrawn from him during the retreat, perceiving, before it was too late, the wisdom of Houston's course, now rejoined him. His total force was at this time about seven hundred and fifty men. Santa Anna was within the heart of Texas with perhaps fifteen hundred men, far from his base of supplies, and without the possibility of succor or reenforcement, should he need

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either. He was utterly unsuspecting that Houston had at last assumed the offensive. He made the not uncommon mistake of the successful commander of despising his enemies. His detachment of a regiment to pursue the President was a fatal blunder.

Houston reached Harrisburg, which Santa Anna had destroyed, on the 18th of April, 1836. Leaving its baggage wagons, the army crossed Buffalo Bayou in a leaky scow and a timber raft. The cavalry horses were forced to swim the river. At dawn on the twentieth, receiving intelligence that the Mexican army was at hand, Houston marched to the junction of Buffalo Bayou and the San Jacinto River. Santa Anna with twelve hundred men was at New Washington. He immediately marched to attack Houston.

The armies came in contact that same afternoon. There was some skirmishing, but no decisive engagement. The Mexicans went into camp and threw up a flimsy entrenchment. On the morning of the 21st Santa Anna was

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joined by five hundred cavalymen under General Cos. The total force of the Texans was seven hundred and eighty-two. There were only two hundred bayonets in the Texan army. As the Mexicans outnumbered them more than two to one, the Texans expected to be attacked. The day wore away, however, without any movement being made by the Mexicans and Houston decided at last to begin the engagement himself.

At four o'clock in the afternoon he ordered his small cavalry squadron and his two-gun battery to advance, the infantry following with their guns at a trail. The army band, which consisted of a solitary drum and fife, played a popular air, "Will you come to the bower?" The movement was screened from the enemy by two little islands or clumps of trees between the Texans and the Mexicans. Houston, wearing an old black coat, a black velvet vest, a pair of snuff-colored pantaloons, and dilapidated boots, with his pantaloons tucked into them, and carrying an old sword, led the

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advance. Mirabeau Bonaparte Lamar was captain of the cavalry. Thomas J. Rusk, Secretary of War, commanded the left; Burleson, the center; and Sherman, the right. As the Texans passed the islands and came in full view of the Mexican lines, Houston galloped up and down the line on a white horse shouting profanely, "G—d d—n you, hold your fire!"

The place where the ensuing battle was fought was enclosed by marshes. There was only one safe way of retreat from it. That was by a road which led across the bayou, called the Vince's Bridge Road. When the army, now on a run, had come within a few hundred feet of the Mexican lines, Deaf Smith, a celebrated scout, dashed up, shouting that he had cut down Vince's Bridge and that there was no retreat. Like Cortez, Houston had burned his boats behind him. It was to be a case of conquer or die. The men did not think of retreating. Shouting "Remember the Alamo! Remember Goliad! Remember

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La Bahia!" they broke from the timber and rushed upon the Mexican camp.

The surprise was complete. It had never occurred to the Mexicans that the Texans would have the temerity to attack so overwhelming a force. When the Americans burst upon them, Santa Anna was asleep, the cavalry were watering their horses, the cooks were preparing the evening meal, and the soldiers had laid aside their arms and were playing games. The Mexicans ran to their arms, but were driven from their breastworks by a well-aimed volley at close range. They actually had no time to discharge their guns. The "Twin Sisters" did valiant service. In a few minutes the whole Mexican line was in hopeless retreat. Lamar, by a gallant dash with his eighty horses, drove the five hundred cavalymen, struggling with their horses, in great confusion. Some of the Mexican officers bravely strove to rally and form their men, and put up a stout resistance, notably General Castrillon and Colonel Almonte, but in vain.

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

The battle was over in fifteen minutes. The Mexicans scattered in every direction; some, hotly pursued by the Americans, ran toward the bayou; others fled into the marshes back of their camp, only to be shot as they stood enmired. Colonel Almonte rallied five hundred men under the trees, but they were panic-stricken and he could do nothing with them. They were surrendered in a body. Six hundred and thirty men, including thirty-three officers, were killed on the field. Two hundred and eight, of whom eighteen were officers, were seriously wounded. Seven hundred and thirty were made prisoners. There were a few who escaped and many who were not accounted for who perished in the marshes and rivers. The total Mexican loss was about seventeen hundred. There were eight Texans killed and twenty-three wounded. Santa Anna himself was captured the day after the battle. With him in Houston's possession, the war was over.

The battle of San Jacinto was a small engagement, but one of great importance, for it

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assured the independence of Texas.<sup>1</sup> Nothing could have exceeded the dash and courage of the Texan force. Houston's maneuvering, his strategy before the battle, his tactics during it, were worthy of the highest praise.

Flushed with its astonishing victory, the army was inclined to exact bloody revenge for the Mexican treatment of Travis and Fannin and their men. It was with difficulty that Houston preserved Santa Anna from the fury of the soldiers, who recalled the massacres and murders of which he had been guilty. Santa Anna was fearful for his life, naturally, and the more willing to recognize the Texan Republic, or to do anything which would ensure his own safety, on that account. Houston carefully guarded the person of the Mexican Dictator, realizing the decisive importance of his capture in determining the future of Texas.

On May 14th, at Velasco, Santa Anna signed two treaties, a public and a private one, in

<sup>1</sup>"I was thirty years too soon!" exclaimed the ineffable Aaron Burr when he heard the news.

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

which he agreed to the independence of Texas, and the withdrawal of all the Mexican troops in the territory.

The treaties were ratified by General Filisola, upon whom the command of the Mexican troops devolved after Santa Anna's capture, and Texas was immediately evacuated. The Texans released Santa Anna. So soon as he reached Mexico, he disavowed the treaties, claiming that they were extorted from him under duress. As to that, it is certain that his desire for freedom and his fear for his personal safety, induced him to sign the treaties. Paying no attention to this attitude of the Mexican government, the Texans at once assumed a place among the nations of the world. This place they maintained for ten years.

An election for President was held in September, 1836, and Sam Houston was chosen by an overwhelming majority over his competitors, Austin and Smith. Really, no man had done so much for Texas as Stephen F. Austin, but the glamour of Houston's decisive

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military success at San Jacinto was sufficient to give him the election by over five thousand votes, Austin and Smith receiving less than one thousand in the aggregate. Houston, wisely desirous of uniting all parties, made Austin Secretary of State, and Smith Secretary of the Treasury.

Not counting Smith, who had been President of the Constitutional Convention, and Burnet, who had been President pro tem. until the regular election could be held, Houston was the first President of the Texan Republic. An article in the Constitution of Texas precluding a President from succeeding himself, except after an interval of a presidential term, subsequently caused the election of Lamar, who had distinguished himself while in command of the cavalry at San Jacinto, as the second President. At the expiration of Lamar's term, Houston was reelected as the third President. Thereafter Anson Jones was elected as the fourth and last President.

The scope of this monograph does not allow

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me to dwell further upon the internal history of Texas. Suffice it to say, in the words of her most recent historian: "Texas can scarcely be said to have had an enviable experience in its essay at independent self-government. During the ten years through which the effort lasted, the young republic, with small available resources and smaller credit, lived a hand-to-mouth existence and was constantly threatened with bankruptcy."<sup>1</sup>

The United States officially recognized the republic on the 1st of March, 1837. France followed in 1839, Holland and Belgium in 1840 and England in 1843. Mexico never fairly recognized the independence of Texas. She kicked spasmodically against the pricks of independence, in fact. Desultory military operations were indulged in on both sides. The advantage from one point of view was on the side of the Mexicans, who captured several Texan expeditions, one against Mexico proper, another against Santa Fé. Mexico also

<sup>1</sup> American Commonwealths—Texas. George P. Garrison.

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seized San Antonio and Goliad on one occasion, although both places were promptly evacuated on the approach of a Texan force. From another point of view, the honors were with the Texans, for the Mexicans gained no permanent advantage in their designs to subdue the revolting territory. So far as Mexico was concerned, Texas was a fact accomplished, although Mexico steadfastly refused to admit it. Mexico could neither subdue Texas, nor would she acknowledge her independence—an impossible position, and one which was bound to make trouble.

Before continuing to record the general course of events, at this point it seems fitting to devote some space to Stephen F. Austin. His character and the services he rendered his country have been indicated during the course of this history. Dating from his Mexican confinement, his health had been very indifferent. On this account at first he refused to accept the office of Secretary of State, but was finally prevailed upon to do so by the urgency

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of his friends. His weakened condition proved unequal to the strain of his duties and on the 27th of December, 1836, in the forty-fourth year of his age, he died of pneumonia. He literally gave his life for his country. Well did the government in announcing his death, style him, "The Father of Texas."

Most of the civic rewards at the disposal of a republic, I observe, go to the successful soldier rather than to the civilian, however eminent the civilian may be, and the name which is most popularly associated with Texan history is that of Sam Houston; but it is no disparagement to that doughty old fighter to place beside it, and it may be above it, the name of Stephen Fuller Austin; a pure and unselfish patriot, a devoted and disinterested public servant, a prudent and far-seeing statesman, a cultivated, high-minded gentleman, and a kindly and generous philanthropist. The integrity of his character, no less than the honesty of his motives, and the quality of his services, will forever appeal to the Texan youth.

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The following memorabilia collected by Guy M. Bryan in *A Comprehensive History of Texas*, are both pertinent and interesting:

"In Yoakum's account of Austin's funeral, he says, 'the nation has erected no monument to the memory of Austin, but this he did himself while he lived, in laying the foundation to a great State, and building it upon principles of moderation and freedom; Austin lived to see his work completed, his country free, prosperous, and happy.' Austin gave up his life, as he had given his best years, to Texas. Austin paid his own expenses (which were large) while in Mexico in 1833-34-35, and a bill for them was never presented to the government for payment, and remains unpaid. He pledged all his property to raise the first loan for Texas in New Orleans in 1836. . . . He had two faithful servants, an old negro woman named Mary, who attended to his rooms, and a body-servant, a negro named Simon. He was neat in his person and clothing, avoiding everything like pretension, or that would attract attention to his dress.

"In the earlier years of the colony he wore a suit of buckskin, made and presented to him by his friends, Mrs. Calvert and Mrs. Long. It was dyed

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dark brown and thoroughly dressed, so that it was as pliant as woolen or cotton cloth. When in the City of Mexico he gave more attention to his personal appearance, for the higher classes of Mexicans were fond of dress and gave great attention to their personal apparel. He was of simple but polished manners, derived from his early education and associations in the best society of Lexington and St. Louis, of which he was a prominent member among the young. He was a graceful dancer, participating in the amusements of the occasion at the parties and balls of the 'old settlers,' making himself agreeable to the young and the old by his genial, unassuming, and pleasing manners. The 'old settlers' delighted to recount to the writer these and other scenes and the part Austin took in them; those were happy days to all of them, and were some compensation to Austin in his anxieties and troubles in founding civilization and an empire in the wilderness. His relatives never heard him utter an oath; in all his private and public papers nowhere has the writer found such, but always elevating thought and language. He had a few good books, some of which he studied for his guidance. The works of Anacharsis, which delineated the laws, governments, and greatest characters of Greece, formed one of them. He gave this book to

## STEPHEN F. AUSTIN

the writer, and told him that it had been of service to him.

"He was a philanthropist, statesman, thoughtful student, and devoted patriot, free from all pretension, thoroughly honest, and truthful in all his ways. He loved Texas better than himself; she was his mistress; he never married.

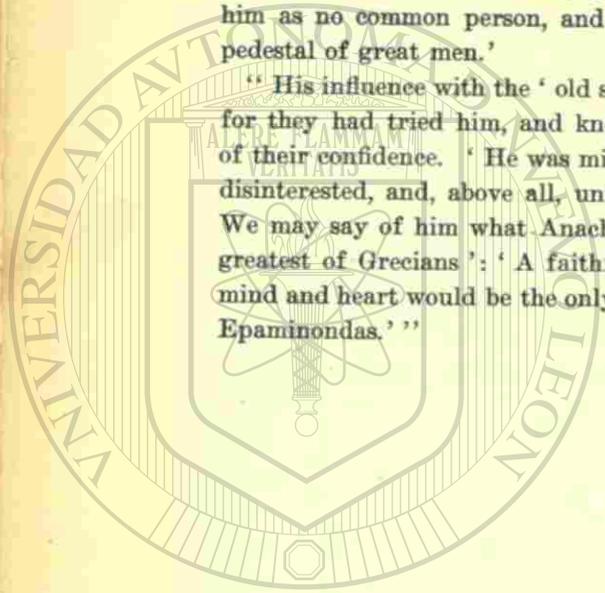
"Williams, in his 'Life of Harrison,' says of him: 'Austin was a man of the highest character, of judicial moderation and prudence, as well as energy and perseverance. He appreciated the conditions on which a permanent and prosperous colony could be founded, and carried them out with rare tact and sagacity. He encouraged industry, and governed the lawless elements of the population by his weight of character and personal influence. To him more than any other is due the creation of an American State in Texas. He was forced into political prominence by the demands of the times rather than any desire of his own, and was as modest and self-sacrificing as he was sagacious and practical.'

"Baneroff, in his 'History of Texas,' says of him: 'Austin made self-assertion subordinate to the public weal. His sense of equity and his constancy, his perseverance and fortitude, his intelligence, prudence, and sagacity, and, lastly, his en-

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duration under persecution, benevolent forgiveness of injuries, and far-reaching philanthropy, mark him as no common person, and place him on the pedestal of great men.'

"His influence with the 'old settlers' was great, for they had tried him, and knew he was worthy of their confidence. 'He was mild, modest, simple, disinterested, and, above all, unimpeachably just.' We may say of him what Anacharsis said of 'the greatest of Grecians': 'A faithful portrait of his mind and heart would be the only eulogy worthy of Epaminondas.'"



PART II  
THE MEXICAN WAR AND ITS  
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CHAPTER VIII  
CAUSES OF THE MEXICAN WAR

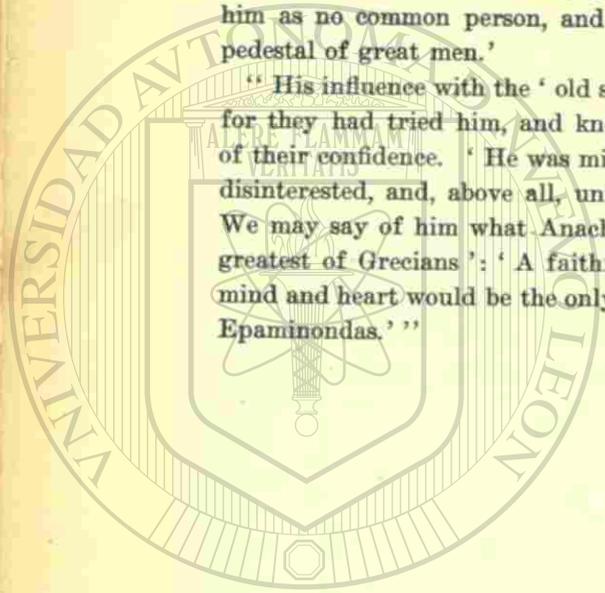
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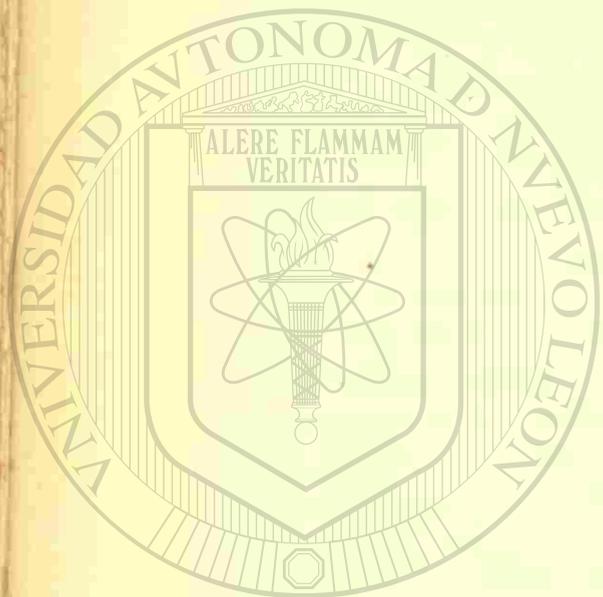


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## CHAPTER VIII

### CAUSES OF THE MEXICAN WAR

THE Mexican War resulted in the seizure by the United States of all the Mexican territory north of the Rio Grande and the Gila, together with a small strip below the Gila between the Rio Grande and the Colorado, which was acquired by the Gadsden Purchase in 1853. The cause of the Mexican War, as I have stated in the introductory chapter, was primarily a determination by the slave-holding states to acquire territory out of which future slave-holding states could be constituted. Secondly, it arose from the natural desire to push the western boundary of the United States across the continent to the Pacific in pursuance of the manifest destiny idea.

After the annexation of Texas had brought the territory between the Sabine and Nueces—

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or the Rio Grande—within our boundaries, the government turned a covetous eye toward New Mexico and California. We had possession of Texas, with what justification there was, but there appeared to be no convenient or easy way of securing California. Several attempts had been made to purchase it but all had failed. Peaceful means having been exhausted, there remained nothing but the “stand and deliver” method of the highwayman.

Dr. Henry William Elson, the most recent of our historians, says, referring to the incoming administration of President Polk: “‘There are four great measures,’ said the new President, with great decision, ‘which are to be the measures of my administration’; and these were a reduction of the tariff, the re-establishment of the independent treasury, the settlement of the Oregon boundary, and the acquisition of California.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> History of the United States of America. The best single volume history of the United States I know of. In this connection the following letter from Dr. Elson is interesting.

## CAUSES OF THE MEXICAN WAR

This is interesting testimony to the intent of the government with regard to the territory in question. The United States was to acquire the territory bordering on the Pacific, if not by one means then by another, whatever the claims of Mexico might be, or however much she might object to surrendering it to us.

Our position, it was thought, would appear better if by any means Mexico could be forced to take the offensive and begin the fighting. A blow struck gives an excuse for a return, and

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2123 NATRONA STREET, PHILADELPHIA,  
September 16, 1904.

MY DEAR DR. BRADY.—You may remember having written me in July, requesting that I give authority for the statement in my history, page 524, that President Polk designated the acquisition of California as one of the measures of his administration.

I was then about to start on a two-months' western tour and had not a moment to spare to look the matter up—but have done so since.

See Schouler's History, vol. iv, p. 498, and foot-note. It seems that Mr. Bancroft gave the information to Mr. Schouler long after the occurrence. In view of the facts I should have cited Schouler's page when I wrote mine, but had not his volume at hand and had forgotten my source of information.

Very sincerely yours,

HENRY W. ELSON.

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such an action on the part of the enemy would unify and direct popular opinion—never so blind and unreasoning a guide as when war is imminent and threatened.

Opportunities for the commencement of hostilities by Mexico were easily developed by the United States. First, there was the annexation of Texas itself; second, the difference of opinion between Texas and Mexico with regard to the western boundary line of the Texan territory; third, a certain body of claims, made by citizens of the United States against the Mexican government, for which heavy pecuniary damages were demanded. In two of these subsidiary matters the United States was clearly in the wrong. I do not think that for the other, the annexation of Texas, the United States was censurable. That, at least, was not a proper cause for war on the part of Mexico; nevertheless, it was certain that Mexico would so regard it.

I shall discuss the question of annexation first. The people of Texas, at the time Hous-

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ton was elected President, had declared with practical unanimity their desire for annexation to the United States, only ninety-one votes being recorded against the proposition. It was well understood by the United States that there would be no objection on the part of Texas to annexation at any time. On the contrary, it was what the people of Texas were solicitous for from the very beginning—and the sooner the better.

Naturally this was so, for practically all the people of Texas had come from the United States. The struggle for the balance of power between freedom and slavery, which was not terminated until the close of the Civil War, made the Southern people, who were not only allied by ties of blood to the Texans, but were attracted to them by an identity of policies as well, anxious to incorporate Texas in the Union. They had viewed with great alarm the action of the Mexican government in abolishing slavery. Had that action prevailed in Texas, the slave states would have been cut

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off from the possibility of any further increase in their number in every direction.

The territorial extent of Texas was so great that it was suggested that at least four slaveholding states could be created out of its territory. It had been the national policy—forced by the South—for many years to admit states in pairs, a Northern and a Southern, a slave and a free state, coming in together. In the House of Representatives, owing to the growing difference in population, Northern, or free states, were certain to get the predominance. In the Senate, however, where each state had two votes independent of population, the balance of power could be, and was, preserved by such methods.

Putting aside the question of slavery, I think it was inevitable that Texas should become part of the Union, and that the United States should desire to incorporate it within its limits. There would be no rhyme or reason in the maintenance of an independent state on the Gulf of Mexico, with no natural,

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racial, or geographical barriers between it and the United States. That any other country should—if any were so disposed—assume by conquest or treaty to administer Texas, was clearly impossible. In any contingency, the annexation of Texas to the United States was unavoidable. Nor did the desire of Texas fail of response in the United States. For instance, General Andrew Jackson wrote privately to William B. Lewis, on September 18, 1843, as follows:

“I then determined to use my influence, after the battle of San Jacinto, to have the independence of Texas acknowledged, and to receive her into the Union. But that arch enemy, J. Q. Adams, rallied all his forces to prevent the annexation to the United States. We must regain Texas; *peaceably if we can; forcibly if we must!* . . . I repeat that the safety as well as the perpetuation of our glorious Union depends upon the retrocession of the whole of that country, as far as the *ancient limits* of Louisiana, to the United States.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> American Statesmen, xvii: Andrew Jackson, by William G. Sumner.

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It will be observed from this quotation that the attempt was made to establish a claim to Texas on the ground that it was included in the limits of the Louisiana Purchase, and the annexation was often called a reannexation by the advocates of it. I think there was nothing in the claim; besides, if there had been, we were estopped from urging it by the treaty of 1828 with Mexico, in which we had recognized the boundaries as those of the treaty of 1819 with Spain.

Abel P. Upshur, Tyler's Secretary of State, wrote to our representative in Texas in November, 1843: "We regard annexation as involving the security of the South."<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, there were equally strong objections to annexation on account of the slavery question. No less than eight free states formally petitioned against it when it was first mooted. The contrary opinion to those cited above was thus expressed by Daniel Webster:

<sup>1</sup> American Statesmen, xxx: Charles Sumner, by Moorfield Storey.

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"While we feel as we ought about the annexation of Texas, we ought to keep in view the true grounds of objection to that measure. Those grounds are—want of constitutional power, danger of too great an extent of territory, and opposition to the increase of slavery and slave representation. It was properly considered, also, as a measure tending to produce war."<sup>1</sup>

The spirit in the country at large against annexation was too strong at first to render it advisable for the Southerners to bring up the question formally, but they lost no opportunity to urge it upon the country and to create a sentiment in favor of it.<sup>2</sup> The Democratic party generally favored annexation, while the new and promising Whig party, which had been growing in power at a rapid rate, opposed it. The opposition, however, had an element of weakness in that it was not so much an oppo-

<sup>1</sup> American Statesmen, xxi: Daniel Webster, by Henry Cabot Lodge.

<sup>2</sup> For an illuminating account, in brief compass, of the discussion of this question see History of the People of the United States, by John Bach McMaster, vol. x, chap. liii.

### CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

sition to the acquirement of territory, or to the intrinsic fact of annexation, as it was an opposition to slavery as a concomitant of annexation. Aside from that, the advantages of annexation were many, the disadvantages few.

If Mexico had been in a position to coerce the Republic of Texas, and had in fact put it down, the conditions would have been different. The case then would have been exactly that of those states which seceded in 1861, and which were coerced into remaining in the Union by those other states which denied the right of individual secession. Any attempt on the part of England, let us say, to annex South Carolina, at that time, or, to make the parallel more apparent, an attempt of Mexico adjoining Texas to annex Texas in 1861, whether with or without the consent of the Texans, would have been considered preposterous and would have resulted in war if persisted in. But the relations of Texas and Mexico after the battle of San Jacinto were not comparable to those between Texas or

### CAUSES OF THE MEXICAN WAR

South Carolina or any other seceding state, and the United States in 1861-65. Texas declared, and then for ten years—the latter part of it being practically undisturbed—maintained, her independence of Mexico. South Carolina declared her independence, and tried hard enough, goodness knows, but she could not maintain it.

After the battle of San Jacinto, it became evident to everybody, except the Mexicans themselves, who simply would not see, that Mexico could not reconquer Texas. Texas became as free and independent a nation as any on the globe. It was equally evident that, so far as Mexico was concerned, Texas would remain free and independent. The great powers of the world had recognized her. Her relation to Mexico was exactly that of Mexico to Spain, which had long refused to recognize the independence of Mexico, although it was an accomplished fact. The logic of events was absolutely against the survival of the Mexican claim of eminent domain over Texas. The

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

fact of annexation, therefore, can not be considered a legitimate cause of war on the part of Mexico.

However, before annexation was finally brought about, the United States by a series of notorious breaches of international comity and a number of flagrant violations of international law, aggrieved Mexico almost to the breaking point.

For instance, General Edmund P. Gaines, commanding the United States forces at Natchitoches, whom we have seen on the Sabine River, sent troops to seize Nacogdoches, on the 4th of August, 1836. He was ordered to do this by the government at Washington, under the pretense of preventing Indian depredations. Nacogdoches was within the Texan limits, and, although Texas had declared her independence, inasmuch as we had not recognized it Nacogdoches was, so far as we were concerned, on Mexican territory. The United States justified this arbitrary procedure by saying that Mexico was unable to preserve

## CAUSES OF THE MEXICAN WAR

order within her own territory and restrain the Indians, and that common humanity constrained it to seize Nacogdoches! All of this gave no little aid and comfort to the Texans.

The Mexican Minister at Washington protested vigorously against this armed invasion and demanded the instant withdrawal of the troops and an apology. His demands were refused. He thereupon asked for his passports and left the country. Again, in September, 1843, Commodore Thomas Ap Catesby Jones, commanding the Pacific squadron of three ships, then lying at Callao, Peru, read a quotation from a New Orleans journal in a Boston paper which had been sent him, to the effect that Mexico had ceded California to Great Britain, and that England, which also had a squadron in the Pacific, was about to seize Upper and Lower California. Jones called a council of war of his ship captains and decided to anticipate the action of Great Britain. He sailed with all speed to Monterey, California, landed on the 19th of October, and without op-

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position took possession of the town and territory in the name of the United States. The day after this brilliant feat of arms, finding he had been mistaken, he hauled down his flag, apologized and departed. The act was disavowed by the government and Commodore Jones recalled, but no censure whatever was visited upon him. Public opinion generally commended him for his promptness and decision.

Upshur, at that time Tyler's Secretary of the Navy, in his report to Congress, under date of December 4, 1841, had said:

"In Upper California there were already considerable settlements of Americans, and others are daily resorting to that fertile and delightful country. Such, however, is the unsettled condition of that whole country, that they can not be safe either in their persons or property, except under the protection of our naval power."

He also declared that,

"It is highly desirable that the Gulf of California should be fully explored, and that this duty

## CAUSES OF THE MEXICAN WAR

alone will give employment a long time to one or two vessels of the smaller class."

The Mexicans, therefore, were not feeling very kindly toward the United States while the question of annexation was being discussed. No specific attempt was made to annex Texas until Tyler became President. Martin Van Buren, who had succeeded Andrew Jackson, realizing that the power of the Whigs was so great that any attempt at annexation would probably fail, and further, that it would greatly impair the chances of his reelection, already seriously endangered by the panic of 1837 and the disturbed financial conditions for which he was most unjustly held responsible, refused to take any steps to bring it about. He failed of reelection, however, and William Henry Harrison, the first Whig President, who succeeded him, died a short time after his inauguration. He was succeeded on the 4th of April, 1841, by the Vice-President, John Tyler, of Virginia.

Tyler was at heart a Democrat, although he had been elected by the Whigs and had

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engaged himself to uphold the principles of that party. He was probably the most unpopular President in our history. He betrayed the party that elected him and refused to carry out the policy to which it was pledged—sole instance of such action among our Presidents. The Whigs read him out of the party and stigmatized him a political Benedict Arnold. The Democrats received him after the Whigs were through with him with just about as much joy and affection as the English had manifested toward Arnold half a century before. He was a President without influence and without party.

John Fiske points out that no platform, or official declaration of principles, was adopted by the Whig Nominating Convention; that their informal platform was "Anything to beat Van Buren"; but the measures advocated by the Whig party were nevertheless thoroughly well understood by Tyler and everybody else. It was these measures, notably those concerning finance, which Tyler prevent-

### CAUSES OF THE MEXICAN WAR

ed from being enacted and which caused his unpopularity. Fiske finds a great deal in Tyler's actions to commend, and in estimating his character and services seems to have chosen the middle course between those who condemn him absolutely and—but there are none who entirely support him. Witness the following:

"As for Tyler, while we can not call him a great man, while for breadth of view and sound grasp of fundamental principles he is immeasurably below Van Buren, at the same time he is not so trivial a personage as his detractors would have us to believe. He was honest and courageous, and in the defeat of Mr. Clay's theory of government he played an important and useful part. If he is small as compared with Jackson and Van Buren, he is great as compared with Pierce and Buchanan."<sup>1</sup>

On the whole, I agree with Fiske, and it is with especial pleasure in this instance that my heart goes out to the under dog.

<sup>1</sup> *Essays Historical and Literary*, vol. i. Chapter viii: Harrison-Tyler and the Whig Coalition, by John Fiske. See also *Letters and Times of the Tylers*, edited by Lyon Gardner Tyler.

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

One of Tyler's pet projects was the annexation of Texas. Being a Southern slaveholder and fully committed to the Southern policy, this was natural. His Secretary of State,<sup>1</sup> as has been noted, was also heart and soul for this cause. The untimely death of Upshur, by the explosion of a huge gun, "The Peacemaker," on the United States ship Princeton, on February 28, 1844, prevented him from negotiating the treaty. Through the influence of Henry A. Wise, of Virginia, John C. Calhoun, of South Carolina, the original Southern secessionist, (John Quincy Adams was the original Northern secessionist!), was persuaded to become Tyler's Secretary of State, solely and wholly for the purpose of effecting the annexation of Texas, upon which, as the best means of promoting the extension of slavery and preserving that zealously defended balance of power, his heart was set. One conviction of which Calhoun affected to be possessed, and of the truth

<sup>1</sup> Upshur was Secretary of the Navy, 1841-43, and thereafter Secretary of State until his death in 1844.

## CAUSES OF THE MEXICAN WAR

of which he strove to persuade his countrymen, was a fear that England would absorb Texas. I do not believe there was the slightest possibility of this, but it furnished a powerful argument for annexation. The influence of England was, indeed, constantly exerted to secure the abolition of slavery in Texas. An anti-slavery party there was, already strong and growing stronger, but that England had any designs on Texas is no longer maintained. Von Holst says:

"Leading Texans—*e. g.*, ex-President Mirabeau B. Lamar—had frequently declared that the anti-slavery party would soon acquire the ascendancy, and that the abolition of slavery could be effected 'without the slightest inconvenience.' The most zealous advocates of annexation in Congress had emphatically indorsed this opinion, and Upshur himself had written to Mr. Murray, 'If Texas should not be attached to the United States, she can not maintain that institution (slavery) ten years and probably not half that time. Calhoun held the same opinion. He informed Mr. Pakenham [the British Minister—C. T. B.] that the President had the settled conviction that it would be

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

difficult for Texas, in her actual condition, to resist what she (Great Britain) desires, without supposing the influence and exertions of Great Britain would be extended beyond the limits assigned by Lord Aberdeen'; and he added, 'and this, if Texas could not resist the consummation of the object of her desire, would endanger both the safety and prosperity of the Union.'

'An independent Texas without slavery and the permanent continuance of slavery in the Union were, however, irreconcilable.'<sup>1</sup>

On April 12, 1844, Calhoun negotiated a treaty between Texas and the United States, but, to the great mortification of Tyler himself, and in spite of all the pressure the administration could bring to bear upon the Senate, it failed of ratification in the Senate by a vote of 35 to 16. To such an extent had Tyler discredited himself with the people generally that many Senators who were really in favor of annexation voted against it because it was his measure.

<sup>1</sup> American Statesmen, xxii: Calhoun, by Dr. H. Von Holst.

## CHAPTER IX

### CAUSES OF THE MEXICAN WAR, CONTINUED—CONTRASTING OPINIONS

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

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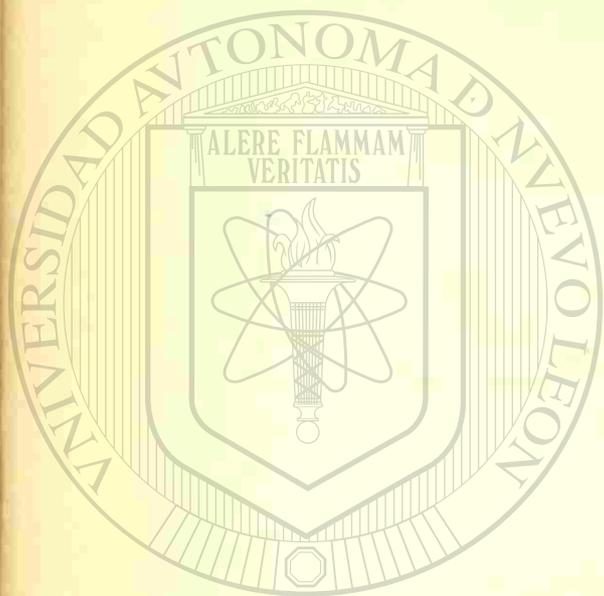
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## CHAPTER IX

### CAUSES OF THE MEXICAN WAR, CONTINUED—CONTRASTING OPINIONS



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## CHAPTER IX

### CAUSES OF THE MEXICAN WAR, CONTINUED— CONTRASTING OPINIONS

MEANWHILE, Mexico had abated some of her contentions. In 1845 the revolution deprived Santa Anna of his dictatorial powers and sent him into exile. President Herrera, who replaced him, consented to recognize the independence of Texas and terminate the alleged war, provided Texas would pledge itself against annexation to the United States. To this proposition Texas had given no answer. The Presidential campaign of 1844 in the United States between the Whigs and Democrats, in which annexation was the crucial question, was decided by the election of James K. Polk, of Tennessee, candidate of the Democratic party, who was strongly in favor of annexation, over Henry Clay, of Kentucky, the

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Whig candidate, who had opposed it or who ultimately favored it so guardedly as to render both the advocates and opponents of annexation uneasy and undetermined, thus losing himself the Presidency. This result of the election, which would bring Polk into office on the 4th of March, 1845, demonstrated conclusively the opinions of the majority of the people in favor of annexation. Such being the case, the friends of annexation realized that the sooner it was accomplished the better. They, therefore, took steps to make their dream an actual fact without waiting for the inauguration of Polk.

This was brought about in a peculiar way. It was felt that the required majority of two-thirds for the ratification of another treaty could not even yet be counted upon in the conservative Senate which responds so slowly to popular demands. The annexationists devised an ingenious plan for securing annexation by a joint, or concurrent, resolution of the two houses of Congress, which would only re-

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quire a bare majority in the Senate. There was no precedent for this method and many of the greatest authorities on constitutional law believed it—and still believe it—to have been unconstitutional.<sup>1</sup>

The Senate was willing to surrender its undoubted prerogative in the ratification of treaties, salving its conscience by inserting a clause which gave the President the option of bringing the matter about by treaty if he could, and the joint resolution was passed on the 28th of February, 1845. It was signed by President Tyler on the 1st of March. One of the provisions of this resolution was as follows:

“ Such States as may be formed out of that portion of said territory lying south of 36° 30' north latitude, commonly known as the Missouri Compromise line, shall be admitted into the Union with or without slavery, as the people of each State asking admission may desire; and in such State or States

<sup>1</sup> The question came up again over Hawaii, which was incorporated into the United States by exactly the same method in 1898. These two cases have practically settled the question of constitutionality, I think.

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as shall be formed out of said territory north of the Missouri Compromise line slavery or involuntary servitude (except for crime) shall be prohibited."<sup>1</sup>

This resolution was transmitted to President Anson Jones, of Texas, who called a convention to meet on July 4, 1845. The Texan Congress having meanwhile agreed to the resolution, the convention ratified the action of Congress. The action of Texas was laid before the United States Congress by President Polk on the first Monday in December, 1845, being the first session of Congress after Texas accepted the proposition. A joint resolution for the admission of Texas as a state of the Union, having passed both houses, was approved by the President on the 29th of December, 1845.

There were important differences between the terms of the Calhoun treaty, which had failed, and the joint resolution of annexation,

<sup>1</sup> Messages and Papers of the Presidents, vol. iv, compiled by James D. Richardson.

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which had passed. In the treaty Texas was to be admitted as a territory and the ownership of her immense body of public lands was to be vested in the United States. A mandatory provision was inserted for the creation of four states out of the territory. By the joint resolution, Texas was admitted as a state, she retained her public lands, and her division into four states was made permissive, but dependent upon her own pleasure, and hence was not mandatory.

Mexico had previously stated that the annexation of Texas by the United States would be regarded as tantamount to a declaration of war. Her minister demanded his passports so soon as the resolution was passed, and returned to his country. The minister of the United States naturally followed suit. All diplomatic intercourse was thus intermitted.

While the relations between Mexico and the United States were in this state of tension, pending the commencement of actual hostilities, matters were further complicated by the

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action of President Polk. There was still a faint hope that difficulties between the two nations might be compromised—hope on the part of Mexico, I assume—and, in answer to an inquiry from Polk, the Mexicans expressed their willingness to receive, during the interregnum, a commissioner from the United States, who might be empowered to discuss the questions at issue with view to an amicable adjustment. President Polk transcended the permission given him and appointed Mr. Alexander Slidell Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary to Mexico.

The Mexican government at that time, in addition to the disturbed foreign affairs, was confronting serious internal disorders. On the arrival of Slidell, the government was struggling for existence, and courteously asked him to refrain, for a short time, from presenting his credentials as commissioner. There was a strong party in Mexico in favor of immediate war with the United States; and the party in power, which was desirous of settling

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the differences peaceably, if possible, did not wish to be subjected to the criticism which would ensue upon an immediate recognition of Mr. Slidell. The weight of Mexican public opinion was against further intercourse with the United States.

Slidell, who was as tactful in politics as most of our ministers to Mexico had been, insisted upon presenting his credentials and demanded recognition immediately, not as commissioner, but as minister. The Mexicans, who had expressed no willingness to have a minister sent to them, being pushed to the wall, finally refused to receive or recognize Slidell in any capacity. He thereupon left the country in high dudgeon, adding another grievance to those carefully cherished and assiduously nursed by the administration; namely, that our duly accredited minister had been refused recognition by the Mexican administration, which had previously agreed to receive him—which was, of course, not true at all. Meantime, General Parades, the head

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of the War Party, was elected President of Mexico.

Now as to our claims against Mexico. Powhatan Ellis, the American minister to Mexico, had been instructed on the 20th of July, 1836, to present fifteen specified claims of American citizens against the Mexican government, with a request for a reply thereto in three weeks. Ellis' instructions directed him, if a satisfactory reply were not given at the end of that time, to give the Mexicans two weeks longer and then ask for his passports. Two claims had been settled before Ellis could carry out his orders. On the 26th of September the thirteen claims remaining were presented, accompanied by a remarkable statement that the United States, at that time, was not in position to prove some of these claims. The Mexican government promised to investigate the claims, pointed out the trivial nature of some of them, and at the same time referred the United States to that section of the treaty of 1831 which provided for the settlement of

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similar grievances through the courts of the respective signatories.

This was not satisfactory to Ellis who, on the 20th of October, demanded an immediate reply under threat of withdrawal. Negotiations were continued, however, the Mexicans showing every disposition to deal fairly. On the 4th of November, Ellis delivered another ultimatum of "two weeks or passports." Meanwhile, five additional claims had been added to the thirteen. On the 7th of December he demanded and received his passports. The Mexican government thereupon proposed that the claims, which were increasing at an alarming rate should be submitted to arbitration.

The United States reluctantly agreed to this. The report of the arbitrators was delivered in February, 1842. The Prussian minister had the final decision in the case of a disagreement between the Mexican and the American members of the court. The total amount of claims presented—and they had

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been growing all the time—was \$11,850,578. Of these \$5,568,975 were rejected; \$3,336,837 had been submitted too late to be examined, and \$928,627 were left undecided by the umpire for want of time.<sup>1</sup> Out of this total of \$11,850,578, only \$2,026,336 were allowed—a little more than one-sixth of the amount.

While we are on the subject of claims, it may be added that, by the treaty closing the Mexican War, the United States agreed to settle these adjudicated claims, the greater portion of which had not been paid by Mexico, and further, to pay all additional claims against Mexico to an amount not exceeding \$3,250,000. To settle these additional claims, commissioners were appointed. They reported that the whole number of claims presented was two hundred and ninety-two. Forty of them were thrown out immediately as baseless. Seventy-two were rejected for want of evidence and one hundred and eighty were sustained. The sum total of \$3,208,374.96, which included

<sup>1</sup>Review of the Mexican War. William Jay.

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a large amount of interest, was awarded and paid by the United States.<sup>1</sup> Thus the United States by its own commissioners, out of upward of fifteen million dollars of unsettled claims—for they continued to grow like Jonah's gourd—found only three million dollars valid. Nor had these claims been of such a nature that they could not have been settled amicably without resorting to war.

The Mexicans, accepting the result of the arbitration award in 1842, at first faithfully endeavored to carry out their part of the agreement. Three quarterly instalments of the principal were paid and the interest as well, until the growing animosity between the two countries caused Mexico to defer further payment—nor can I seriously blame them for that action. The United States, however, worked these claims desperately in an effort to force a war upon Mexico. Upon the way we pressed them, the following throws an interesting light:

<sup>1</sup>Moore's History and Digest of International Arbitrations, vol. ii, pp. 123, 124, 125.

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“ Claims were presented to the Mexican government, and satisfaction demanded in language so insulting that, as John Quincy Adams said, ‘ No true-hearted citizen of this Union ’ could witness the proceeding ‘ without blushing for his country.’ In his annual message of December, 1836, Jackson saved appearances by adopting a comparatively temperate tone. But the number of American claims against Mexico, some of which were gotten up with the most scandalous disregard of decency, constantly increased, and with it the bullying virulence of the demand.”<sup>1</sup>

The boundary question was much simpler than the two which have been discussed. By resolution of the Texan Congress, December 2, 1836, the boundaries of Texas were declared to extend to the Río Grande. There was not a shadow of justification for this claim. As a matter of fact, the western boundary of the Mexican State of Texas had been the states of Tamaulipas and Coahuila. The boundary between Tamaulipas and Texas was the river Nueces and between Texas and Coahuila the

<sup>1</sup> American Statesmen, xx: Henry Clay, vol. ii, by Carl Schurz.

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river Medina. Texas never succeeded in establishing her claim to the territory to the west of the Nueces, although she had tried to seize Santa Fé and failed lamentably. It is as certain as anything can be, that the Texan boundary line never had been, and was not at the time of annexation, the Río Grande. The United States eagerly supported the extreme Texan claim, however.

There were, then, four ostensible grounds for war—annexation, the claims, the boundary line, and the rejected minister. The President of the United States forthwith furnished a fifth. He invaded the territory of Mexico by despatching General Zachary Taylor with some three thousand regular soldiers to the Río Grande. There was nothing left but to fight.

It may not be amiss to insert here, before considering the prosecution of the war against Mexico, quotations from two famous speeches which fairly enough give the opinions of those who favored, and those who opposed, the

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Mexican War. Both speeches, at the time, were widely circulated, vehemently discussed, and variously commented on throughout the country. The first was delivered in the House of Representatives on the 14th of April, 1842, by Representative Henry A. Wise, of Virginia, the administration leader of the house.

“Texas has but a sparse population, and neither men nor money of her own to raise and equip an army for her own defense; but let her once raise the flag of foreign conquest—let her once proclaim a crusade against the rich States to the south of her, and in a moment volunteers would flock to her standard in crowds from all the States in the great valley of the Mississippi—men of enterprise and hardy valor before whom no Mexican troops could stand an hour. They would leave their own towns, arm themselves and travel at their own cost, and would come up in thousands to plant the lone star of the Texan banner on the Mexican capital. They would drive Santa Anna to the South, and the boundless wealth of captured towns, and rifled churches, and a lazy, vicious, and luxurious priesthood would soon enable Texas to pay her soldiers,

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and redeem her State debt, and push her victorious arms to the very shores of the Pacific.

“And would not all this extend slavery? Yes, the result would be, that before another quarter of a century, the extension of slavery would not stop short of the Western Ocean. . . .

“Give me five millions of dollars, and I would undertake to do it myself. Although I don't know how to set a single squadron in the field, I could find men to do it; and, with five millions of dollars to begin with, I would undertake to pay every American claimant the full amount of his demand with interest, yea, fourfold. *I would place California* where all the powers of Great Britain would never be able to reach it. **SLAVERY SHOULD POUR ITSELF ABROAD WITHOUT RESTRAINT, AND FIND NO LIMIT BUT THE SOUTHERN OCEAN.** The Comanches should no longer hold the richest mines of Mexico; but every golden image which had received the profanation of a false worship should soon be melted down, not into Spanish milled dollars, indeed, but into good American eagles. Yes, there should more hard money flow into the United States than any exchequer or sub-treasury could ever circulate. I would cause as much gold to cross the Rio del Norte as the mules of Mexico could carry; aye, and make a better use of it than any lazy, bigoted

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priesthood under heaven. I am not quarreling with the particular religion of these priests; but I say that any priesthood, that has accumulated and sequestered such immense stores of wealth, ought to disgorge, and it is a benefit to mankind to scatter their wealth where it can do good."<sup>1</sup>

The second was delivered in the United States Senate, at a later period, during the course of the war, by Thomas Corwin, Senator from Ohio.

"You have overrun half of Mexico—you have exasperated and irritated her people—you claim indemnity for all expenses incurred in doing this mischief, and boldly ask her to give up New Mexico and California; and, as a bribe to her patriotism, seizing on her property, you offer three millions to pay the soldiers she has called out to repel your invasion, on condition that she will give up to you at least one-third of her whole territory.

"Sir, had one come and demanded Bunker Hill of the people of Massachusetts, had England's lion ever showed himself there, is there a man over thirteen and under ninety who would not have been

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Jay's Review of the Mexican War.

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ready to meet him? Is there a river on this continent that would not have run red with blood? Is there a field but would have been piled high with the unburied bones of slaughtered Americans before these consecrated battle-fields of liberty should have been wrested from us? But this same American goes into a sister republic and says to poor, weak Mexico, 'Give up your territory, you are unworthy to possess it; I have got one-half already, and all I ask of you is to give up the other!' England might as well, in the circumstances I have described, have come and demanded of us, 'Give up the Atlantic slope—give up this trifling territory from the Alleghany Mountains to the sea; it is only from Maine to St. Mary's—only about one-third of your republic, and the least interesting portion of it.' What would be the response? They would say, we must give this up to John Bull. Why? 'He wants room.' The Senator from Michigan says he must have this. Why, my worthy Christian brother, on what principle of justice? 'I want room!'

"Sir, look at this pretense for want of room. With twenty millions of people, you have about one thousand millions of acres of land, inviting settlement by every conceivable argument, bringing them down to a quarter of a dollar an acre and

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allowing every man to squat where he pleases. But the Senator from Michigan says we will be two hundred millions in a few years and we want room. If I were a Mexican I would tell you, 'Have you not room in your own country to bury your dead men? If you come into mine we will greet you with bloody hands, and welcome you to hospitable graves.'

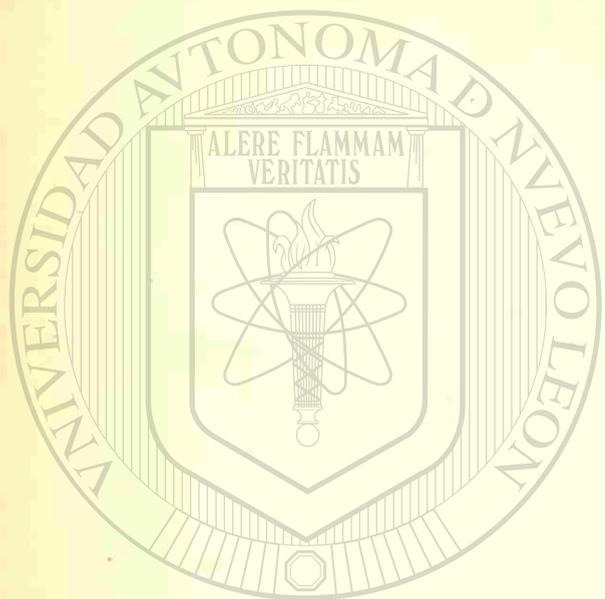
"Why, says the chairman of this Committee on Foreign Relations, it is the most reasonable thing in the world! We ought to have the Bay of San Francisco. Why? Because it is the best harbor on the Pacific! It has been my fortune, Mr. President, to have practised a good deal in criminal courts in the course of my life, but I never yet heard a thief, arraigned for stealing a horse, plead that it was the best horse that he could find in the country! We want California. What for? Why, says the Senator from Michigan, we will have it; and the Senator from South Carolina, with a very mistaken view, I think, of policy, says you can't keep our people from going there. I don't desire to prevent them. Let them go and seek their happiness in whatever country or clime it pleases them.

"All I ask of them is, not to require this government to protect them with that banner consecrated to war waged for principles—eternal, enduring

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truth. Sir, it is not meet that our old flag should throw its protecting folds over expeditions for lucre or for land. But you still say you want room for your people. This has been the plea of every robber chief from Nimrod to the present hour."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *American History Told by Contemporaries*, vol. iv. Edited by Albert Bushnell Hart.



CHAPTER X  
THE MEXICAN WAR—GENERAL  
TAYLOR

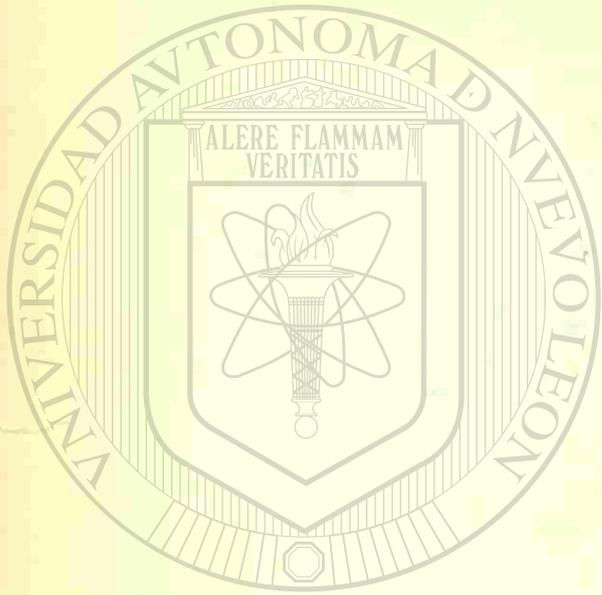
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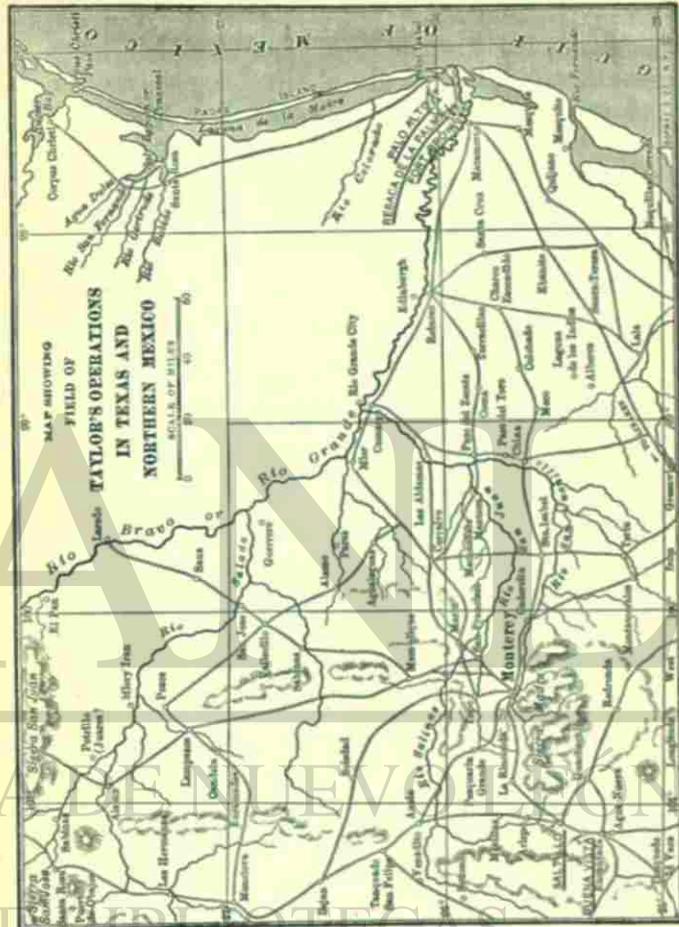
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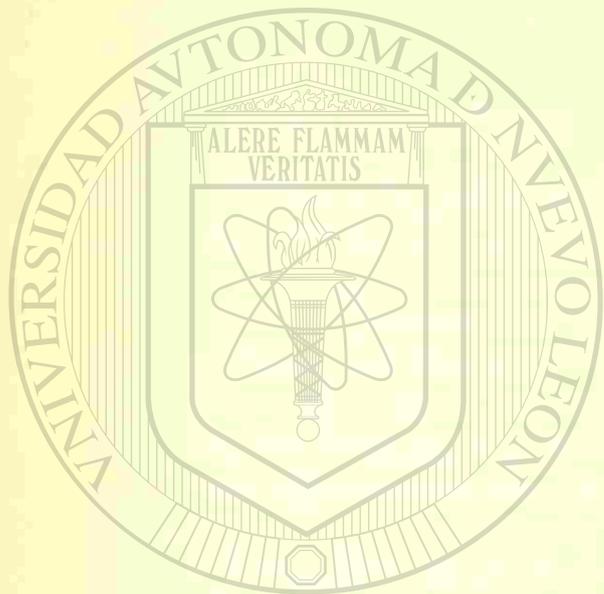


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## CHAPTER X

### THE MEXICAN WAR—GENERAL TAYLOR

As this is intended to be an inquiry into its political aspects rather than a military history of the Mexican War, I shall not go into the details of the military and naval operations, interesting as they are, but shall simply present such a conspectus of the war as will serve to render intelligible its diplomatic features, and the final settlement whereby the great spoliation was completed.

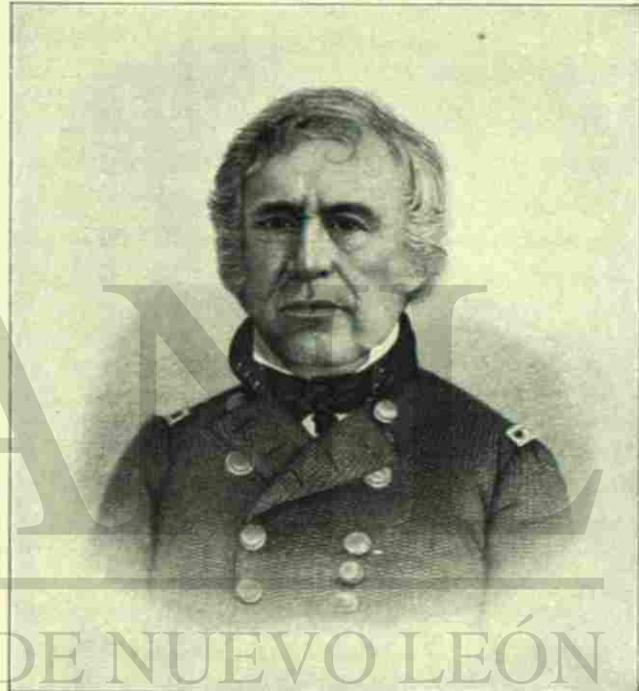
In population, in wealth, in intelligence, in stability, in organization, in all that goes to make a nation powerful, there was no parity at that time between the United States and Mexico. We were so far superior to the struggling republic to the south of us, that any comparison would be impossible. This should have made us more scrupulous not to

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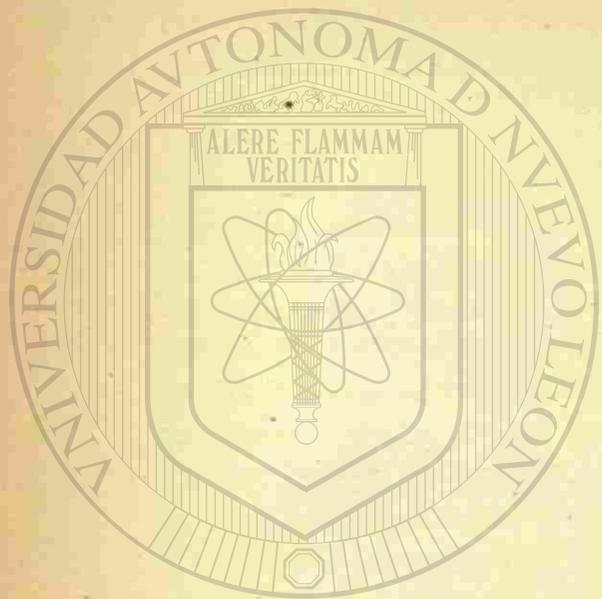
take advantage of our weaker neighbor. Unfortunately, it did not.

During a large part of the period under discussion, we had been engaged in an acrimonious dispute with Great Britain over the northwest boundary of the United States, known at the time as the "Oregon Question." Public feeling ran high. "Fifty-four forty or fight!" became a very catchy slogan. We had, we fancied, as much justice on our side, as many wrongs against us, and as valid claims for damages in the case of England as in the case of Mexico. Indeed, the situation in the Northwest was for a long time much more acute than in the Southwest. Yet the question in the Northwest eventually was settled by compromise and treaty.

I do not say for a moment that we were cowardly or recreant to our duty, or that we jeopardized our honor in making that settlement. Quite the contrary. It was a judicious and a righteous thing to do, but it emphasizes the point that we should have done the same



GENERAL ZACHARY TAYLOR. ®



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thing in the Southwest. How far the fact that Great Britain was a strong country and Mexico a weak one, brought about different methods of settlement, I shall not presume to say. Perhaps if the question of slavery had not obtruded itself, as, although it has been modified in form by the Emancipation Proclamation, it still obtrudes, we might have been as calm, as equable and as just in the Southwest as in the Northwest. I recall a famous Old World motto which runs this way: "Mild with the lowly, rough with the strong." Whatever the causes, we reversed the clauses, for we were gentle with England, harsh with Mexico. Perhaps we coveted the territory to the southwest as being more valuable than that to the northwest.

In June, 1845, Brevet Brigadier-General Zachary Taylor, an elderly colonel in the United States Army, who had distinguished himself in a minor command during the War of 1812, and had done good, if not notable, service in the succeeding period, was ordered

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to Corpus Christi, at the mouth of the Nueces River, with a small body of regular troops, the number of which was gradually increased during the ensuing summer and fall. The American Congress, having formally constituted Texas a state in December, 1845, General Taylor, in January, 1846, was ordered to advance to the Rio Grande, which he reached late in March.

As I see it, this was an invasion of Mexican territory by an armed force of the United States. An act such as this has always been tantamount to a declaration of war, and this act was so regarded by Mexico. Four regiments of the regular army of the United States, with a small quota of cavalry and artillery, had been ordered to report to General Taylor. At the same time he was authorized by the President to call for volunteers from Texas and Louisiana to defend our frontier. In March, 1846, Taylor established a supply depot at Point Isabel, on the Gulf of Mexico, a few miles north of the mouth of the Rio

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Grande. Thence he moved southward to the river and threw up, near its mouth, an entrenchment, afterward called Fort Brown, opposite the Mexican town of Matamoras.

General Pedro de Ampudia, in command of the Mexican forces at Matamoras, remonstrated with Taylor, calling attention to the flagrant violation of international law involved in the presence of the American army in the territory of Mexico, in the following proclamation:

“ To explain to you the many grounds for the just grievances felt by the Mexican nation, caused by the United States Government, would be a loss of time and an insult to your good sense. I therefore, pass at once to such explanations as I consider of absolute necessity. Your government in an incredible manner—you will even permit me to say an extravagant one, if the usages or general rules established and received among all civilized nations are regarded—has not only insulted but exasperated the Mexican nation, bearing its conquering banner to the left bank of the Rio Bravo del Norte; and in this case, by express and definitive orders of my government, which neither can, will,

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nor should receive new outrages, I require you in all form, and at latest in the peremptory term of twenty-four hours, to break up your camp and return to the east bank of the Nueces River while our governments are regulating the pending question in relation to Texas. If you insist upon remaining upon the soil of the Department of Tamaulipas, it will certainly result that arms, and arms alone, must decide the question; and in that case I advise you that we accept the war to which, with so much injustice on your part, you provoke us, and that on our part it shall be conducted conformably to the principles established by the most civilized nations—that is to say, that the law of nations and war shall be the guide of our operations, trusting that on your part the same will be observed. With this view, I tender you the consideration due to your person and respectable office.

“God and Liberty!

“Two o'clock P. M., April 12, 1846.”<sup>1</sup>

Taylor, of course, refused to abandon his post. On April 14, Ampudia was superseded by General Mariano Arista, who determined to cross the river and force the Americans out of Mexico so soon as he could assemble a suffi-

<sup>1</sup> History of the Mexican War, by General Cadmus M. Wilcox.

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cient force at Matamoras. No conflict between the armed forces had yet taken place, although several American stragglers had been cut off and killed by guerrillas.

On the 24th of April, Captain Thornton, with sixty dragoons, met in a skirmish a much larger Mexican force, by which sixteen Americans were killed and the remainder captured. Each side has claimed that the other was the aggressor, and that upon the aggressor must lie the responsibility for the war. The decision of the question is not important. The first act of aggression consisted in the invasion of Mexico by the American army and no quibbling about Thornton's party can rid us of the blame of armed invasion, to say nothing of what went before.

Learning that Arista was being reenforced, and realizing that he would soon be attacked, Taylor left an adequate garrison in Fort Brown, and on May 1st marched the remainder of his little army back to Point Isabel in order to make safe his base of supplies. Arista

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conceived this to be a retreat. With some five thousand men he promptly crossed to the north bank of the Rio Grande to pursue Taylor. On the 3d of May he ordered the force at Matamoras to bombard Fort Brown.

Taylor hastened his preparations at Point Isabel and on May 7th marched back toward the sound of cannon. He was in some anxiety as to whether the fort could hold out until he relieved it. On the 8th, about three o'clock in the afternoon, Arista attacked him at a place called Palo Alto. The ensuing affair, which can hardly be dignified by the name of a battle, was fought mainly by artillery, in which, as in every other battle of the war, the Americans were greatly superior, not so much from weight of metal, or number of pieces, as from accuracy of aim, mobility, and rapidity of fire.

The fighting ceased at dark and Taylor's men remained in possession of the field. Arista retired a few miles to the south and reformed his lines behind an extensive ravine, partially filled with water, called Resaca de la Palma.

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The loss on either side had not been serious. Technically, it was a victory for General Taylor. The enemy had attacked him, and he had driven him off, inflicting a much greater loss than he had received, and had remained on the field. Yet the Mexican army still greatly outnumbered his. Its effectiveness had not been appreciably diminished. The issue of the campaign therefore still remained to be decided.

The next morning General Taylor held a council of war in which the usual conservative opinions were put forth. He listened to all that was said and closed the deliberations by ordering the officers to go to their commands, stating that in thirty minutes he intended to advance. He marched after Arista and attacked him at three o'clock in the afternoon. The battle was short, sharp and decisive. In spite of the shelter of the ravine, Taylor drove Arista from his carefully selected and highly defensible position. Such was the impetuosity of the American charges, especially on the part

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of the cavalry, which actually pierced the Mexican center, sabering the cannoneers of the battery in place there, and capturing the guns, that Arista lost control of his army, which finally fled in utter panic. The battle was a complete rout. The seizure of Matamoras followed a few days after. General Taylor had successfully won a foothold south of the Rio Grande.

A comparison of force is interesting. In these two battles General Taylor's forces amounted to two thousand two hundred and eighty-eight. His losses were forty-eight killed and one hundred and twenty-nine wounded. General Arista's forces approximated five thousand. His loss in killed and wounded and missing was over one thousand.

The tale of lost men, however, did not measure the extent of Arista's disaster, for his baggage, public and private, his camp equipage, eight pieces of artillery and many small arms, were captured and the morale of his troops was greatly shattered. There were many who fled

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in terror before the American advance, and never returned to their colors.<sup>1</sup>

As an earnest of future success, the campaign was important. President Polk sent a special message to Congress on May 11th in which, after a specious attempt at a justification of the course of the United States, he had the unblushing effrontery to declare that "after reiterated menaces Mexico has passed the boundary of the United States, has invaded our territory and shed American blood on American soil,"<sup>2</sup> and further, that "war exists, and, notwithstanding all our efforts to avoid it, exists by the act of Mexico herself."<sup>3</sup>

Congress, artfully dodging a formal declaration of war by making use of Polk's ingenious

<sup>1</sup> All statistics of numbers engaged, losses, etc., in this and the next chapter are taken from the summaries in vol. x of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents.

<sup>2</sup> Abraham Lincoln serving his first term in Congress in the next fall, introduced a series of resolutions requesting the President to state the exact spot where Mexico had shed the blood of our citizens on our own soil. These under the nickname of "*The Spot Resolutions*" attracted some little attention.

<sup>3</sup> Messages and Papers of the Presidents, vol. iv.

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phrase, "war exists in Mexico," by a practically unanimous vote—two hundred and twenty-four to sixteen, as the total for both houses—authorized the President to call for fifty thousand volunteers and placed a fund of ten million dollars at his disposal for the national defense and other expenses of this war brought about by the Mexican "invasion"!

Concerning this action, Henry Clay said in a speech at Lexington, Ky., that "no earthly consideration would ever have tempted or provoked him to vote for a bill with a palpable falsehood stamped upon its face." . . . "All the nations, I apprehend," he added, solemnly, "look upon us, in the prosecution of the present war, as being actuated by a spirit of rapacity, and an inordinate desire for territorial aggrandizement."<sup>1</sup> Never were truer words spoken.

I do not for a moment suppose that Polk

<sup>1</sup> American Statesmen, xx: Henry Clay, vol. ii, by Carl Schurz.

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thought he was doing anything wrong, or that he believed that his conduct had not been all that the conduct of a high-minded Christian statesman should be, which shows how easy it is for a man to find excuse and justification for whatever he wants to do.

" In religion,  
What damned error, but some sober brow  
Will bless it and approve it with a text."

In the truth of that assertion lies one of the few resemblances between religion and politics. Certainly, it may be pointed out that many who helped to make up that great majority in Congress for the prosecution of the war, were not in favor of it. Yet, now that hostilities had actually begun, it was very hard not to espouse the cause of the United States, no matter whose the fault. "My country, may she ever be right; but right or wrong, my country," Stephen Decatur's famous phrase, has an appeal which it is difficult for the sternest patriot, the most inexorably righteous man, to

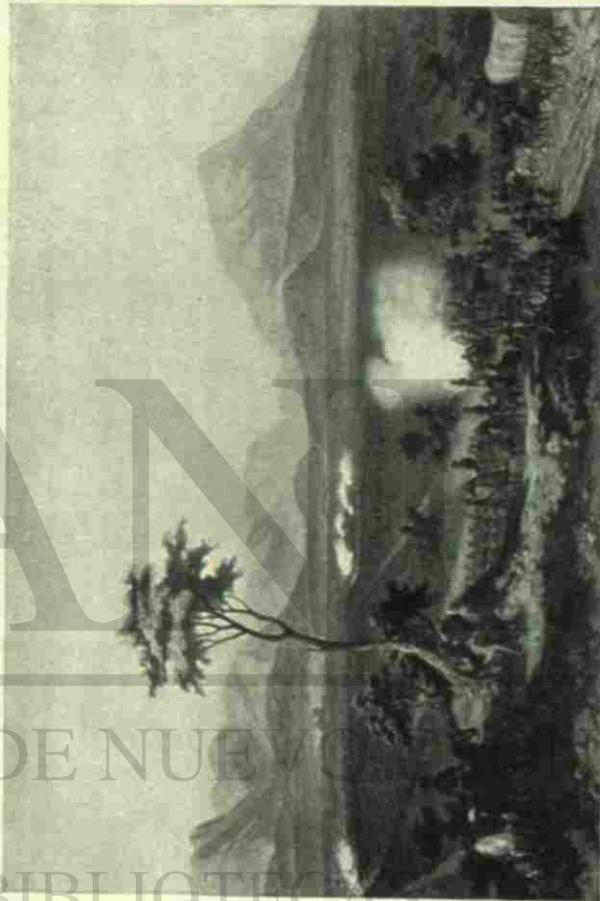
## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

disregard in favor of a sentiment like this: "Our country, may she always be right, but if she be not, let us make her so at all costs."

All parties being now united, the war was prosecuted vigorously. Some of the opponents thereto may have salved their conscience by a feeling that, possibly, in an energetic campaign lay the surest hope of a speedy settlement and so they made the best of a bad business.

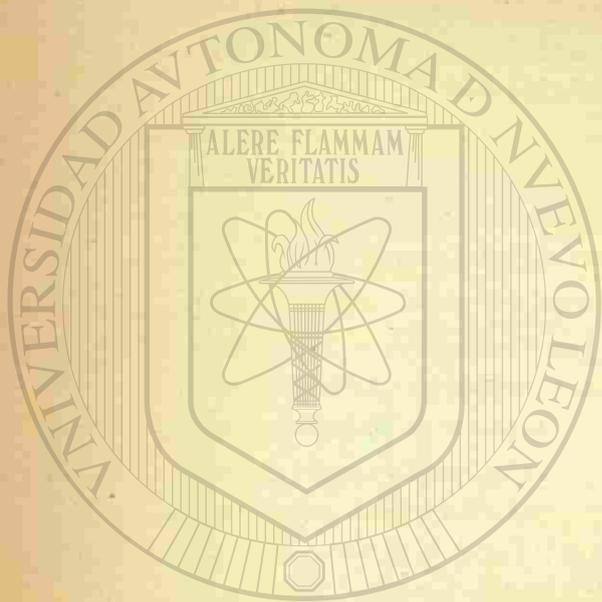
The majority of the people, carried away by the news of the fighting, became enthusiastic for the war. They always are in similar circumstances. Taylor's victories were hailed with loud acclaim. The Democrats, who now made no effort to conceal their determination to seize all the Mexican territory between Texas and the Pacific, and whose course was entirely consistent, taunted the Whigs for supporting and voting supplies for a war which they did not believe justifiable. The taunt, which was unanswerable, rankled.

To go back to our fighting—always the



THE CAPTURE OF MONTEREY.  
From the original by Nebel.





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### GENERAL TAYLOR

easier task—reinforcements were hurried to General Taylor and on August 19th, with six thousand six hundred and fifty men, he left Camargo, four hundred miles up the river, where he had established a new base of supplies, and marched down to capture Monterey, then as now, the most important city in northern Mexico, which was held by General Ampudia and ten thousand men, of whom seven thousand were regulars. After the hardest kind of fighting the Americans had yet encountered, lasting for two days, in a series of brilliant operations, in which many formidable positions were carried by storm, and after a desperate defense by the Mexicans, Taylor, who was nobly seconded by General Worth, captured the town on the 24th of September. Taylor lost one hundred and twenty killed and three hundred and thirty-seven wounded. The Mexican loss was much greater.

General Taylor was a Whig. Personally, he was not in sympathy with the policy of Polk and the Democratic party. He was a soldier,

*CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST*

however, whose business it was to carry out the orders of his superiors to the best of his ability, and his ability was certainly of a high order. His personality, plain, simple and honest—so much so that his soldiers called him “Old Rough and Ready”—was attractive to the people. His victories exalted him to the status of a national hero and people began to talk of him for the Presidency. This was sufficiently disquieting to Polk and his friends at Washington, although Taylor attended strictly to his business and did not meddle with politics.

CHAPTER XI

THE MEXICAN WAR—GENERAL SCOTT

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*CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST*

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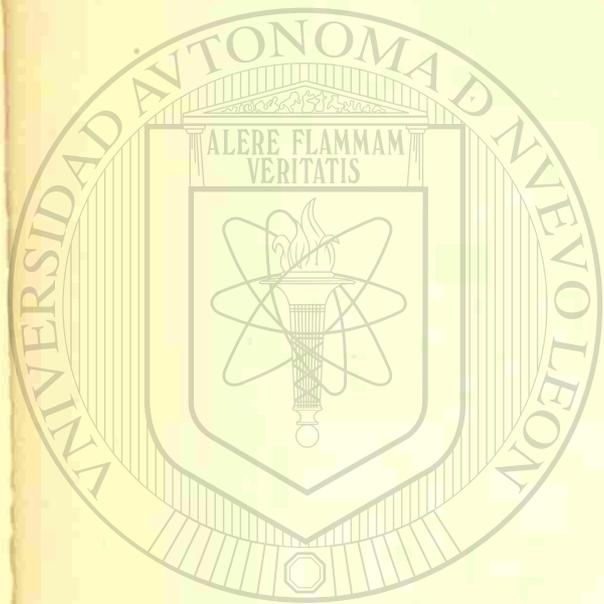
CHAPTER XI

THE MEXICAN WAR—GENERAL SCOTT

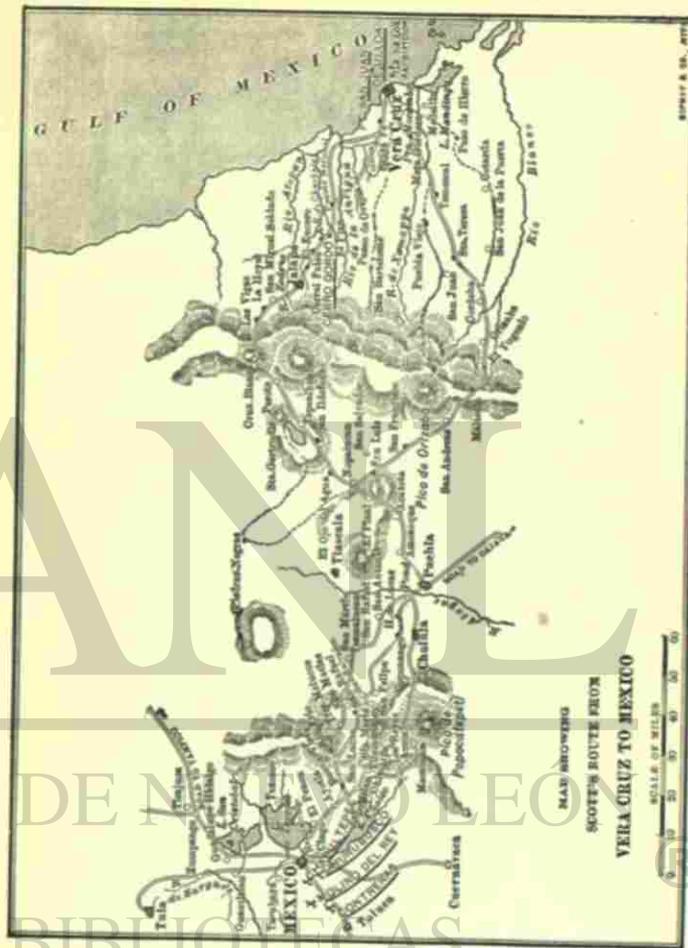
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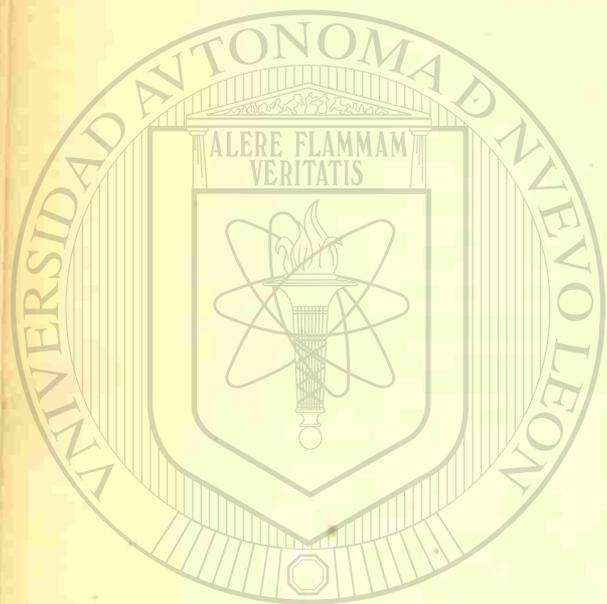
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## CHAPTER XI

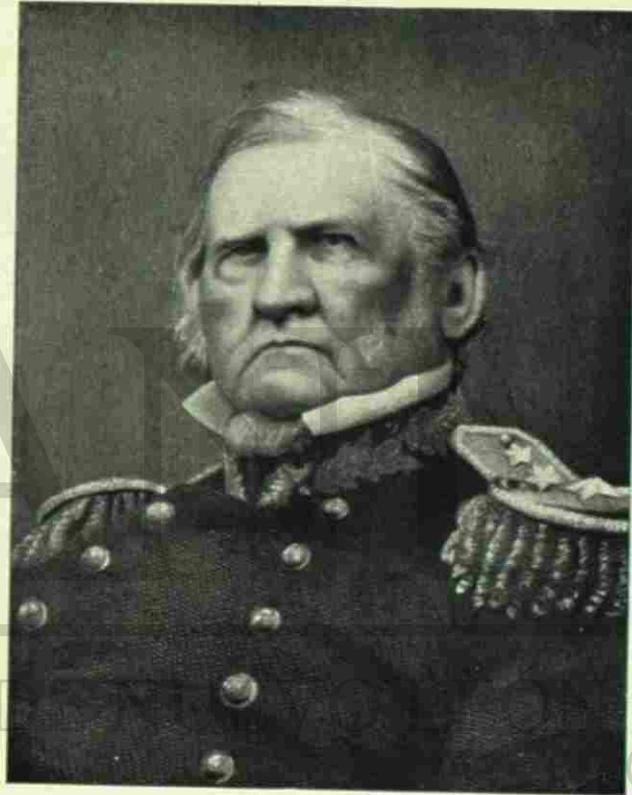
### THE MEXICAN WAR—GENERAL SCOTT

It was evident to every military man that the proper way to effect the conquest of Mexico was, not to attempt to seize the capital by marching down from the Rio-Grande; the most practicable access to the interior was along the line from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico. The advance on this line might be more fiercely contested, but the line was much shorter, and, in spite of the mountains, the way much more practicable. The war would be sooner ended, and, as nobody doubted the final issue, time was a very important factor.

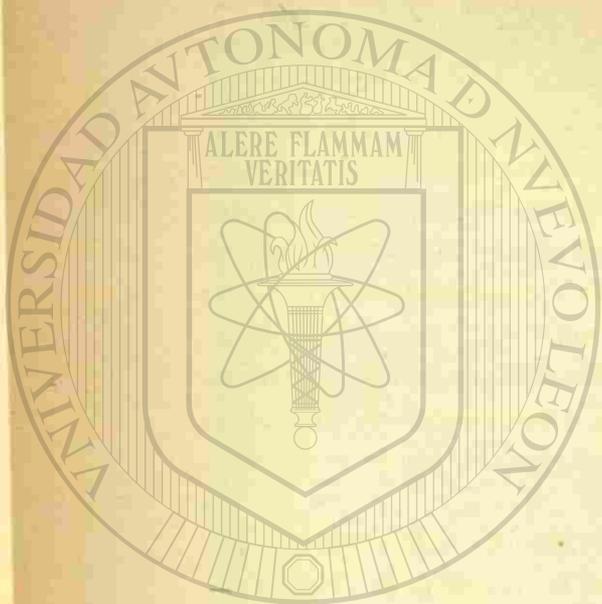
The ranking officer of the United States Army was then Major-General Winfield Scott, who had won great distinction in the War of 1812, and was an accomplished soldier of international reputation. Unfortunately, for

### CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

the administration, he, too, was a Whig. He was also a much greater personage, much more of a politician, and man of affairs generally, than Taylor. When Taylor had become so prominent, the administration resolved to bring forward Scott in the hope of dividing the allegiance of the Whigs between these two military commanders, so that neither would become sufficiently formidable as a Presidential candidate to cause disquiet to Polk at the next election. If they had had a general of their own political faith, with sufficient skill and capacity to be trusted with the conduct of the war, both Taylor and Scott would have been set aside. Indeed, after he had sent him to Mexico, Polk tried to supersede Scott by appointing Thomas H. Benton, a lieutenant-general, and when Congress refused to permit this, the President asked authority to place a junior over a senior, intending to appoint Benton a major-general and place him over Scott. This request was also refused. So Scott was perforce left in command. The



GENERAL WINFIELD SCOTT.



### GENERAL SCOTT

administration did everything possible to embarrass him, However, his division commanders were all Democrats and were not in sympathy with him.

To make an army for Scott, Taylor's veteran regular troops were taken away from him, raising Scott's total force to about twelve thousand men. With these he was ordered to begin a campaign toward the City of Mexico via Vera Cruz. Scott received just about one-half the force he had deemed necessary for the task. Nevertheless, he went about it with zeal and courage, determined to do his best.

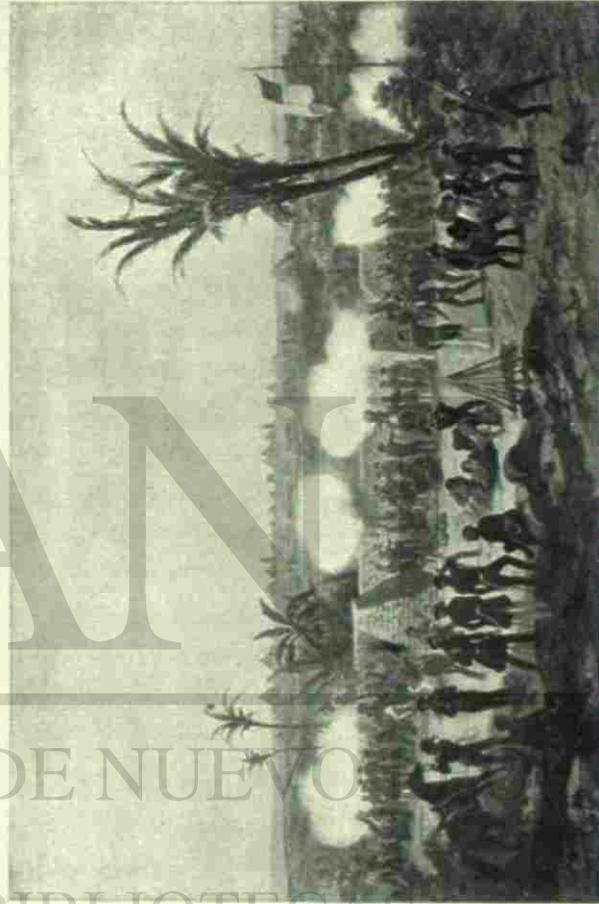
The naval force on the Gulf of Mexico had been commanded by Commodore David Connor, an officer of respectable attainments but nothing more. He had cooperated, so far as he could, with Taylor, but had effected little or nothing, considering the force at his disposal and the fact that Mexico had no navy. He was a prime seaman, however, if not a great captain. He disembarked Scott's army

### CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

at Vera Cruz in a masterly way, without loss, on the 9th of March, 1847. The Mexicans, confident in the strength of the city, made no effort to prevent the landing of the Americans.

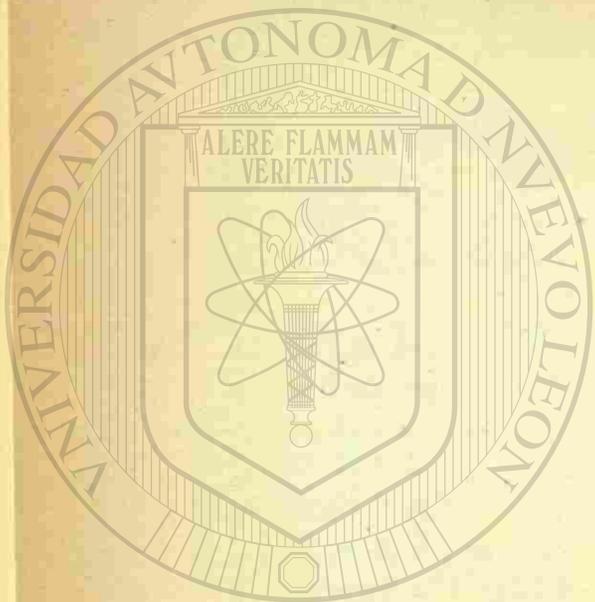
The siege of Vera Cruz was immediately begun, and after enduring a furious bombardment for four days, the city capitulated on the 26th of March, 1847. The American loss was only sixty-seven wounded, the Mexicans lost one thousand in killed and wounded.

Connor, whose term of sea duty in the Gulf had expired, was superseded by Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry. Under his energetic and efficient direction, the navy made a vigorous campaign up and down the coast, taking every port on the shore, and others on the rivers which the sailors could reach. Scott with ten thousand men, a large part of them being from the regular army, and a moiety of these veterans who had been trained and disciplined by Taylor, started across the mountains for the City of Mexico. To invade a country of the size of Mexico with such a force,



THE BOMBARDMENT OF VERA CRUZ.  
From the original by Nebel.





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### GENERAL SCOTT

was an act of boldness and daring which stands almost alone in our history. Nor was this enterprise "a mere military promenade" as it has been sometimes sneeringly called. There was the hardest kind of fighting in this campaign, even if the Americans did win every battle.

The Mexicans on their part had not been idle after the fall of Monterey. With the mistaken idea that Santa Anna would prove a friend to the United States, the government had sent a warship to bring him from Havana, to which place he had been exiled in a recent revolution, and had landed him at Vera Cruz. Whatever he was, or had been, Santa Anna chose the patriotic part on this occasion. He immediately declared for his country and against the United States. He was able to get himself elected President and then assumed command of the Mexican forces, which he concentrated at San Luis Potosi, midway between Monterey and Vera Cruz.

Although Taylor's army had been depleted

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

by the withdrawal of the bulk of his regulars, he still was in command of some five thousand men. Scott had recommended him to fall back to the Rio Grande, but it was not in Taylor's nature either to retreat or to remain quietly where he was, doing nothing. He, therefore, led his men southward, captured Saltillo, and advanced through the mountains with his army, threatening the south. Santa Anna thought he saw a chance to crush him. Scott would soon arrive before Vera Cruz and thereafter he knew he would have to deal with Scott's army. San Luis Potosi was admirably situated to cover both points now threatened. Santa Anna, who showed many of the qualities of a general, determined to rush a large army to the north and overwhelm Taylor. He thought he would be able to do this and still get back to the south in time to confront Scott.

With imperious energy, he organized an army of twenty thousand men, including about five thousand cavalry, and by a forced march of about five hundred miles appeared before

## GENERAL SCOTT

General Taylor on the 22nd of February, 1847. Taylor had received notice of Santa Anna's advance and had retired to a famous defile in the mountains, the pass of Angostura, a mile south of the large hacienda of Buena Vista and about six miles south of Saltillo. Deducting the garrison of Saltillo, Taylor had about forty-seven hundred men with which to hold the pass. Ninety per cent of these men were volunteers who had never been in action.

There was some heavy skirmishing on the 22nd, the advantage being with Santa Anna, but nothing decisive had been attempted. That night General Taylor, after making the rounds of his lines, rode back to Buena Vista and Saltillo to bring up every available man to the fighting line for the morrow's battle, and to satisfy himself that everything was right with his base of supplies, which was threatened by a large detachment of Santa Anna's cavalry.

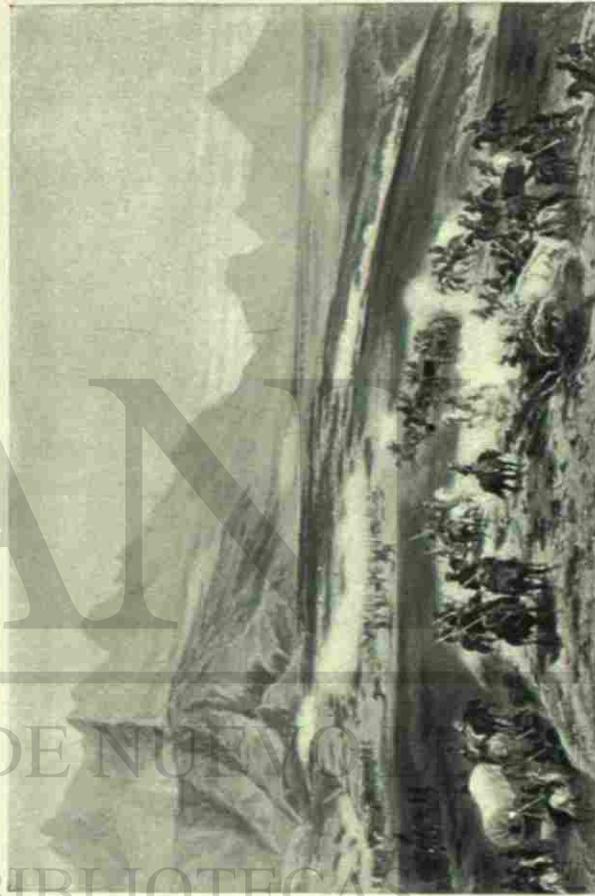
The battle ground of Buena Vista lies between two ranges of mountains. Near the east

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

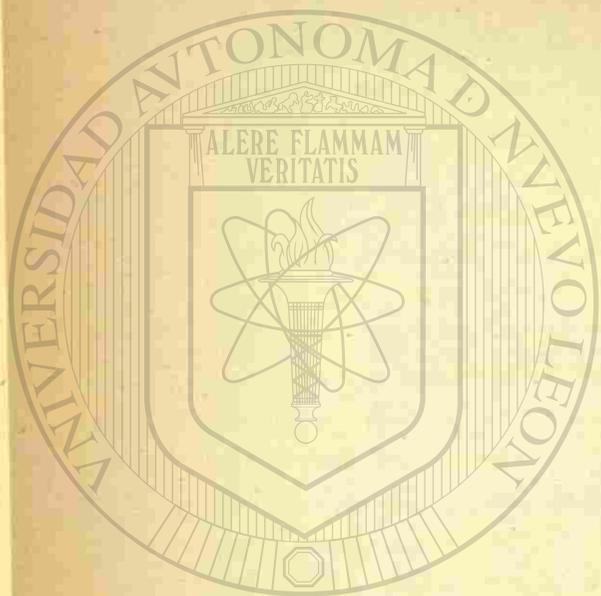
range is a narrow pass. Extending from this pass to the west is a plateau about a mile wide, which is broken by tremendous ravines terminating on the slope of the mountains.

At 2 A. M. on the 23rd, Santa Anna put his army in motion. At dawn the battle began. The fighting line was under the immediate command of General John E. Wool, a veteran and approved soldier. With his batteries, supported by some infantry and cavalry, engaging the right of the line which held the narrow part of the pass, Santa Anna concentrated the bulk of his army on the American left.

The conflict on the extreme left was desperate. Conditions on the right and front were menacing and Wool did not dare detach any of his men to succor the left. The line, in truth, was much too long for the small American force to hold against such overwhelming superiority as the Mexicans enjoyed. The Mexicans avoided the ravines by advancing along the slopes of the mountains and turned the American left. Finally an Indiana regi-



THE BATTLE OF BUENA VISTA.  
From the original by Nebel.



### GENERAL SCOTT

ment was seized with panic and fled, and, despite the efforts of other troops, the line was gradually forced back by the overwhelming onslaught, most of the soldiers fighting desperately and contesting every foot of the ground.

General Taylor, leading Colonel Jefferson Davis' fine regiment of Mississippi riflemen, came on the field early in the morning. Wool, who had been fighting heroically, remarked to his commander that the army was whipped. "That," said Taylor calmly, "will be for me to determine." He checked the advance of the enemy by throwing Davis' riflemen against them, thus giving the left wing of his army time to halt and reform. These Mississippians were brilliantly led, and fought with the greatest courage. The lines were reformed, guns were brought up, and a furious battle raged all over the plateau and through the ravines until evening.

The Mexicans tried again and again to crush the American left. At the same time

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determined assaults were made on the right and center; but everywhere they were repulsed with terrible slaughter. As usual, the deciding factor in the battle was the American artillery, which was managed and served with a skill, rapidity and brilliancy worthy of the highest praise. Sometimes, without support from the infantry, the artillery checked the Mexican rushes. The carnage among the Mexicans was fearful. The casualties among the Americans were also very severe. Completely baffled in his purpose by the heroic constancy of Taylor and his men, Santa Anna at last withdrew from the field, acknowledging a bitter defeat.

I regard Buena Vista as one of the decisive battles of the war, and perhaps the decisive one, for if Santa Anna had overwhelmed Taylor, as one time he was so near doing, he would have led back to attack Scott an army flushed with victory and Scott would have required a vastly larger force than he had at his disposal to carry out his brilliant campaign. What-

## GENERAL SCOTT

ever Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma had been, Buena Vista was a real battle and a splendid victory. Ultimately it made General Taylor President of the United States. The American loss was seven hundred and forty-six, the Mexican over two thousand.<sup>1</sup>

Defeated, but not dismayed, with an energy for which he deserves great credit, Santa Anna led his shattered army back a thousand miles to confront Scott after the fall of Vera Cruz. By making use of every resource, including his private means, he reorganized the army and with fifteen thousand men, took a strong position in the mountains of Orizaba at the pass of Cerro Gordo. There, on the 18th of April, Scott attacked him with eight thousand men. Santa Anna had neglected to fortify a commanding height, never dreaming that the Americans could scale its crest. Scott, whose engineering corps<sup>2</sup> was remarkable for its

<sup>1</sup> It was in this battle that Taylor sent his famous despatch to one of his batteries. "A little more grape, Captain Bragg."

<sup>2</sup> Robert E. Lee, Pierre G. T. Beauregard, Henry W. Halleck,

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

efficiency, was apprised of the situation, the height was seized, the Mexican lines were taken at a disadvantage, and by a general charge on flank and in front, the pass was taken by storm. Santa Anna fled so precipitately that he left behind him his wooden leg.<sup>1</sup> The American loss was sixty-three killed and three hundred and ninety-eight wounded; the Mexican, twelve hundred killed and wounded and three thousand captured.

After the battle Scott seized the city of Jalapa and the great fortress of Perote without any resistance to speak of; and then, following the route made famous by Cortez over three hundred years before, he led his army over the mountains and occupied the important city of Puebla. There, having received reinforcements which enabled him to repair the loss made by sickness and casualties of battle,

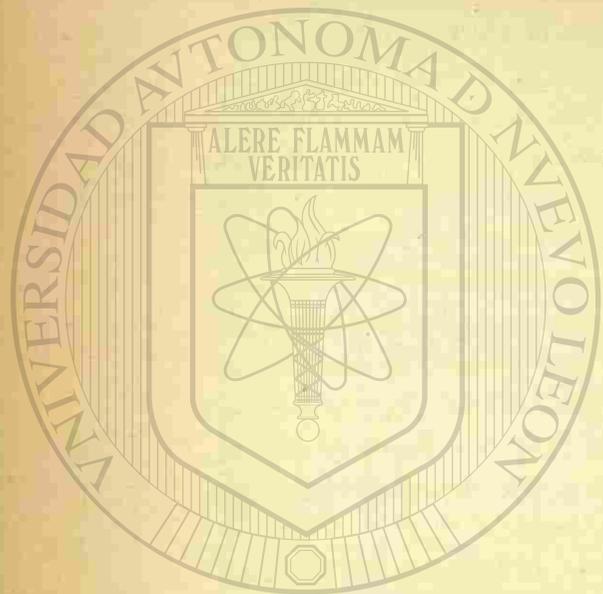
George B. McClellan, Joseph E. Johnston and George G. Meade were among his engineer officers.

<sup>1</sup> This is perhaps the principal fact that the average person recalls about the Mexican War! It is interesting, of course, but it had no bearing on the determination of the issue.



THE BATTLE OF CERRO GORDO.  
From the original painting by Chappell.





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### GENERAL SCOTT

with some ten thousand men of all arms of the service, he began his famous campaign against the City of Mexico on the 7th of August.

He approached the Mexican capital from the southward. On the 20th of August, in a series of brilliant engagements among the lava beds—El Pedregal—or Padierna, or Contre-ras, and at the village of Churubusco on the same day, he overwhelmed the Mexicans under General Victoria in the first battle and under Santa Anna himself in the second. The American loss on that day of hot but brilliant fighting, was ten hundred and fifteen; the Mexican, five thousand eight hundred and seventy-seven.

After the battle of Churubusco, Scott advanced to within sight of the capital, there halted his army, proposed an armistice, and sent forward Mr. Nicholas B. Trist, Commissioner from the United States to Mexico, who had accompanied the army, offering Mexico a treaty of peace.

This was an act of great magnanimity on  
16 219

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

the part of the American captain, which should be noted. Scott could have taken possession of the capital then and there without much difficulty, but he gave an opportunity to Mr. Trist to tender proposals for peace without subjecting Mexico to that humiliation. The Mexicans, however, inspired by Santa Anna, were not at all certain that the war had been ended, and, convinced that the opportunity for defeating Scott was still open, after delaying matters with Mr. Trist—whose demands they regarded as impossible—until they could further reorganize their forces, they practically terminated negotiations by a counter ultimatum. These propositions are discussed in the succeeding chapter, so as not to break the thread of the narrative of military movements.

Scott was prompt to take up the challenge. On the 7th of September he officially terminated the armistice, the Mexicans having given abundant excuse. The strongest outpost of the fortifications of the capital was a castle upon the famous rock of Chapultepec. The

## GENERAL SCOTT

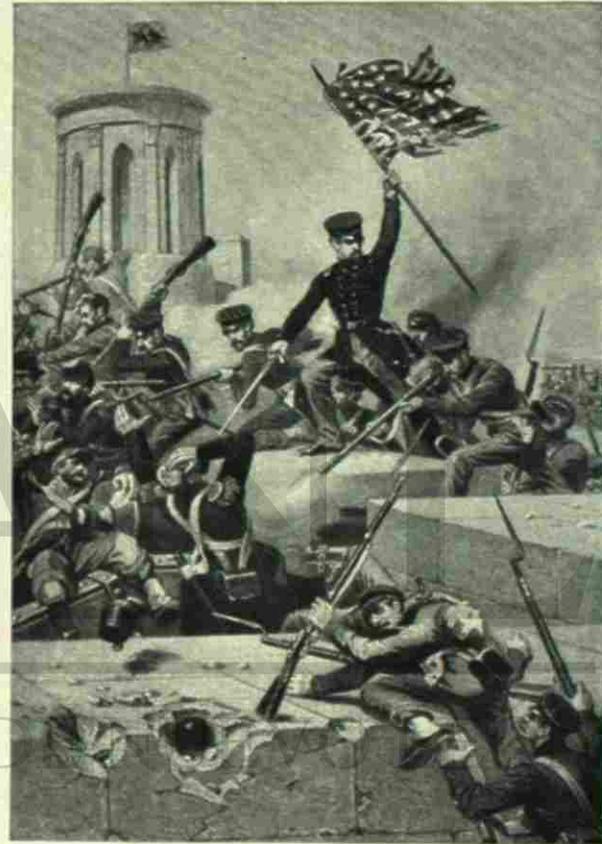
base of this rock was defended by forts and works, the key to which was an old stone mill called Molino del Rey. This mill was captured after a furious battle on the morning of September 8th, by troops under the immediate command of General Worth, upon whom Scott had imposed the congenial duty. Worth put thirty-one hundred men in action against fourteen thousand Mexicans, not all of whom were actively engaged. The American loss was proportionately heavier than in any battle of the war, being seven hundred and ninety-nine, or nearly twenty-six per cent. The Mexican loss was over three thousand. The fighting had been the fiercest kind of a hand-to-hand struggle.

Chapultepec was bombarded for two days and then stormed with great gallantry on the 13th of September by the divisions of Pillow, Twiggs and Quitman. The Mexicans had fought bravely in every battle—there can be no mistake about that. The country was torn by dissensions and the proper efficiency of the

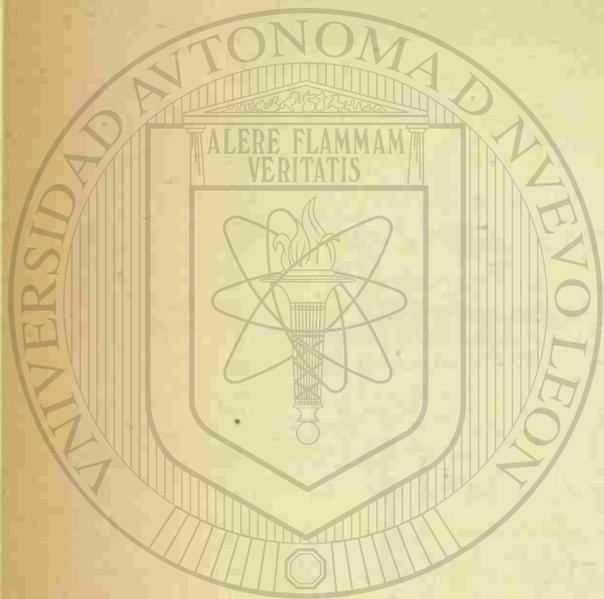
## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

army hindered by divided councils and conflicting purposes; moreover, the men were ill-paid, worse equipped, badly drilled, raw and undisciplined, and ignorantly officered. But whenever there was actual fighting, they fought bravely and well. Sometimes they piled the ground with American slain. General Grant has borne testimony to their courage in many instances. Chapultepec was especially remarkable for the valiant resistance of the Mexicans. On the top of the rock was located the Mexican Military Academy and the youths undergoing training at that institution proved their right to the title of soldiers by the heroism of their defense.

Scott did not lose a moment after the storming of the castle. The same day he launched his columns at the City of Mexico. The ground around that ancient city was marshy, and the walls were approached by long, broad and well-paved causeways. Some of these causeways carried stone aqueducts on arches down the middle. There was fierce hand-to-



THE STORMING OF CHAPULTEPEC.  
From the original painting by Powell.



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hand fighting from arch to arch, but finally the columns of Worth and Quitman stormed the San Cosme and Belem gates and Scott effected a lodgment in the city that night. The Mexicans fled the city, and Scott and his army marched in the next day. This time the war really was over.

Scott, at Chapultepec and the attack on the city gates, had eight thousand men in action, of whom he lost eight hundred and sixty-two; the Mexican force was twenty-five thousand, not all of them being actively engaged. This army was defeated, demoralized and scattered in retreat; in killed, wounded, captured and missing, it is estimated that Santa Anna lost over ten thousand men in that day's fighting, most of the loss being in captured and missing.

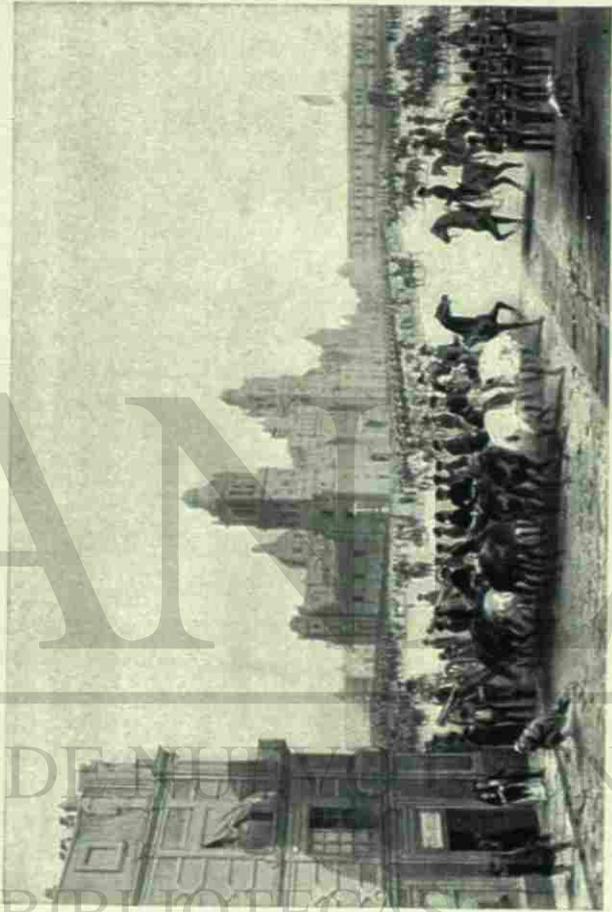
"Both the strategy and tactics displayed by General Scott in these various engagements were faultless," was the testimony of Ulysses S. Grant, then a second lieutenant of infantry in Scott's army.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant.

### CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

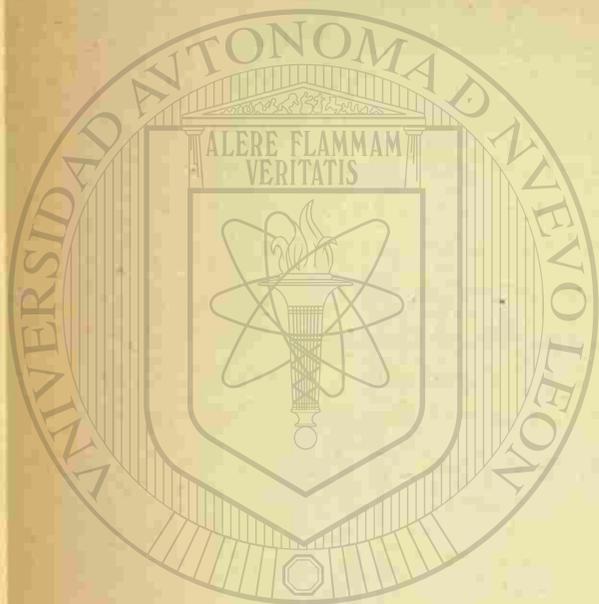
The other military operations may be briefly summarized. The navy held the east coast of Mexico. On the west coast of California squadrons under Commodores Sloat, Stockton, Shubrick and Biddle successively—Stockton having the good luck to do most of the work—had been equally successful in cooperation with John C. Frémont, "the Path-finder," and General Stephen W. Kearny, and the whole extent of territory from the forty-second parallel of latitude to the mouth of the Gulf of California was actually in the possession of the Americans. All the southern ports as far as Acapulco were blockaded. Colonel Doniphan had seized Chihuahua after a famous march; General Kearny had taken Santa Fé, and the whole country north of the Rio Grande and the Gila was in possession of the American Army. There was desultory fighting in different parts of Mexico for a short time, but even the most patriotic Mexican realized the utter hopelessness of the Mexican cause.

General Grant, who served with Taylor as



GENERAL SCOTT'S ENTRANCE INTO MEXICO.  
From the original by Nebel.





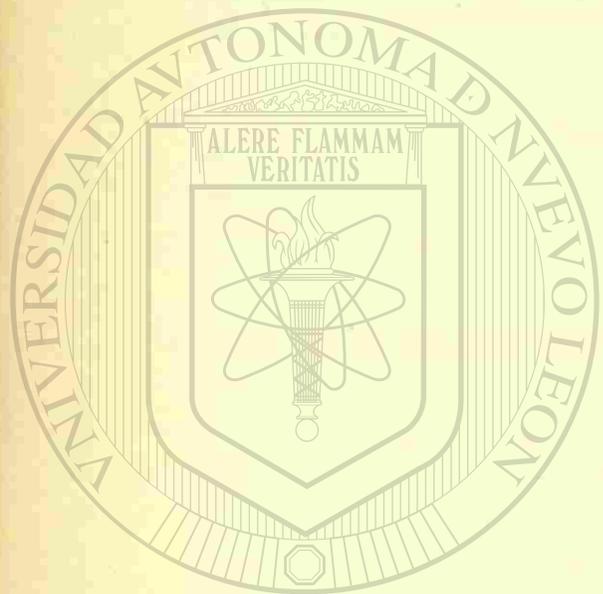
### GENERAL SCOTT

well as Scott in the Mexican War, said that "both of these generals deserve the commendations of their countrymen, and to live in the grateful memory of this people to the latest generation." He also approved heartily of most of the generalship displayed and declared that both Taylor and Scott "had such armies as are not often got together, and that a better army, man for man, probably never faced an enemy than the one commanded by General Taylor in the earlier engagements."<sup>1</sup> This is high praise, for officers and men, from one who knew whereof he affirmed, and to which it is a pleasure to call attention.

<sup>1</sup>Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant.

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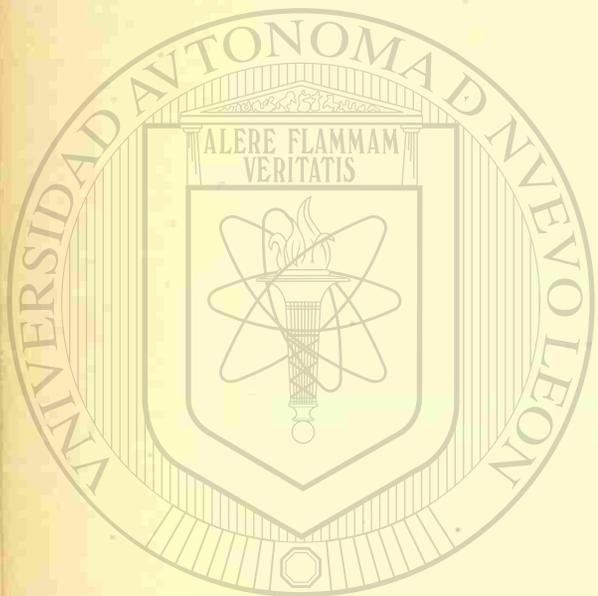


CHAPTER XII  
FIRST EFFORTS AT NEGOTIATION

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## CHAPTER XII

### FIRST EFFORTS AT NEGOTIATION

I SHALL now consider first, the proposition of the United States made during the armistice; second, the counter proposition of Mexico, which brought about the termination of the armistice; and, third, the conclusions which were finally embodied in the treaty by which hostilities were terminated and peace assured.

Mr. Nicholas P. Trist, our commissioner, was a man of some experience in diplomacy and of respectable talents for negotiation. He was persevering, courteous, tactful, conciliatory, but unyielding. He had learned tenacity in a rare school as the private secretary of President Andrew Jackson. His powers were ample. His instructions were comprehensive. Roughly speaking, he was directed to propose peace to Mexico upon

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

the cession of all territory north of the Rio Grande and the Gila, including the peninsula of Lower California. For this, in an attempt to justify a high-handed proceeding and change a theft into a forced sale, he was authorized to offer a sum not exceeding twenty millions of dollars. The Mexican government rejected this proposition unanimously and presented a counter project, which proposed to fix the boundaries between the two countries as follows:

“Commencing in the Gulf of Mexico, three leagues from land, opposite the southern mouth of the bay of Corpus Christi [the boundary] shall run in a straight line from within the said bay to the mouth of the Nueces River, thence through the middle of that river in all its course to its source, from this point in a straight line until it meets the present frontier of New Mexico on the east-southeast side until it touches the thirty-seventh degree, which will serve as a limit to both republics, from the point in which it touches the said frontier of the west of New Mexico to the Pacific Ocean.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> History of the Mexican War, by General Cadmus M. Wilcox.

## FIRST EFFORTS AT NEGOTIATION

This proposal, while it did not yield all that the United States demanded, was a tremendous concession. The vast extent of territory thus delimited included the greater part of Texas, all of Utah, practically all of Nevada and the upper part of California. The thirty-seventh parallel of latitude is the northern boundary of the present territories of New Mexico and Arizona, which, with all of California below Santa Cruz, on the north shore of the Bay of Monterey about ninety miles below San Francisco, together with the lower peninsula, hapless Mexico sought to retain.

In transmitting this proposition, the Mexican commissioners accompanied it with a note, which in its simplicity, its honesty, and its dignity, and coming as it did from a weaker power to a stronger, from a conquered country to its conqueror, reflects the highest credit on the Mexican commissioners, besides furnishing one of the best explanations as well as justifications of the position of their country:

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

" Article 4th of the *projet*, which you were pleased to deliver to us on the evening of the 27th ultimo, and which was discussed at our previous conferences, imports the cession of part of Mexico: 1st. The State of Texas. 2d. Of the territory without the limits of the said State, which extends to the left bank of the Bravo and to the southern boundary of New Mexico. 3d. All New Mexico. 4th. Of the two Californias.

" The war which now exists has been caused solely on account of the territory of the State of Texas, to which the Republic of North America presents as a title the act of the same State by which it annexed itself to the North American Confederacy, after having proclaimed its independence of Mexico. The Mexican Republic agreeing (as we have manifested to you that it does) on account of the owing indemnity, to the pretensions of the Government at Washington to the territory of Texas, the cause of the war has disappeared, and it should cease, since all the reasons for continuing it have ceased to exist. In regard to the other territories comprehended in the fourth article of your *projet*, until now the Republic of North America has urged no claim, nor did we believe it possible that any could be alleged. It then could not acquire them by right of conquest, or by that which would re-

## FIRST EFFORTS AT NEGOTIATION

sult from sale or cession, to which it would now force Mexico. But as we are persuaded that the Republic at Washington would not only absolutely repel but would hold in odium the first of these titles, and as, on the other hand, it would be a new thing that war should be made upon a people for the simple reason that it refuses to sell a territory which its neighbor wishes to purchase, we hope, from the justice of the government and people of North America, that the great modification which we have to propose of the cession of territory (without the State of Texas), which is claimed in the said article 4, will not be considered a motive for continuing a war which the worthy General of the North American forces has justly characterized as *uncommon-desnaturalizanda*.

" In our conferences we have declared to you that Mexico can not cede the belt of land comprehended between the left bank of the Bravo and the right of the Nueces. The reason of this is not only the full certainty that the stated territory never has belonged to the State of Texas, nor that it is of great value considered in itself. It is that this zone, with the Bravo at its back, forms the natural frontier of Mexico, as much in a military as in a commercial point of view; and of no people should it be claimed, nor should any people consent to

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abandon such a frontier. But, in order to remove all cause for dissension for the future, the Government of Mexico binds itself not to found new settlements or establish colonies in the space between the two rivers; in this manner preserving it in the depopulated state in which it now exists, presenting equal security to both republics. The preservation of this territory is, according to our instructions, a condition *sine qua non* of peace. Sentiments of honor and delicacy (which your noble character will cause you to estimate properly), more than a calculation of interest, prevent our government from consenting to the dismemberment of New Mexico. On this point we believe it to be superfluous to add anything to what we have already stated to you in our conference.

"The cession of Lower California, little profitable to North America, offers great embarrassments, considering the position of that peninsula opposite our coasts of Sonora, from which it is separated by the Gulf of Cortez.

"You have given to our observations on this subject their true value, and we have learned with satisfaction that you have been convinced by them.

"Besides the preservation of Lower California, it would be necessary for Mexico to retain a portion of the upper; otherwise that peninsula would

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remain without land communication with the remainder of the republic, which would always be a great embarrassment, especially for a non-maritime power such as Mexico. The cession of the part of Upper California offered by our government (for the compensation) will not bring to the United States merely fertile lands and intact mineral wealth, but presents the advantage of an interrupted communication with its territory of Oregon. The wisdom of the Government of Washington and the energy of the American people will know how to draw abundant fruits from the acquisition which we now offer them. . . .

"We have entered into this ingenuous explanation of the motives of the republic for not ceding all the territory beyond the boundaries of Texas which is required of it, because we desire that the government and North American people should be convinced that our partial negative does not proceed from sentiments of aversion generated by the events of this war, or by what it has caused Mexico to suffer, but only from considerations dictated by reason and justice, and which would equally influence at any time with the most friendly people, and in the midst of relations of the strictest amity. ®

"The salutary work of peace can not, in our

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opinion, come to a happy termination if each one of the contending parties should not resolve to abandon some of its original pretensions. This has in all cases happened and all nations have not hesitated in such cases to make great sacrifices to extinguish the desolating flame of war. Mexico and the United States have special reasons for acting in this manner. Not without sorrow ought we to confess that we are giving to humanity the scandalous example of two Christian peoples of two republics in the view of all the monarchies, who, for a dispute concerning boundaries, mutually do themselves all the injury that is possible, when we have more land than is sufficient to populate and cultivate in the bountiful hemisphere in which Providence has cast our lot."<sup>1</sup>

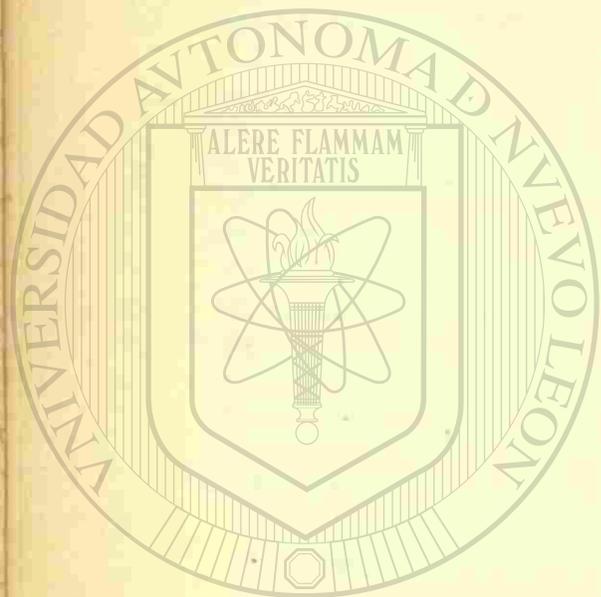
Had the United States been at war simply for the settlement of the western boundary of Texas, and to secure the payment due its citizens from Mexico of amounts which had been awarded by the agreement of 1842, but which had never been paid, certainly here were concessions great enough to have satisfied all the demands of the most exacting advocate of the

<sup>1</sup> History of the Mexican War, by General Cadmus M. Wilcox.

## FIRST EFFORTS AT NEGOTIATION

war, which had been, in the language of its promoters, undertaken "to conquer peace." But the United States had determined upon what it would have and it would be content with no less. *Væ Victis*. Trist's orders were peremptory as to the greater part of the demand. He had no authority to substitute the Mexican proposition for his own, although he had been authorized to concede Lower California to Mexico, and had professed his willingness so far to abate his original demand. As to the rest, so well were the sentiments of the administration known to Trist that he did not think it worth while even to refer the Mexican proposition to the President.

The armistice had been maintained with some difficulty and there had been violation upon both sides. Perceiving that the commissioners of the two powers had come to an *impasse* and that further negotiations would be useless, Scott notified Santa Anna that he considered the armistice terminated and advised him to be governed accordingly.



CHAPTER XIII  
THE FINAL SETTLEMENT

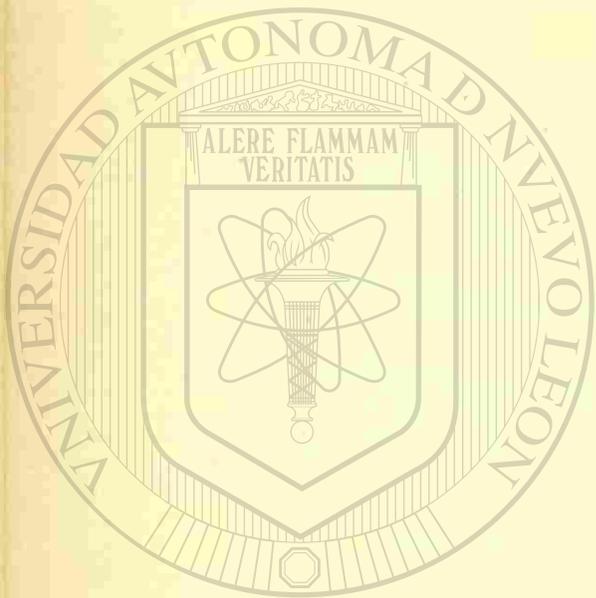
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## CHAPTER XIII

### THE FINAL SETTLEMENT

AFTER the capture of the city and the subsequent collapse of the Mexican defense, Mr. Trist proposed the reopening of negotiations looking toward peace, with the provisional President, Manuel de la Peña-y-Peña, the senior judge of the Supreme Court, who had succeeded Santa Anna when Santa Anna resigned in disgust. The proposition met with a favorable reception, but nothing could be done until Congress met and elected a President *ad interim*. On January 8, 1848, Pedro Maria Anya was chosen to this position and Peña became his Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Mexican Congress authorized them to conclude a treaty of peace with the United States, which was signed at Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, 1848.

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

After the failure of his first effort, Trist had been recalled by President Polk, but he had not yet returned to the United States. Believing that the desire for a settlement of the war was paramount at Washington, and that such a settlement on the lines of his original instructions was certain to be ratified, Mr. Trist disregarded the fact that his commission had lapsed, and negotiated and signed the treaty on the part of the United States, Mexico knowing that he had no authority to do so, but nevertheless consenting to negotiate with him. In this treaty poor Mexico was forced to accede substantially to the settlement which she had rejected only a few months before. President Polk transmitted the treaty to the Senate with the following explanation:

" I lay before the Senate, for their consideration and advice as to its ratification, a treaty of peace, friendship, limits, and settlement, signed at the city of Guadalupe Hidalgo on the 2nd of February, 1848, by N. P. Trist on the part of the United States, and by plenipotentiaries appointed

## THE FINAL SETTLEMENT

for that purpose on the part of the Mexican Government.

" I deem it to be my duty to state that the recall of Mr. Trist as commissioner of the United States, of which Congress was informed in my annual message, was dictated by a belief that his continued presence with the army could be productive of no good, but might do much harm by encouraging the delusive hopes and false impressions of the Mexicans, and that his recall would satisfy Mexico that the United States had no terms of peace more favorable to offer. Directions were given that any propositions for peace which Mexico might make should be received and transmitted by the commanding general of our forces to the United States.

" It was not expected that Mr. Trist would remain in Mexico or continue in the exercise of the functions of the office of commissioner after he received his letter of recall. He has, however, done so, and the plenipotentiaries of Mexico, with a knowledge of the fact, have concluded with him this treaty. I have examined it with a full sense of the extraneous circumstances attending its conclusion and signature, which might be objected to, but conforming as it does substantially on the main questions of boundary and indemnity to the terms which our commissioner, when he left the United

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

States in April last, was authorized to offer, and animated as I am by the spirit which has governed all my official conduct toward Mexico, I have felt it to be my duty to submit it to the Senate for their consideration with a view to its ratification."<sup>1</sup>

For his courageous action in negotiating this treaty Mr. Trist deserves the thanks and approval of his countrymen. The sooner the war was stopped and peace declared, the better it would be for all concerned. Polk blamed his commissioner severely; why, it is difficult to understand, since Trist had fulfilled his directions to the letter. Certain sections of the treaty are interesting. Article 5 defines the boundary line as follows:

"The boundary line between the two Republics shall commence in the Gulf of Mexico, three leagues from land, opposite the mouth of the Rio Grande, otherwise called Rio Bravo del Norte, or opposite the mouth of its deepest branch, if it should have more than one branch emptying directly into the sea; from thence up the middle of that river, fol-

<sup>1</sup>Messages and Papers of the Presidents, vol. iv, by James D. Richardson.

## THE FINAL SETTLEMENT

lowing the deepest channel, where it has more than one, to the point where it strikes the southern boundary of New Mexico; thence, westwardly, along the whole southern boundary of New Mexico (which runs north of the town called Paso) to its western termination; thence, northward, along the western line of New Mexico, until it intersects the first branch of the river Gila (or, if it should not intersect any branch of that river, then to the point on the said line nearest to such branch, and thence in a direct line to the same); thence down the middle of the said branch and of the said river, until it empties into the Rio Colorado; thence across the Rio Colorado, following the division line between Upper and Lower California, to the Pacific Ocean."<sup>1</sup>

The first section of Article 12 provided for a payment for the territory ceded, as follows:

"In consideration of the extension acquired by the boundaries of the United States, as defined in the fifth article of the present treaty, the government of the United States engages to pay to that of the Mexican Republic the sum of fifteen millions of dollars."®

<sup>1</sup>Treaties and Conventions Between the United States and Other Powers Since July 4, 1776.

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

ranges whose snow-capped peaks tower unto the skies. These mountains abound in gold, silver, iron and other valuable metals, as well as coal. Within the ranges lie valleys as fertile as they are fair. Grass mantled plains spreading far and wide from the mountain slopes and foothills invite the pasturage of the world. Cattle and sheep by millions find there a feeding ground. The greatest expanse of timbered lands in the republic, uncut since creation, is found upon vast plateaus upheaved a mile above the level of the sea. In other sections great wastes of sand and desert land abound, as the Staked Plains, the Painted Desert; some of it even lies below sea level, where the heat is tropic in intensity and the dryness terrible in degree, as in Death Valley.

Every product of the temperate zone and every product of the tropic belt are found there. Pines and palms, firs and cacti, growing side by side, typify the contrast as well as wheat and cotton, tobacco and apples, oranges and olives.

## THE FINAL SETTLEMENT

The range of climate is equally great from the cold of the snow-capped mountains, through the temperate, bracing air of Utah, the cool, invigorating weather of the table lands of Texas, Arizona and New Mexico, and the semi-tropic atmosphere of California, to the intense heat of the extreme southern portion.

There, too, are to be found the most curious and interesting of the aboriginal races. The Indian still exists in all states of whatever civilization he has attained, from the wretched "Digger" of California to the enlightened Zuñi and Navajo. And there is the home of the greatest native race of fighters—whatever their other characteristics—that America has produced, the terrible Apache.

Withal, it is a most wonderful section of our country. I have not been everywhere, nor have I seen everything, but I dare affirm that the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River, in Arizona—by universal comment the most sublime natural wonder in the world—is the only thing the realization of which exceeds every

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

possible preconception. No matter how extravagantly it may be described, nor what advanced ideas the mind may form of it, the reality far transcends the imagination. No human being ever looked at it with disappointment. To try to describe it is almost like seeking to trammel the infinite with the limitations of language.

But the Grand Canyon is not all. There are other canyons and mountains which for beauty and majesty challenge the world. And there are wonders which need not the attraction of magnitude to delight the soul. The petrified forests, the trees of the past turned into stone by the Gorgon touch of time—the *dejecta membra* of primeval days, almost as old when the Pyramids were builded, or when Terah died in Haran, as they are to-day—glittering on the soil beside the mesas of soft gray tufa and making the face of the world like an overturned jewel casket, are scarcely less interesting than the Grand Canyon.

It is a land of mystery as well. There are

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the caves of the Cliff Dwellers; there the prehistoric remains of older races, whose hieroglyphics mock the scientists; there the peoples that have gone and left no sign, of whom only do we know that they were—the rest is silence.

Who that has seen these things can forget them?

And it is a land of rare beauty, too. The giant redwoods of Mariposa are not more wonderful to the student of nature than the gnarled dwarf cedars of the uplands, the sagebrush of the desert. That desert swimming in the heat, void of vegetation, bordered like a Roman Senator's toga with the purple of distant hills, the marvelous blend and play of brown and yellow and red and violet; the clarity of the air above it, the brightness of the stars that look upon it—all this has an attractiveness, a fascination, that once felt will ever after be remembered.

And in many places, by the persuasive witchery of irrigation, that desert is being made to blossom like a rose. Some day, when all the

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

local sources of water supply shall have been exhausted—and in some places they have not been touched—some genius, some heaven-sent benefactor, with a Moses-rod, will smite the rock and flood the thirsty land which gives forth its life so abundantly when it has half a chance. Or perhaps from the air or from the sea the water will be drawn. Come it must, and come it will, and teeming millions of the future will occupy the now deserted spaces.

Well may Mexico think sadly of what she lost, well may the United States be thankful for the terrible expiation of national wrong that was required and paid for in 1861-65; and, with a hope that the slate has been wiped clean, that the score has been settled, with chastened soul and kindly heart essay to do better in the future. "What doth the Lord require of thee, O people, but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God" among men and nations, great or small, forever?

## CHAPTER XIV

### WHAT IT COST—A CHEAPER WAY

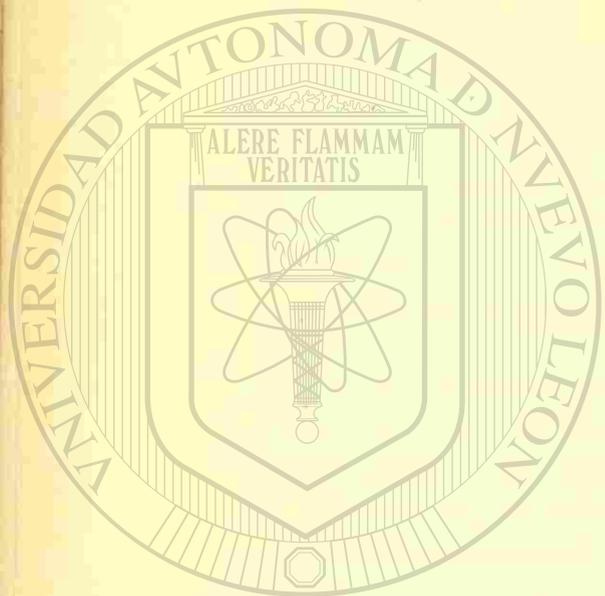
## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

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## CHAPTER .XIV

### WHAT IT COST—A CHEAPER WAY

I SAID in the beginning of this book that the Conquest of the Southwest added the largest increment of territory to the original boundaries of the United States which the country has ever received.

There is a prevalent opinion that the Louisiana Purchase included a greater area than the transaction under discussion. I wrote to the General Land Office to settle the question and received the following reply sustaining my contention.

*WASHINGTON, D. C., August 4, 1904.*

“ Complying with the request contained in your letter of June 20, 1904, and reiterated July 28, 1904, I have to state that the areas of the cessions to the United States by Mexico and France, which you designate as ‘ The Conquest of the Southwest,’ and the Louisiana Purchase territory as delimited by the treaty of 1819 with Spain, have been carefully estimated by this office, as appears below: ®

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

"Area of Louisiana Purchase, excluding the territory abandoned by treaty of 1819 with Spain.....		825,715 sq. mi.
Texas annexed in 1845.....	389,795 sq. mi.	
Ceded by Mexico, in 1848....	530,049 "	
Gadsden Purchase, 1853....	29,964 "	
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>949,808 "</b>	
Difference in favor of territory designated as 'The Conquest of the Southwest' over Louisiana Purchase, delimited by treaty of 1819.....		124,098 sq. mi.

"The Louisiana Purchase from France in 1803, as delineated by red border line on the General Land Office map of the United States of 1903, is 905,760 square miles.

"The fact that France, in 1803, ceded territory which in 1819 was abandoned to Spain by the United States, should not deprive the Louisiana Purchase of any fraction of the 905,760 square miles last noted above, and, on the other hand, the portion delimited by that treaty should very properly be considered as a part of the territory ceded by Texas in 1845; so that the area through 'The Conquest of the Southwest,' amounting to 949,808 square miles, is greater than the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, amounting to 905,760 square miles, by 44,048 square miles.

"The area of territory ceded by France in 1803,

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and in 'The Conquest of the Southwest,' is 1,775,523 square miles.

"Very respectfully,

"JOHN H. FIMPLE,

"Acting Commissioner."

It will be seen that even crediting France with that portion of the territory lying south of the Arkansas River and west of the hundredth meridian, which was afterward released to Spain by the treaty of 1819, the Conquest of the Southwest is greater by forty-four thousand square miles, and disregarding the portion mentioned by one hundred and twenty-four thousand square miles.

As to population the balance is greatly in favor of the Louisiana Purchase, as is shown by the following letter from the Acting Director of the Department of Commerce and Labor:

"WASHINGTON, August 24, 1904.

"I have to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of the 13th instant, in which you request an estimate of the population of the Louisiana Purchase, and 'The Conquest of the Southwest.' In reply thereto, I take pleasure in enclosing you herewith

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

my estimate of the population June 1, 1900, in the accessions of territory described by you, and as outlined on the Land Office map of 1902. You will note that the population in the strip of territory bounded by the Mississippi river, the Perdido river, and the 31st parallel of latitude, is given separately, and may be added to my estimate of the Louisiana Purchase, if desired. This is the territory commonly referred to as 'in dispute with Spain.'

"Trusting that the estimates enclosed will answer your purpose, I am

"Very respectfully,

"EDWARD MCCAULEY,  
"Acting Director."

Estimated population, Louisiana Purchase, in 1900:

Including the complete States of Arkansas, Indian Territory, Iowa, Missouri, and Nebraska, and portions of the States of Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Wyoming:

13,439,721.

<sup>1</sup>This has nothing to do with the question under discussion and I have disregarded it.

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NOTE.—This estimate does not include the territory in Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi bounded by the Mississippi river on the west, the Perdido river on the east, and south of the 31st parallel of latitude, and referred to as the "Territory in dispute with Spain." The estimated population in 1900 of this area is 252,590.

Estimated population, "The Conquest of the Southwest," in 1900:

Including the complete States of California, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah, and portions of Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Wyoming:

5,263,272.

With this knowledge of the extent and population of "The Conquest of the Southwest" it will be interesting to determine as nearly as may be just what the territory cost us. We assumed and paid the claims of our citizens against Mexico to the amount of over three millions of dollars. We paid fifteen millions indemnity by the Treaty of Peace. We added ten millions to the Mexican exchequer by the Gadsden Purchase. We gave Texas ten mil-

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lions for the relinquishment to the United States of her extravagant claims to the westward of the present boundary line. I estimate the military expenses of the war as at least eighty millions and the naval as ten millions more. I arrived at these figures for the army and navy by a comparison between the military and naval appropriations for two years prior to the war and the actual amount expended during the war and for one year after, all figures being taken from the official reports of the Secretary of War. I followed the same process with regard to the navy, and think the figures resulting, as shown in the following table, which I have given above in round numbers, are sufficiently accurate:

Appropriation for the United States	
Army for the year of 1844.....	\$3,123,433.00
Appropriation for the United States	
Army for the year of 1845.....	3,909,766.30
	2) \$7,033,199.30
	\$3,516,599.65 av. 1844-45
	4
Amount for four years under ordinary conditions.....	\$14,066,398.60

WHAT IT COST

Appropriation for the United States	
Army for the year 1846.....	\$6,778,082.67
Appropriation for the United States	
Army for the year 1847.....	32,478,461.38
Appropriation for the United States	
Army for the year 1848.....	46,975,439.62
Appropriation for the United States	
Army for the year 1849.....	10,612,371.94
Total war expenses.....	\$96,844,355.61
Average four years.....	14,066,398.60
Excess over average.....	\$82,777,957.01
Appropriation for the United States	
Navy for the year 1844.....	\$6,134,757.63
Appropriation for the United States	
Navy for the year 1845.....	5,224,660.66
	2) \$11,359,418.29
	\$5,679,709.14 av. 1844-45
	4
Amount for four years under ordinary conditions.....	\$22,718,836.56
Appropriation for the United States	
Navy for the year 1846.....	\$6,501,703.16
Appropriation for the United States	
Navy for the year 1847.....	7,495,694.70
Appropriation for the United States	
Navy for the year 1848.....	9,075,330.10
Appropriation for the United States	
Navy for the year 1849.....	10,570,608.71
Total navy expenses.....	\$33,643,336.67
Average four years.....	22,718,836.56
Excess over average.....	\$10,924,500.11

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

The Pension Commissioner informs me that up to July 1, 1904, we have paid the enormous sum of over thirty-five millions for service pensions on account of this war. To this sum may be added an amount which I estimate as between three and four millions for disability pensions. These items may be summed up as follows:

Claims of Mexico—assumed and paid.....	\$3,208,374.96
Amount of indemnity awarded by the Treaty of Peace .....	15,000,000.00
Interest on deferred payments .....	1,800,000.00
Gadsden Purchase.....	10,000,000.00
Paid Texas for the relinquishment of her western claims .....	10,000,000.00
Army expenses.....	80,000,000.00
Navy expenses.....	10,000,000.00
Pensions.....	38,662,130.35
Total.....	\$168,670,505.31

As will be seen by the foregoing table the total of these several amounts is over one hundred and sixty-eight and a half millions of dollars. It will be safe to call it one hundred and seventy millions of dollars. In other words, we paid about one hundred and eighty dollars

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for each square mile of territory, or thirty-two dollars for each member of the population to-day.<sup>1</sup>

Suppose, convinced that we must have this territory to round out and complete our national domain, that we had gone to Mexico and offered her twenty-five, fifty, seventy-five, or even one hundred millions of dollars? We would have been greatly the gainer from a financial point of view even if she had demanded the highest figure, and as a matter of opinion, I do not believe there would have been any hesitation on her part in eagerly agreeing to the lowest figure. Even if she had taken advantage of our evident desire, to insist upon as much as one hundred and seventy millions we would still have been the gainer if we had paid it rather than have gone to war. The loss

<sup>1</sup> It has been estimated that the cost of the Revolution was upward of one hundred and seventy millions of dollars. We paid France for the Louisiana Purchase fifteen millions of dollars. The price of Alaska was seven million two hundred thousand dollars, and the Philippines cost us twenty millions in cash to Spain, besides the enormous expenses of the war.

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

of life in the war on our side was considerable. The disorganization of various sections of our people was still greater and it is impossible to state in definite terms what other consequences, deleterious and harmful to us either as individuals or a people, ensued from this national buccaneering enterprise. Certainly we would not have stained our otherwise reasonably clean escutcheon with the ineffable blot of injustice and oppression. Yet the individual who should have proposed to satisfy the land-grasping spirit of the United States, and at the same time secure the peaceful cooperation of Mexico by paying what would be considered such an extravagant sum as fifty millions of dollars, to say nothing of the larger amounts, would have been laughed to scorn. All this goes to show how much cheaper almost any settlement is than war. There are times when nations apparently must fight, but they should realize when they do fight that they are indulging in a luxury, and that they are attempting to adjudicate their differences by the

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most costly of all methods. This is a material argument for peace which is not without weight. Nations may do well to ponder upon it before they have recourse to arms.

To complete this statistical chapter I subjoin a letter from the Military Secretary of the War Department, courteously sent me in answer to a letter of inquiry which I had addressed to him:

*WASHINGTON, July 23, 1904.*

"In compliance with the request, contained in your letter of the 21st instant, for information relative to the number of men who enlisted and served in the Mexican War, and the number of casualties among them, I am directed by the Acting Secretary of War to advise you as follows:

"It appears from a report of the Adjutant General, dated December 3, 1849, and published in Executive Document No. 24, House of Representatives, 31st Congress, 1st Session, with certain additions compiled from the official records on file in this office, that there were 74,188 volunteers and 26,922 regulars, making a total of 101,110 officers and men received into the service of the United States during the War with Mexico. This does not include the strength of the regular army (7,365

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

officers and men) at the commencement of the war.

"From the sources indicated above it has been ascertained that the 74,188 volunteers were enlisted for terms of service as follows:

"For three months.....	1,390	officers and men
"For six months (held for three months only).....	11,211	" "
"For twelve months.....	27,063	" "
"During the war with Mexico.....	34,524	" "

"It is shown by the report of the Adjutant General referred to above that 844 of the twelve-months volunteers were reenlisted, or 'remustered,' and, consequently, are counted twice in that report. There is no doubt but that some of the 1,390 three-months volunteers, and also some of the 11,211 six-months volunteers, and probably more than 844 of the 27,063 twelve-months volunteers were subsequently enlisted 'for the war,' and, consequently, are counted twice in the tables. But their numbers can not be ascertained and, therefore, the number of individuals received into the military service of the United States during the War with Mexico can not be definitely determined.

"It also appears, from the same sources, that the losses sustained by the army of the United States during that war were as follows:

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NATURE OF CASUALTIES.	Volunteers.	Regulars.	Total.
Died, total.....	7,078	5,818	12,896
Killed in action.....	514	530	1,044
Died of wounds.....	100	405	505
Ordinary deaths.....	6,273	4,714	10,986
Accidental deaths.....	192	169	361
Discharged, total.....	9,230	3,036	12,256
For disability.....	7,200	2,549	9,749
By civil authority.....	206	77	283
By order.....	1,814	410	2,224
Resigned.....	327	129	456
Wounded in action.....	1,318	2,075	3,393
Deserted.....	3,976	2,849	6,825

"It is stated in the report of the Adjutant General, referred to above, that 'It is believed that many who died of wounds are reported as cases of ordinary deaths.' It is also stated that 'The discharges on account of disease or disability, and the number of ordinary deaths reported to the Adjutant General's Office, and exhibited in the table, must be much less than the actual loss, owing to missing muster-rolls and returns, which could never be obtained, although repeatedly written for to commanders of regiments and corps.'

"Very respectfully,

"F. C. AINSWORTH,

"The Military Secretary."

### CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

I am informed by letter from the Secretary of the Navy that similar figures for the Navy are not available. There were in all probability, however, about eight thousand seamen and marines in the service of the country, of whom probably not more than two hundred and fifty were killed in action.

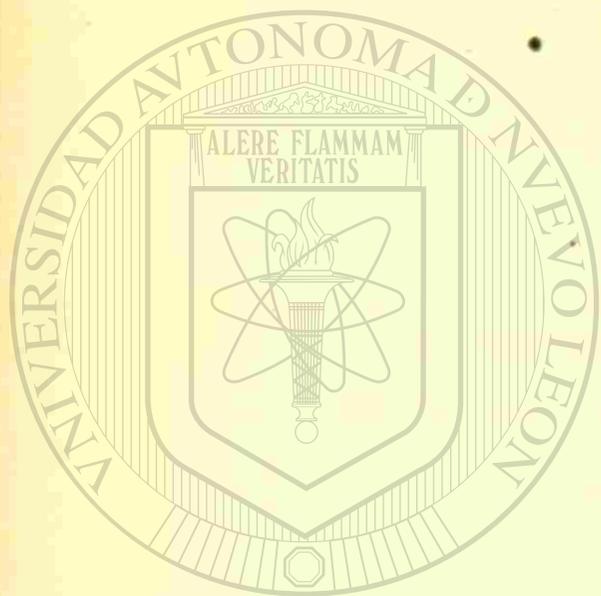
There are still on the pension roll of the United States the surprising number of thirteen thousand pensioners of the Mexican War. Five thousand of these are survivors, the rest widows. The number of pensioners is diminishing at the rate of about eight hundred a year, mostly among the survivors. Owing to the pernicious practice, at one time widely prevalent, and which perhaps still obtains to some degree, of young women marrying old veterans on the verge of the grave, for the sake of a dependent widow's pension, the number of widows on the roll is apt to show little decrease for some time. And we will probably still be paying pensions on account of this costly experiment in unrighteousness for twen-

### WHAT IT COST

ty years to come, or three-quarters of a century after the war was terminated!<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The last report of the Commissioner of Pensions shows three widows of Revolutionary soldiers, one survivor of the War of 1812, and nine hundred and eighteen widows of soldiers who fought in that war, still on the rolls and drawing pensions!

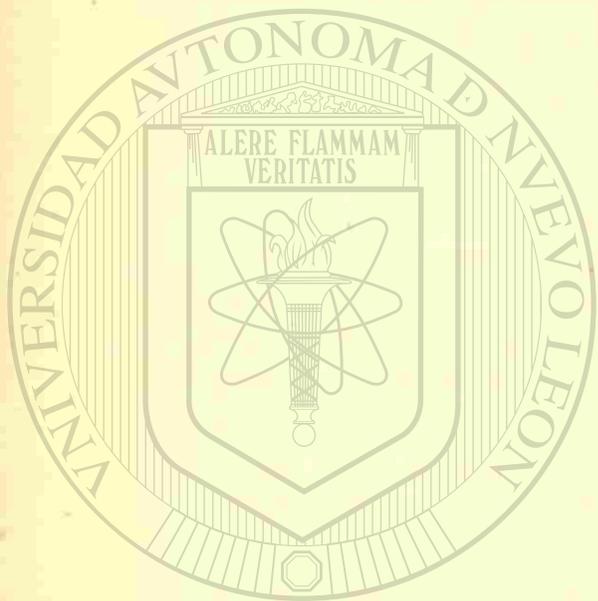


# UANL

CHAPTER XV  
CONCLUDING REMARKS

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## CHAPTER XV

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

THE discussion of the future settlement of the Southwest, the development of the country, the methods by which states were created and delimited, falls outside the scope of this monograph. Yet the story would not be complete without at least a brief reference to the temporary settlement of that question, which, according to my view, was back of the whole undertaking, *i.e.*, the slavery question.

In the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, nothing was said about slavery in the newly acquired territory. The matter was ignored. Much had been said and much continued to be said in Congress and in the United States, however, for four years from the beginning of the war, or until the famous Compromise of 1850.

At the request of President Polk, transmit-

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

ted by his message of August 7, 1846, a bill authorizing the placing at his disposal of a sum of money to be used by him as an advance payment in purchasing territory from the Mexican government, in case he should be able to terminate the war, was introduced in Congress. Representative David Wilmot, of Pennsylvania, offered an amendment to the bill which provided, "that neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist in any part of said territory, except for crime, whereof the party shall first be duly convicted." This amendment is known in history as "The Wilmot Proviso." The amended bill passed the House, but failed in the Senate. Early in the following year a similar bill, with the same amendment, appropriating three million dollars for the same purpose again passed the House, but the amendment was stricken out in the Senate as before, and the House finally agreed to it. Some of the reasons for these senatorial rejections are given in the words of Thomas H. Benton, as quoted by Roosevelt:

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"Benton's position on the Wilmot Proviso is worth giving in his own words: 'That measure was rejected again as heretofore, and by the votes of those who were opposed to extending slavery into the territories, because it was unnecessary and inoperative—irritating to the slave States, without benefit to the free States, a mere work of supererogation, of which the fruit was discontent. It was rejected, not on the principle of non-intervention; not on the principle of leaving to the territories to do as they pleased on the question, but because there had been intervention; because Mexican law and constitution had intervened, had abolished slavery by law in those dominions; which law would remain in force until repealed by Congress. All that the opponents to the extension of slavery had to do, then, was to do nothing. And they did nothing.'"<sup>1</sup>

Senator Lewis Cass, of Michigan, also opposed the proviso:

"His reasons were six: 1. The present was not the time to introduce a sectional topic. 2. It would be quite in season to provide for the government of

<sup>1</sup>American Statesmen, xxiii: Thomas H. Benton, by Theodore Roosevelt.

## CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHWEST

a territory after it was obtained. 3. Any such proviso expressed too much confidence in the outcome of the war. 4. Legislation at that time would be inoperative, and not binding on succeeding Congresses. 5. The adoption of the proviso might bring the war to an untimely issue. 6. It would prevent the acquisition of a single foot of territory, and thus disappoint a vast majority of the American people."<sup>1</sup>

The out-and-out opponents of slavery, the "Abolitionists," as they began to call themselves, supported the proviso vigorously, and although temporarily defeated they persisted in their efforts again and again with increasing zeal and determination. The matter was not settled, therefore; like Banquo's ghost, it would not down. Efforts to force the adoption of the proviso in various forms were renewed at every possible opportunity. Abraham Lincoln once said, "that he had voted for the principle of the Wilmot Proviso 'about

<sup>1</sup>American Statesmen, xxiv: Lewis Cass, by Andrew C. McLaughlin.

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forty-two times,' which, if not an accurate mathematical computation, was a vivid expression of his staunch adherence to the doctrine"<sup>1</sup> and also an indication of the frequency with which the opponents of slavery endeavored to secure its passage in some shape.

Polk was succeeded in the Presidency by the Whig candidate, General Zachary Taylor, the hero of Buena Vista. The most important question before the new administration was whether California, which had been filled with American settlers, and which had developed enormously under the stimulus afforded by the discovery of gold, should be admitted as a free or a slave-holding state.

The matter had come up previously in 1848 over the question of territorial governments for Oregon, New Mexico and California. A conference committee of the House and Senate "reported a bill, providing territorial govern-

<sup>1</sup>American Statesmen, xxv: Abraham Lincoln, by John T. Morse, Jr.

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ments for Oregon, New Mexico, and California, which prohibited slavery in Oregon, but left the question whether the Constitution permitted slavery in California and New Mexico to be decided by the territorial courts, with the right of appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States. The bill passed in the Senate, but was tabled in the House. Thereupon the House prepared and sent to the Senate a bill prohibiting slavery in Oregon, to which the Senate added an amendment carrying the Missouri Compromise line of 36° 30' N. from the 100th meridian to the Pacific. The House disagreed with the amendment; whereupon the Senate, on the last day of the session gave way, and passed the bill, with the express prohibition of slavery."<sup>1</sup>

Although a Southerner and a slave-holder, Taylor recommended the admission of California as a free state, its citizens having declared their desire and intention, so far as

<sup>1</sup> The Cambridge Modern History: The United States, vol. vii, chap. xii.

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they could do so by adopting a free-state constitution, not to allow slavery within its borders.

This, when Oregon would be admitted, would destroy the carefully preserved balance of power in the Senate between the free and the slave-holding states. And the contest raged with greater acrimony and bitterness than any previous struggle that had been engendered and discussed between different sections or different political parties.

It was finally decided by the Compromise of 1850. The aged veteran, Henry Clay, emerged from his retirement and accepted a seat in the Senate to do what he could to bring peace and harmony into the councils of the warring sections.

On January 29, 1850, to meet the difficulties of the situation, Clay introduced a series of eight resolutions to be followed by appropriate bills, the intent of which was to compromise the conflicting claims of North and South. Says Carl Schurz:

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“ The first declared that California should be speedily admitted as a State—of course, with her free-state constitution; the second, that, as slavery did not by law exist and was not likely to be introduced in any of the territories acquired from Mexico, Congress should provide territorial governments for New Mexico and Utah, without any restriction as to slavery, thus sacrificing the Wilmot Proviso, without, however, authorizing slaveholders to take their slaves there, thus adjourning the slavery question as to those territories to a future day; the third and fourth, that a boundary line between Texas and New Mexico should be fixed, giving to Texas but little of the New Mexican territory she claimed, but granting her a certain sum of money for the payment of that part of her public debt for which, during her independent existence, her customs revenue had been pledged; the fifth, that it was expedient to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia without the consent of Maryland, etc.; the sixth, that the slave trade in the District should be prohibited; the seventh, that a more effectual fugitive-slave law should be enacted; and the eighth, that Congress had no power to prohibit or obstruct the trade in slaves between the slaveholding States. The preamble declared the purpose of these resolutions to be ‘for peace, concord,

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

and harmony of these States, to settle and adjust amicably all existing questions of controversy between them arising out of the institution of slavery upon a fair, equitable, and just basis.’ ”<sup>1</sup>

On this subject Professor McLaughlin has written:

“ There was great discontent concerning the various proposals of Clay’s compromise measure. One objected to one clause and another to another clause, and finally the whole subject was, on April 13th, referred to a select committee of thirteen, of which Clay was chairman and Cass was a member. On May 8th this committee reported, and recommended three bills. The first provided for three distinct objects: the immediate admittance of California [as a free State, of course.—C. T. B.]; the establishment of territorial governments for New Mexico and Utah, with the stipulation that the territorial legislature should pass no law with reference to slavery [and providing that when fit to be received as a State each might come in with or without slavery as her constitution might determine.—C. T. B.]; the settlement of the boundary<sup>®</sup>

<sup>1</sup> American Statesmen, xx: Henry Clay, vol. ii, by Carl Schurz.

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of Texas, and the payment to that State of a sum of money [ten million dollars.—C. T. B.] as a recompense for giving up her claim to part of Mexico. The second bill provided for the return of fugitive slaves [the odious 'Fugitive Slave Law.'—C. T. B.]; the third, for the discontinuance of the slave trade in the District of Columbia."<sup>1</sup>

The debate on these resolutions was one of the greatest ever heard in Congress. The speeches of Clay, Seward, Webster, Calhoun—the latter too feeble to speak, but sustained by his indomitable will in spite of a mortal illness, forcing himself to write, and to occupy his chair in the Senate while another read, his final plea—were among the most brilliant and thoughtful orations in our political history.

"Calhoun had suffered for some time from an acute pulmonary affection, which had recently become aggravated by a heart disease. He himself was no more able to address the Senate for any length of time. On March 4, 1850, his carefully prepared speech was read by Mr. Mason, of Vir-

<sup>1</sup> American Statesmen, xxiv: Lewis Cass, by Andrew C. McLaughlin.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

ginia, to the Senate. Every Senator listened with profound attention and unfeigned emotion; the galleries were hushed into the deepest silence by the extraordinary scene, which had something of the impressive solemnity of a funeral ceremony."<sup>1</sup>

People came from far and near to hear these speeches, especially that of Henry Clay. The three bills referred to above were passed during August, 1850. A temporary settlement was thus effected, the North gaining more by it than the South.

Here my chronicle ends. Suffice to say that a further and more definite settlement of the great question of slavery was postponed to be fought out between Fort Sumter and Appomattox. The relation of the black man to the white was changed by the Civil War and the passage of the constitutional amendments resulting therefrom. But the change was not so material as it was at first hoped and be-

<sup>1</sup> American Statesmen, xxii: John C. Calhoun, by Dr. H. Von Holst.

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lieved to be. Slavery has vanished, but the question involved in the presence of the negro in this country is still with us; it is one of our gravest problems and demands settlement from the best blood, the sanest thought and the highest patriotism of the Republic. Sometimes I despair of its satisfactory solution, and yet I know that in His own good time God will raise up a leader for us who will show us the way. Meantime, it behooves us, by our own honest consecrated endeavors, to do our best to fit ourselves at least to follow intelligently that leading when it comes.

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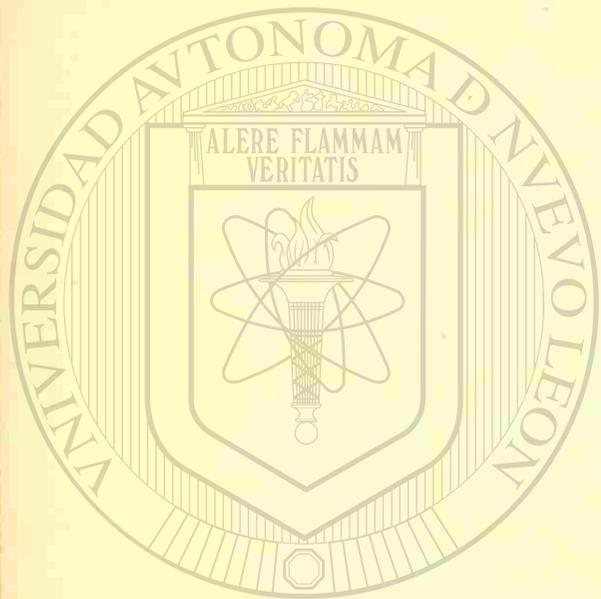
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