

XXXVI.

The war with Mexico.

Sir, I scarcely understand the meaning of all this myself. If we are to vindicate our rights, by battles in bloody fields of war, let us do it. If that is not the plan, why then let us call back our armies into our own territory, and propose a treaty with Mexico, based upon the proposition that money is better for her and land is better for us. Thus we can treat Mexico like an equal, and do honor to ourselves. But what is it you ask? You have taken from Mexico one-fourth of her territory, and you now propose to run a line comprehending about another third, and for what? I ask, Mr. President, for what? What has Mexico got from you for parting with two-thirds of her domain? She has given you ample redress for every injury of which you have complained.

She has submitted to the award of your commissioners, and, up to the time of the rupture with Texas, faithfully paid it. And for all that she has lost (not through or by you, but which loss has been your gain), what requital do we, her strong, rich, robust neighbor, make? Do we send our missionaries there, "to point the way to heaven?" Or do we send the schoolmasters to pour daylight into her dark places, to aid her infant strength to conquer freedom, and reap the fruit of the independence herself alone had won? No, no; none of this do we. But we send regiments, storm towns, and our colonels prate of liberty in the midst of the solitudes their ravages have made. They proclaim the empty forms of social compact to a people bleeding and maimed with wounds received in defending their hearth-stones against the invasion of those very men who shoot them down, and then exhort them to be free. Your chaplain of the navy throws aside the New Testament and seizes a bill of rights. He takes military possession of some town in California, and instead of teaching the plan of the atonement and the way of salvation to the poor, ignorant Celt, he presents Colt's pistol to his ear, and calls on him

to take "trial by jury and habeas corpus," or nine bullets in his head. Oh! Mr. President, are you not the light of the earth, if not its salt?

What is the territory, Mr. President, which you propose to wrest from Mexico? It is consecrated to the heart of the Mexican by many a well-fought battle with his old Castilian master. His Bunker Hills, and Saratogas, and Yorktowns are there! The Mexican can say, "There I bled for liberty! and shall I surrender that consecrated home of my affections to the Anglo-Saxon invaders? What do they want with it? They have Texas already. They have possessed themselves of the territory between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. What else do they want? To what shall I point my children as memorials of that independence which I bequeath to them, when those battle-fields shall have passed from my possession?"

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 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?

THOMAS CORWIN.

Third Part.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

OF THE PRINCIPAL HEROES

—OF THE—

Independence of Mexico.