

Bk. VII. other evils, caused an immense immigration, which again
Ch. 5. resulted in the settlement of the Western States. Iowa
A. D. and Florida were admitted in 1846, and Wisconsin in
 1848. the following year.

Election of Taylor. In June, 1848, was held a great Whig convention, in Philadelphia, which nominated General Taylor for President and Millard Fillmore for Vice-President. The hero of the Mexican war was chosen by a considerable majority. On the 4th of March, 1849, President Polk

Death of Polk. retired to private life, but survived his retirement only a few months. He died, June 15th, 1849.

CHAPTER VI.

ADMINISTRATION OF GENERAL TAYLOR.

THE 4th of March occurring on Sunday, the inauguration of the new President was deferred to the following day. He made choice of John M. Clayton, of Delaware, for Secretary of State; William M. Meredith, of Pennsylvania, Secretary of the Treasury; George W. Crawford, of Georgia, Secretary of War; W. B. Preston, of Virginia, Secretary of the Navy; Thomas Ewing, of Ohio, Secretary of the Interior; Jacob Collamer, of Vermont, Postmaster-General; and Reverdy Johnson, of Maryland, Attorney-General.

The summer of 1849 has been rendered memorable by the settlement of California. In consequence of the discovery of gold, near Sutter's mill, in February, 1848, the immigration thither was enormous. By the articles of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed February 2d, 1848, California had become a territory of the United States. The settlement of this new territory, on the distant border of the Pacific Ocean, was unprecedentedly rapid, and has no parallel in the history of nations. The desire for the acquisition of gold was the inciting cause; and Providence made use of this universal passion as a means of colonizing one of the fairest sections of the globe, which, owing to its remoteness from the realms of civilization, might have remained unoccupied, except by Indians and casual adventurers, for centuries to come. Europeans, Chinese, and Americans, flocked to this El

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1849.

Taylor's Cabinet.Discovery of gold in CaliforniaIts consequences.

Bk. VII. Dorado, on the confirmation of the truth of this im-
Ch. 6. portant discovery. The dreams of the Spaniards were
A. D. realized: inexhaustible mines of the precious metals
1849. were at length found.

Results to It might be interesting to speculate on the results of
civiliza- this great discovery, but our limits forbid it. We will
tion of the merely remark, however, in passing, that the main result
discovery was the colonization of a far distant land by the Anglo-
of gold- Saxon race. The accumulation of hundreds of millions
mines. of gold has had the effect of increasing the cost of living
in all parts of the world. Some kinds of property have
Real appreciated more than others; yet, it cannot be doubted
wealth not that, just in proportion as gold continues to be produced
increased. from the Californian and Australian mines, property of
all kinds will increase in value, as will also the wages of
labour. Commerce was stimulated for a while, and will,
Commerce doubtless, continue to feel the effects of auriferous pro-
stimu- duction; but the real wealth of the world is represented,
lated. as before, by farms, houses, merchandize, and industrial
habits. Gold and silver are the medium of commerce
and exchange, not substantial and permanent wealth.
They are the indicia of wealth — not the reality. The
settlement of California by adventurers will cause new
channels of communication with the Pacific coast to be
opened; the Rocky Mountains will be crossed by rail-
roads, and the fertile lands at their base will be studded
with farm-houses, and dotted with church-steeple. The
United States will benefit by this rapid expansion, in
the acquisition of greater power. It is to be hoped that
the same melancholy effects which were once produced
in Spain, by the sudden increase of gold, may not result
to the United States; and that the precious metals may
not be sent to European nations, to purchase follies and
luxuries, which are enervating in their influence.

On the first of September, 1849, the people of Cali- Bk. VII.
fornia voted for a State government, and adopted a con- Ch. 6.
stitution excluding slavery from the territory.

Congress assembled on the 2d of December, 1849; 1849. A. D.
but no event of great importance characterized its pro- Assem-
ceedings, until the new Senators and Representatives bling of
from California presented a petition for the admission Congress.
of that territory into the Union as one of the confederated
States. That article of its Constitution which excluded
slavery led to the most violent debates, during which
Henry Clay proposed his celebrated measures of com- 1850.
promise. He was seconded by Daniel Webster, and
other eminent statesmen; but it was not till late in the
session that the Compromise Act became a law.

On the 31st of March, 1850, John C. Calhoun ex- Death of
pired at Washington. During his brilliant career, he Calhoun.
had held some of the highest and most important offices
in the gift of the people; and, as a statesman and a citi-
zen, he won from all classes the highest meed of praise
for his talents and virtues. Unfortunately, during a
period of great agitation and perplexity, he advocated
nullification, which the State he represented was, at one
time, disposed to follow out. But the vigorous measures
adopted by President Jackson prevented an occurrence
which might, ere this, have dissolved the Union, and
plunged it into disastrous wars, of which no one could
predict the end.

On the 9th of July, a few months subsequent to the Death of
demise of Mr. Calhoun, while Congress was engaged Taylor.
with exciting debates on the slavery question, the pa-
triotic and heroic President Taylor breathed his last.
Never did a nation more sincerely mourn the departure
of exalted worth than did the United States lament the
loss of the man they had elevated, for his illustrious

services, to the highest position to which American ambition may aspire. His death was regarded as a national calamity; although the time has come when the loss of individuals, however great and eminent, ceases to materially affect the current of events.

Accession
of Fill-
more.

By his death the administration of the government devolved on the Vice-President, who fortunately possessed and deserved the confidence of the nation. On the 10th of July, Millard Fillmore, of New York, became President of the United States. Thus Providence, rather than personal ambition, elevated to that high responsibility one who, four years previously, never dreamed of attaining so exalted a dignity.

CHAPTER VII.

ADMINISTRATION OF MILLARD FILLMORE

The first important act of President Fillmore, after his accession to power, was the appointment of a new cabinet. Daniel Webster, of Massachusetts, became Secretary of State; Thomas Corwin, of Ohio, Secretary of the Treasury; A. H. H. Stuart, of Virginia, Secretary of the Interior; William A. Graham, of North Carolina, Secretary of the Navy; J. J. Crittenden, of Kentucky, Attorney-General; and K. N. Hall, of New York, Postmaster-General. William R. King, of Alabama, was elected President of the Senate.

The country was agitated, during the remainder of the session of Congress, by violent debates respecting the admission of California and the escape of fugitive slaves from justice. During four months these questions were debated. Finally, on the 9th of September, the Compromise Act was passed, which embodied several important measures; viz., that California should be admitted as a free State; that the Mormon settlements near the Great Salt Lake should be erected into a territory, to be called Utah; that New Mexico should also be admitted as a territory, and that \$10,000,000 be paid to Texas as a settlement of her claims; that the slave-trade in the District of Columbia should be abolished, and that fugitive slaves should be arrested and returned to their owners.

Bk. VII. This celebrated act, called the Omnibus Bill, from the
Ch. 7. variety of the measures embraced in it, was received by
A. D. the nation with varied and conflicting opinions, and led
1850. to great popular agitation and demonstrations.

Fugitive Slave Law. Especially did that part of it which pertained to the restoration of slaves escaping from bondage, called the Fugitive Slave Act, produce great commotion in the northern States. Mass meetings were held in various northern cities, to express disapprobation of the law. Daniel Webster and Henry Clay made great efforts to conciliate the opposing parties, and, to a great extent, succeeded in allaying popular irritation. The President issued his proclamation, declaring it to be his intention to enforce the law, even though it should be necessary to employ the whole power with which he was constitutionally armed. A most tremendous excitement was caused in Boston by the denunciations of popular orators, such as Theodore Parker, William Loyd Garrison, Wendall Phillips, and other anti-slavery agitators; and at Detroit there was a riot. But great mass meetings were also convened to support the Constitution and the cause of law and order.

Popular agitation.

Congress adjourned on the 30th of September, and re-assembled on the 2d of December. The year closed with every indication of great prosperity.

1851. Among the acts passed by Congress in the year 1851, was one making important changes in the general Post-office laws, chiefly in relation to letter-postage, which was reduced to three cents on a letter not exceeding half an ounce in weight. In this the United States copied after the English post-office improvements by Rowland Hill. Congress also passed acts to establish a territorial government in Oregon and Minnesota, and to found a military asylum for the relief and support of invalid and disabled

New Post-office law.

soldiers of the United States. On the 3d of March, a joint resolution was passed by Congress, and approved by the President, to provide Louis Kossuth, the exiled Hungarian governor, with a passage to the United States, on one of the public vessels then cruising in the Mediterranean.

These were the most important acts of the National Legislature during the session of 1850-'51. But, meanwhile, other events of interest were transpiring. On the 3d of February, General Quitman, of Mississippi, was arrested, by the United States Marshal, for a violation of the neutrality laws, by aiding and countenancing a meditated invasion of Cuba.

This was the great event of the year, in a political point of view, although it did not lead to important and permanent national changes. During the summer, considerable excitement was caused throughout the country, by various concerted movements for the purpose of invading Cuba, with a view to its subjugation and final annexation to the United States, as in the case of Texas. The vigilance of the government was aroused, orders were issued for the arrest of all suspected persons, and the steamboat Cleopatra was seized in the harbor of New York. These events produced a great commotion, also, in Cuba, and 40,000 Spanish troops were concentrated on the island, with the view of defending it from the threatened invasion. General Lopez, one of the ring-leaders in the movement, endeavored to induce the people of New Orleans to aid him in his meditated expedition.

The steamer Pampero, with 450 to 500 men, composing the expedition against Cuba, under General Lopez, left New Orleans, August 3d, and, on the 12th, the troops disembarked on the island of Cuba, at Cubanos, after encountering a trifling resistance. Lopez, with 323

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1851.

Arrest of Quitman

Invasion of Cuba.

Genera. Lopez.

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1851. men, marched to Las Posas, leaving Colonel Crittenden with 120 men, to guard the stores and ammunition. On the 13th, Colonel Crittenden was attacked by 500 Spanish troops, and his forces scattered. On the same day, General Lopez encountered 800 Spanish troops at Las Posas, and succeeded in repulsing them, with a loss of about 30 men. He then directed his march to the mountains, but was again attacked, on the 16th of August, by 900 troops, who were likewise compelled to retreat with a loss of 320 men. On the 19th, the ammunition of Lopez was destroyed by a storm; and, on the following day, his decimated and dispirited troops were completely routed. After enduring great sufferings in the mountains, in his attempts to escape, Lopez was finally captured, and, on the first day of September, publicly garroted in Havana. The unfortunate men who accompanied Lopez and Crittenden were, when taken, condemned to ten years' labor on the public works in Spain. A part of the men, being Americans, were subsequently liberated by the Spanish government, and sent back to the United States.

Defeat of Lopez.

Discovery of the magnetic telegraph. About this time, the Electro-magnetic Telegraph was perfected, and messages were sent by it to various parts of the United States. This discovery will make the name of Morse illustrious in the records of science. During the season, the yacht America beat the yacht Titania, on British waters, adding a new laurel to American art and enterprize.

Agitation respecting the Maine liquor-law. The summer of 1851 was marked by one of those periodical excitements, arising out of the discussion of moral questions, which, from time to time, have agitated the community. The Legislature of Maine passed a stringent law in reference to the sale of intoxicating liquors; and numerous prosecutions were commenced in

Portland, and other large towns, against persons who had violated the law, which contemplated the suppression of intemperance by forcible measures. The Maine law was subsequently copied by other States; but a sufficient time has not yet elapsed to demonstrate the wisdom or the folly of the interference, by legislation, with what were once regarded as personal rights.

The census of the year 1850 computed the population of the United States to be 23,144,126 persons; a gain, in ten years, of over 6,000,000 — an increase unprecedented among the nations of the earth.

In October, 1851, the expedition, fitted out in New York the preceding year by Moses Grinnell, to make search for Sir John Franklin, returned, after an unsuccessful cruise in the high northern latitudes. Under the command of Lieutenant De Haven, of the United States Navy, it penetrated to the southern entrance of Wellington Channel, where the graves of three of Franklin's men were found.

In December, 1851, Louis Kossuth, the exiled Governor of Hungary, visited the United States, for the purpose of securing material aid for his unfortunate countrymen. He was received everywhere with extraordinary marks of distinction, such as never had been bestowed on any foreigner, with the exception of La Fayette. All the great cities which he visited gave him banquets, and paid him high honours, and, at Washington, the leading members of Congress invited him to a grand dinner. His speeches excited the liveliest interest; but a great number were more astonished and delighted with his extraordinary eloquence than excited by sympathy for his cause. Still, he received every demonstration of respect, both for his own individual virtues, and the cause which he represented. He also obtained

Bk. VII. considerable "material aid." His progress through the
Ch. 7. Union was a continuous triumphal procession, except in
A. D. some of the southern cities. But he and his cause were
1851. endeared to a great majority of the American people. His imprudences and his boldness of rebuke, in some measure lessened the enthusiasm with which, at first, he was greeted; and, as often happens, when the éclat of his name had somewhat diminished, thousands felt ashamed of the feeling they had at first expressed. Nevertheless, his visit was an event of considerable importance.

Congress met in December, 1851, at the usual date, but no measures of great national interest were carried through, except a modification of the postage law, and a provision for the better security of the lives of passengers in vessels propelled in whole or in part by steam.

1852. In the year 1852, the nation sustained a great loss in the death of two eminent statesmen, who enjoyed a reputation as wide-spread as the limits of civilization. Henry Clay, the illustrious pacificator, died on the 20th of June; and Daniel Webster, whose intellectual powers, as a whole, have never been equalled in the United States, departed from the scene of his glory on the 24th of October. Both of these great men rendered vast services to the nation, and both were appreciated and honoured; but neither of them reached the goal of their ambition. They had, respectively, too many enemies, and they were also rivals.

Anticipated difficulties respecting the fisheries. In the course of the summer of 1852, considerable anxiety was caused, for a short time, by an official intimation from the government of Great Britain, that orders had been given for the protection of the fisheries, upon the coasts of the British provinces, against the alleged encroachments of the fishing-vessels of the United States

and France. It was at first feared that Great Britain intended to enforce some supposed rights which the government of the United States did not recognize. Although this intimation led to the despatch of Commodore Perry to the fishing-grounds, in an armed vessel, no cause of hostility transpired, and the question was finally settled by negotiation; Mr. Webster having, as Secretary of State, prepared the way before his death.

Difficulties also continued with the island of Cuba, in consequence of the refusal of the authorities, in several instances, to allow the landing of the passengers and mails—a precaution, on the part of the people of Cuba, very naturally induced by a fear of the introduction on the island of parties having revolutionary views.

Early in the year 1852, communications had been received by the government at Washington, from the governments of France and Great Britain, in which the United States were invited to join those nations in a disclaimer, now and for the future, of all intentions to obtain possession of the island of Cuba—which invitation was, of course, respectfully declined.

Among other events which occurred during the year, was the nomination of Franklin Pierce for President, and William Rufus King for Vice-President; which nomination was confirmed by the vote of the people, and by the largest majority of votes on record, in the political history of the country. During the summer, the government acknowledged the sovereignty of Peru over the Lobos Islands, valuable chiefly for guano, the wonderful properties of which, as a manure, had lately been tested.

During this year, \$65,000,000 in gold arrived from California, and \$90,000,000 were expended in railroads—indices of enterprize and prosperity. This year was also marked by great disasters—by railroad accidents,

Bk. VII.Ch. 7.A. D.1852.Commodore Perry sent to the fishing-grounds.Difficulties with Cuba.French and English intervention in Cuban affairs.Nomination of Pierce.Guano.Gold from California.

BK. VII. steamboat explosions, and extensive conflagrations—property valued at \$10,000,000 having been destroyed by a single fire in Sacramento City. Like casualties constituted the principal items in the domestic history of the country.

Edward Everett Secretary of State.

Edward Everett succeeded Daniel Webster as Secretary of State, on the 9th of October; and his short term of office was characterized by the production of able state-papers on matters of great complexity. John P. Kennedy became Secretary of the Navy on the 31st of July.

The second session of the thirty-second Congress commenced in December, at the usual time, but no important bills were passed—all such being left for the action of the next Congress, under a new administration. An assay office was established in New York, and many private bills were passed. Great debates, however, took place respecting the foreign policy of the government.

Expedition to Japan.

During the summer of 1852, an expedition, comprising seven ships of war, under the command of Commodore Perry, was fitted out for the purpose of securing greater commercial advantages from the empire of Japan. The result was highly satisfactory, many Japan ports being opened to the ships of the United States.

1853.

Organization of Washington Territory.

On the 2d of March, 1853, a new territory, called Washington, was formed by Congress out of the northern part of Oregon. This was the last event of importance which characterized the administration of Mr. Fillmore, who retired to private life, bearing with him the good wishes and the respect of the nation, for the signal ability and integrity with which he had discharged his responsible duties.

CHAPTER VIII.

ADMINISTRATION OF GENERAL PIERCE.

FRANKLIN PIERCE, of New Hampshire, entered upon his duties as President of the United States on the 4th of March, 1853. His Inaugural Address, delivered before an immense concourse of people assembled on the steps of the eastern portico of the Capitol, gave indication of considerable talent, and of a disposition to discharge the great trust committed to him to the best of his ability. He was the youngest man ever elected to fill the office of President.

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1853.
Inauguration of Pierce.

On the 7th of March, the Senate, in special session, confirmed his cabinet appointments. William L. Marcy, of New York, became Secretary of State; James Guthrie, of Kentucky, Secretary of the Treasury; Robert McClelland, of Michigan, Secretary of the Interior; Jefferson Davis, of Mississippi, Secretary of War; James C. Dobbin, of North Carolina, Secretary of the Navy; James Campbell, of Pennsylvania, Postmaster-General; and Caleb Cushing, of Massachusetts, Attorney-General.

The first object of importance which called for the attention of the new government, was a dispute between Mexico and the United States respecting boundaries. The Mesilla Valley was claimed by both governments, under the provisions of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo—a fertile region, 175 miles in length, and from 30 to 40 miles in width. The boundary commissioners

Mexican boundaries.