

a free citizen, a well-informed, good man, acting with others like him. This is the lesson which is taught in the charter of our independence; this is the lesson which our example is to teach the world.

The epic poet of Rome—the faithful subject of an absolute prince—in unfolding the duties and destinies of his countrymen, bids them look down with disdain on the polished and intellectual arts of Greece, and deem their arts to be

“To rule the nations with imperial sway;  
To spare the tribes that yield; fight down the proud;  
And force the mood of peace upon the world.”

A nobler counsel breathes from the charter of our independence; a happier province belongs to our free republic. Peace we would extend, but by persuasion and example—the moral force, by which alone it can prevail among the nations. Wars we may encounter, but it is in the sacred character of the injured and the wronged; to raise the trampled rights of humanity from the dust; to rescue the mild form of liberty from her abode among the prisons and the scaffolds of the elder world, and to seat her in the chair of state among her adoring children; to give her beauty for ashes; a healthful action for her cruel agony; to put at last a period to her warfare on earth; to tear her star-spangled banner from the perilous ridges of battle and plant it on the rock of ages. There be it fixed forever,—the power of a free people slumbering in its folds, their peace reposing in its shade!

## THOMAS CORWIN



THOMAS CORWIN, American statesman and orator, was born in Bourbon Co., Ky., July 29, 1794, and died at Washington, D. C., Dec. 18, 1865. Removing with his parents to Ohio in 1798, his youth was passed on his father's farm. His educational opportunities were meagre, but early in life he began the study of law, and in 1818 was admitted to the Bar. Four years later he entered the Ohio legislature, making a speech in opposition to the proposed introduction of the whipping-post into Ohio. After seven years' service in the legislature, he entered Congress and became prominent there as a Whig leader. He resigned in 1840 to become a candidate for the governorship of Ohio. During the political campaign that ensued, Corwin spoke several times a day for over three months. He was elected by a large majority, but was defeated in a similar contest in 1842. In 1844, he was elected to the United States Senate, where he was a conspicuous opponent of the war with Mexico. During the administration of President Fillmore (1850-53), Corwin was Secretary of the Treasury, and on the expiration of Fillmore's term he returned to the practice of his profession at Lebanon, O. From 1858 to 1861, he sat in Congress, and was subsequently Minister to Mexico (1861-64). Corwin was a brilliant speaker, alike at the Bar and in Congress, and his social qualities made him a general favorite. His strenuous opposition to the Mexican War, however, interfered with his political advancement. His "Life and Speeches," edited by Strohn, were published in 1859 at Dayton, Ohio.

### FROM SPEECH ON THE MEXICAN WAR

DELIVERED IN THE UNITED STATES SENATE, FEBRUARY 11, 1847

THE President has said he does not expect to hold Mexican territory by conquest. Why then conquer it? Why waste thousands of lives and millions of money fortifying towns and creating governments, if, at the end of the war, you retire from the graves of your soldiers and the desolated country of your foes, only to get money from Mexico for the expense of all your toil and sacrifice? Who ever heard, since Christianity was propagated among men, of a nation taxing its people, enlisting its young men, and marching off two thousand miles to fight a people merely to

be paid for it in money? What is this but hunting a market for blood, selling the lives of your young men, marching them in regiments to be slaughtered and paid for like oxen and brute beasts?

Sir, this is, when stripped naked, that atrocious idea first promulgated in the President's message, and now advocated here, of fighting on till we can get our indemnity for the past as well as the present slaughter. We have chastised Mexico, and if it were worth while to do so, we have, I dare say, satisfied the world that we can fight. What now? Why the mothers of America are asked to send another of their sons to blow out the brains of Mexicans because they refuse to pay the price of the first who fell there fighting for glory! And what if the second fall, too? The Executive, the parental reply is, "We shall have him paid for; we shall get full indemnity!"

Sir, I have no patience with this flagitious notion of fighting for indemnity, and this under the equally absurd and hypocritical pretence of securing an honorable peace. An honorable peace! If you have accomplished the objects of the war—if indeed you had an object which you dare to avow—cease to fight and you will have peace. Conquer your insane love of false glory, and you will "conquer a peace."

Sir, if your commander-in-chief will not do this, I will endeavor to compel him, and as I find no other means I shall refuse supplies—without the money of the people he cannot go further. He asks me for that money; I wish him to bring your armies home, to cease shedding blood for money; if he refuses, I will refuse supplies, and then I know he must, he will cease his further sale of the lives of my countrymen.

May we not, ought we not now to do this? I can hear no reason why we should not, except this: It is said that we

are in war, wrongfully it may be, but, being in, the President is responsible, and we must give him the means he requires! He responsible! Sir, we, we are responsible, if, having the power to stay this plague, we refuse to do so. When it shall be so—when the American Senate and the American House of Representatives can stoop from their high position and yield a dumb compliance with the behests of a president who is, for the time being, commander of your army; when they will open the treasury with one hand, and the veins of all the soldiers in the land with the other, merely because the President commands, then, sir, it matters little how soon some Cromwell shall come into this hall and say, "The Lord hath no further need of you here."

When we fail to do the work "whereunto we were sent," we shall be, we ought to be, removed, and give place to others who will. The fate of the barren fig-tree will be ours—Christ cursed it and it withered.

Mr. President, I dismiss this branch of the subject, and beg the indulgence of the Senate to some reflections on the particular bill now under consideration. I voted for a bill somewhat like the present at the last session—our army was then in the neighborhood of our line. I then hoped that the President did sincerely desire a peace. Our army had not then penetrated far into Mexico and I did hope that with the two millions then proposed we might get peace and avoid the slaughter, the shame, the crime, of an aggressive, unprovoked war. But now 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. This is the modest—I should say, the monstrous—proposition now before us as explained by the chairman of the committee on foreign relations [Mr. Sevier], who reported the bill. I cannot now give my consent to this.

But, sir, I do not believe you will succeed. I am not informed of your prospects of success with this measure of peace. The chairman of the committee on foreign relations tells us that he has every reason to believe that peace can be obtained if we grant this appropriation. What reason have you, Mr. Chairman, for that opinion? “Facts which I cannot disclose to you—correspondence which it would be improper to name here—facts which I know, but which you are not permitted to know, have satisfied the committee that peace may be purchased if you will but grant these three millions of dollars.”

Now, Mr. President, I wish to know if I am required to act upon such opinions of the chairman of the committee on foreign relations, formed upon facts which he refuses to disclose to me? No! I must know the facts before I can form my judgment. But I am to take it for granted that there must be some prospect of an end to this dreadful war—for it is a dreadful war, being, as I believe in my conscience it is, an unjust war. Is it possible that for three millions you can purchase a peace with Mexico? How? By the purchase of California? Mr. President, I know not what facts the chairman of the committee on foreign affairs may have had access to. I know not what secret agents have been whispering into the ears of the authorities of Mexico; but of one thing I am certain, that by a cession of California and New Mexico you never can purchase a peace with her.

You may wrest provinces from Mexico by war—you may hold them by the right of the strongest—you may rob her; but a treaty of peace to that effect with the people of Mexico, legitimately and freely made, you never will have! I thank God that it is so, as well for the sake of the Mexican people as ourselves; for, unlike the senator from Alabama [Mr. Bagby], I do not value the life of a citizen of the United States above the lives of a hundred thousand Mexican women and children—a rather cold sort of philanthropy, in my judgment. For the sake of Mexico, then, as well as our own country, I rejoice that it is an impossibility that you can obtain by treaty from her those territories under the existing state of things.

I am somewhat at a loss to know on what plan of operations gentlemen having charge of this war intend to proceed. We hear much said of the terror of your arms. The affrighted Mexican, it is said, when you shall have drenched his country in blood, will sue for peace, and thus you will indeed “conquer peace.” This is the heroic and savage tone in which we have heretofore been lectured by our friends on the other side of the chamber, especially by the senator from Michigan [General Cass].

But suddenly the chairman of the committee on foreign relations comes to us with a smooth phrase of diplomacy made potent by the gentle suasion of gold. The chairman of the committee on military affairs calls for thirty millions of money and ten thousand regular troops; these, we are assured, shall “conquer peace,” if the obstinate Celt refuses to treat till we shall whip him in another field of blood. What a delightful scene in the nineteenth century of the Christian era!

What an interesting sight to see these two representatives

of war and peace moving in grand procession through the halls of the Montezumas! The senator from Michigan [General Cass], red with the blood of recent slaughter, the gory spear of Achilles in his hand and the hoarse clarion of war in his mouth, blowing a blast "so loud and deep" that the sleeping echoes of the lofty Cordilleras start from their caverns and return the sound, till every ear from Panama to Santa Fé is deafened with the roar. By his side, with "modest mien and downcast look," comes the senator from Arkansas [Mr. Sevier], covered from head to foot with a gorgeous robe, glittering and embossed with three millions of shining gold, putting to shame "the wealth of Ormus or of Ind." The olive of Minerva graces his brow; in his right hand is the delicate rebec, from which are breathed, in Lydian measure, notes "that tell of naught but love and peace."

I fear very much you will scarcely be able to explain to the simple, savage mind of the half-civilized Mexicans the puzzling dualism of this scene, at once gorgeous and grotesque. 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 com-

plained. 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 hearthstones against the invasion of these very men who shoot them down and then exhort them to be free. Your chaplains of the navy throw aside the New Testament and seize a bill of rights. The Rev. Don Walter Colton, I see, abandons the Sermon on the Mount, and betakes himself to Blackstone and Kent, and is elected a justice of the peace! 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 lights of the earth, if not its salt? You, you are indeed opening the eyes of the blind in Mexico, with a most emphatic and exoteric power. Sir, if all this were not a sad, mournful truth, it would be the very *ne plus ultra* of the ridiculous.

But, sir, let us see what, as the chairman of the committee on foreign relations explains it, we are to get by the combined processes of conquest and treaty.

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 battlefields 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 battlefields 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—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 Allegheny 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 pretence of 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 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. 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 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. I dare say, when Tamerlane