

Such is the history of the wrongs which we have suffered and patiently endured from Mexico through a long series of years. So far from affording reasonable satisfaction for the injuries and insults we had borne, a great aggravation of them consists in the fact, that while the United States, anxious to preserve a good understanding with Mexico, have been constantly, but vainly, employed in seeking redress for past wrongs, new outrages were constantly occurring which have continued to increase our causes of complaint and to swell the amount of our demands. While the citizens of the United States were conducting a lawful commerce with Mexico under the guaranty of a treaty of "amity, commerce and navigation," many of them have suffered all the injuries which would have resulted from open war. This treaty, instead of affording protection to our citizens, has been the means of inviting them into the ports of Mexico, that they might be, as they have been in numerous instances, plundered of their property and deprived of their personal liberty if they dared insist on their rights. Had the unlawful seizures of American property, and the violation of personal liberty of our citizens, to say nothing of the insults to our flag which have occurred in the ports of Mexico, taken place on the high seas, they would themselves long since have constituted a state of actual war between the two countries. In so long suffering Mexico to violate her most solemn treaty obligations, plunder our citizens of their property, and imprison their persons without affording them any redress, we have failed to perform one of the first and highest duties which every government owes to its citizens; and the consequence has been, that many of them have been reduced from a state of affluence to bankruptcy. The proud name of American citizen, which ought to protect all who bear it from insult and injury throughout the world, has afforded no such protection to our citizens in Mexico. We had ample cause of war against Mexico long before the breaking out of hostilities. But even then we forbore to take redress into our own hands, until Mexico herself became the aggressor by invading our soil in hostile array, and shedding the blood of our citizens.

Such are the grave causes of complaint on the part of the United States against Mexico—causes which existed long before the annexation of Texas to the American Union; and yet, animated by the love of peace, and a magnanimous moderation, we did not adopt those measures of redress which, under such circumstances, are the justified resort of injured nations.

The annexation of Texas to the United States constituted no just cause of offence to Mexico. The pretext that it did so is wholly inconsistent, and irreconcilable with well authenticated facts connected with the revolution by which Texas became independent of Mexico. That this may be more manifest, it may be proper to advert to the causes and to the history of the principal events of that revolution.

Texas constituted a portion of the ancient province of Louisiana, ceded to the United States by France in the year 1803. In the year 1819, the United States, by the Florida treaty, ceded to Spain all that part of Louisiana within the present limits of Texas; and Mexico, by the revolution which separated her from Spain, and rendered her an independent nation, succeeded to the rights of the mother country over this territory. In the year 1824 Mexico established a federal constitution, under which the Mexican republic was composed of a number of sovereign States, confederated together in a federal Union similar to our own. Each of these States had its own executive, legislature, and judiciary, and for all, except federal purposes, was as independent of the general government, and that of the other States, as is Pennsylvania or Virginia under our constitution. Texas and Coahuila united and formed one of these Mexican States. The State constitution which they adopted, and which was approved by the Mexican confederacy, asserted that they were "free and independent of the other Mexican United States, and every other power and dominion whatsoever;" and proclaimed the great principle of human liberty, that "the sovereignty of the State resides originally and essentially in the mass of the individuals who compose it." To the government under this constitution, as well as to that under the federal constitution, the people of Texas owed allegiance.

Emigrants from foreign countries, including the United States, were invited by the colonization laws of the State and of the federal government to settle in Texas. Advantageous terms were offered to induce them to leave their own country to become Mexican citizens. This invitation was accepted by many of our citizens, in the full faith that in their new home they would be governed by laws enacted by representatives elected by themselves, and that their lives, liberty, and property would be protected by constitutional guarantees similar to those which existed in the republic they had left. Under a government thus organized they continued until the year 1835, when a military revolution broke out in the city of Mexico, which entirely subverted the federal and State constitutions, and placed a military dictator at the head of the government.

By a sweeping decree of a Congress subservient to the will of the dictator, the several State constitutions were abolished, and the States themselves converted into mere departments of the Central Government. The people of Texas were unwilling to submit to this usurpation. Resistance to such tyranny became a high duty. Texas was fully absolved from all

allegiance to the Central Government of Mexico from the moment that government had abolished her State constitution, and in its place substituted an arbitrary and despotic Central Government.

Such were the principal causes of the Texan revolution. The people of Texas at once determined upon resistance, and flew to arms. In the midst of these important and exciting events, however, they did not omit to place their liberties upon a secure and permanent foundation. They elected members to a convention, who, in the month of March, 1836, issued a formal declaration that their political connexion with the Mexican nation has forever 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. They also adopted for their government a liberal republican constitution. About the same time, Santa Anna, then dictator, invaded Texas with a numerous army for the purpose of subduing her people, and enforcing obedience to his arbitrary and despotic government. On the 21st of April, 1836, he was met by the Texan citizen-soldiers, and on that day was achieved, by them, the memorable victory of San Jacinto, by which they conquered their independence. Considering the numbers engaged on the respective sides, history does not record a more brilliant achievement. Santa Anna himself was among the captives.

In the month of May, 1836, Santa Anna acknowledged, by a treaty with the Texan authorities, in the most solemn form, "the full, entire, and perfect independence of the republic of Texas." It is true he was then a prisoner of war, but it is equally true that he had failed to reconquer Texas, and had met with signal defeat; that his authority had not been revoked, and that by virtue of this treaty he obtained his personal release. By its hostilities were suspended, and the army which had invaded Texas under his command returned in pursuance of this arrangement unmolested, to Mexico.

From the day that the battle of San Jacinto was fought until the present hour, Mexico has never possessed the power to reconquer Texas. In the language of the Secretary of State of the United States, in a despatch to our minister in Mexico, under date of the eighth of July, 1842, "Mexico may have chosen to consider, and may still choose to consider Texas as having been at all times since 1835, and as still continuing, a rebellious province; but the world has been obliged to take a very different view of the matter. From the time of the battle of San Jacinto, in April, 1836, to the present moment, Texas has exhibited the same external signs of national independence as Mexico herself, and with quite as much stability of government. Practically free and independent, acknowledged as a political sovereignty by the principal Powers of the world, no hostile foot finding rest within her territory for six or seven years, and Mexico herself refraining for all that period from any further attempt to re-establish her own authority over that territory, it cannot but be surprising to find Mr. de Bucanegra" (the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Mexico) "complaining that for that whole period citizens of the United States, or its government, have been favoring the rebels of Texas, and supplying them with vessels, ammunition and money, as if the war for the reduction of the province of Texas had been constantly prosecuted by Mexico, and her success prevented by these influences from abroad." In the same despatch the Secretary of State affirms that "since 1837 the United States have regarded Texas as an independent sovereignty, as much as Mexico; and that trade and commerce with citizens of a government at war with Mexico cannot, on that account, be regarded as an intercourse by which assistance and succour are given to Mexican rebels. The whole current of Mr. de Bucanegra's remarks run in the same direction as if the independence of Texas had not been acknowledged. It has been acknowledged—it was acknowledged in 1837 against the remonstrance and protest of Mexico; and most of the acts of any importance, of which Mr. de Bucanegra complains, flow necessarily from that recognition. He speaks of Texas as still being 'an integral part of the territory of the Mexican republic,' but he cannot but understand that the United States do not so regard it. The real complaint of Mexico, therefore, is, in substance, neither more nor less than a complaint against the recognition of Texan independence.—It may be thought rather late to repeat that complaint, and not quite just to confine it to the United States, to the exemption of England, France, and Belgium, unless the United States, having been the first to acknowledge the independence of Mexico herself, are to be blamed for setting an example for the recognition of that of Texas." And he added, that "the constitution, public treaties, and the laws oblige the President to regard Texas as an independent State, and its territory as no part of the territory of Mexico." Texas had been an independent State, with an organized government, defying the power of Mexico to overthrow or reconquer her for more than ten years before Mexico commenced the present war against the United States. Texas had given such evidence to the world of her ability to maintain her separate existence as an independent nation, that she had been formally recognized as such, not only by the United States, but by several of the principal powers of Europe. These powers had entered into treaties of amity, commerce and navigation with her. They had received and accredited her ministers and other

diplomatic agents at their respective courts, and they had commissioned ministers and diplomatic agents on their part to the government of Texas. If Mexico, notwithstanding all this, and her utter inability to subdue or reconquer Texas, still stubbornly refused to recognize her as an independent nation, she was none the less so on that account. Mexico herself had been recognized as an independent nation by the United States, and by other powers, many years before Spain, of which, before her revolution, she had been a colony, would agree to recognize her as such, and yet Mexico was at that time, in the estimation of the civilized world, and in fact, none the less an independent power because Spain still claimed her as a colony. If Spain had continued until the present period to assert that Mexico was one of her colonies in rebellion against her, this would not have made her so, or changed the fact of her independent existence. Texas, at the period of her annexation to the United States, bore the same relation to Mexico that Mexico had borne to Spain for many years before Spain acknowledged her independence, with this important difference—that, before the annexation of Texas to the United States was consummated, Mexico herself, by a formal act of her government, had acknowledged the independence of Texas as a nation. It is true, that in the act of recognition she prescribed a condition which she had no power or authority to impose, that Texas should not annex herself to any other Power; but this could not detract in any degree from the recognition which Mexico then made of her actual independence. Upon this plain statement of facts, it is absurd for Mexico to allege, as a pretext for commencing hostilities against the United States, that Texas is still a part of her territory.

But there are those who, conceding all this to be true, assume the ground that the true western boundary of Texas is the Nueces, instead of the Rio Grande; and that, therefore, in marching our army to the east bank of the latter river, we passed the Texan line, and invaded the territory of Mexico. A simple statement of facts, known to exist, will conclusively refute such an assumption. Texas, as ceded to the United States by France in 1803, has been always claimed as extending west to the Rio Grande or Rio Bravo. This fact is established by the authority of our most eminent statesmen at a period when the question was as well if not better understood than it is at present. During Mr. Jefferson's administration, Messrs. Monroe and Pinckney, who had been sent on a special mission to Madrid, charged, among other things, with the adjustment of the boundary between the two countries, in a note addressed to the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, under date of the 25th of January, 1805, assert that the boundaries of Louisiana, as ceded to the United States by France, "are the river Perdido on the east, and the river Bravo on the west;" and they add that "the facts and principles which justify this conclusion are so satisfactory to our government as to convince it that the United States have not a better right to the island of New Orleans, under the cession referred to, than they have to the whole district of territory which is above described."

Down to the conclusion of the Florida treaty, in February, 1819, by which this territory was ceded to Spain, the United States asserted and maintained their territorial rights to this extent. In the month of June, 1818, during Mr. Monroe's administration, information having been received that a number of foreign adventurers had landed at Galveston, with the avowed purpose of forming a settlement in that vicinity, a special messenger was despatched by the government of the United States, with instructions from the Secretary of State, to warn them to depart, should they be found there, or any other place north of the Rio Bravo, and within the territory claimed by the U. States. He was instructed, should they be found in the country north of that river, to make known to them "the surprise with which the President has seen possession thus taken, without authority from the United States, of a place within their territorial limits, and upon which no lawful settlement can be made without their sanction." He was instructed to call upon them to "avow under what national authority they profess to act," and to give them due warning "that the place is within the United States, who will suffer no permanent settlement to be made there, under any authority other than their own." As late as the eighth of July, 1842, the Secretary of State of the United States, in a note addressed to our minister in Mexico, maintains that, by the Florida treaty of 1819, the territory as far west as the Rio Grande was confirmed to Spain. In that note he states that, by the treaty of the 22d of February, 1819, between the United States and Spain, the Sabine was adopted as the line of boundary between the two Powers. Up to that period, no considerable colonization had been effected in Texas; but the territory between the Sabine and the Rio Grande being confirmed to Spain by the treaty, applications were made to that Power for grants of land, and such grants, or permissions of settlement, were in fact made by the Spanish authorities in favor of citizens of the United States proposing to emigrate to Texas in numerous families, before the declaration of independence by Mexico.

The Texas which was ceded to Spain by the Florida treaty of 1819, embraced all the country now claimed by the State of Texas between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. The Republic of Texas always claimed this river as her western boundary, and in her treaty made with Santa An-

na in May, 1836, he recognized it as such. By the constitution which Texas adopted, in March, 1836, senatorial and representative districts were organized extending west of the Nueces. The Congress of Texas, on the 19th of December, 1836, passed 'An act to define the boundaries of the republic of Texas,' in which they declared the Rio Grande from its mouth to its source to be their boundary, and by the said act they extended their 'civil and political jurisdiction' over the country up to that boundary. During a period of more than nine years, which intervened between the adoption of her constitution and her annexation as one of the States of our Union, Texas asserted and exercised many acts of sovereignty and jurisdiction over the territory and inhabitants west of the Nueces. She organized and defined the limits of counties extending to the Rio Grande. She established courts of justice and extended her judicial system over the territory. She established a custom-house, and collected duties, and also post offices and post roads, in it. She established a land office, and issued numerous grants for land, within its limits. A Senator and a Representative residing in it were elected to the Congress of the Republic, and served as such before the act of annexation took place. In both the Congress and Convention of Texas, which gave their assent to the terms of annexation to the United States, proposed by our Congress, were representatives residing west of the Nueces, who took part in the act of annexation itself. This was the Texas which, by the act of our Congress of the 29th of December, 1845, was admitted as one of the States of our Union. That the Congress of the United States understood the State of Texas which they admitted into the Union to extend beyond the Nueces is apparent from the fact, that on the 31st of December, 1845, only two days after the act of admission, they passed a law 'to establish a collection district in the State of Texas,' by which they created a port of delivery at Corpus Christi, situated west of the Nueces, and being the same point at which the Texas custom-house, under the laws of that republic, had been located, and directed that a surveyor to collect the revenue should be appointed for that port by the President, and with the advice and consent of the Senate. A surveyor was accordingly nominated and confirmed by the Senate, and has been ever since in the performance of his duties. All these acts of the Republic of Texas, and of our Congress, preceded the orders for the advance of our army to the east bank of the Rio Grande. Subsequently, Congress passed an act 'establishing certain post routes,' extending west of the Nueces. The country west of that river now constitutes a part of one of the Congressional districts of Texas, and is represented in the House of Representatives. The Senators from that State were chosen by a legislature in which the country west of that river was represented. In view of all these facts, it is difficult to conceive upon what ground it can be maintained that in occupying the country west of the Nueces with our army, with a view solely to its security and defence, we invaded the territory of Mexico. But it would have been still more difficult to justify the Executive, whose duty it is to see that the laws be faithfully executed, if in the face of all these proceedings, both of the Congress of Texas and of the United States, he had assumed the responsibility of yielding up the territory west of the Nueces to Mexico, or of refusing to protect and defend this territory and its inhabitants, including Corpus Christi, as well as the remainder of Texas, against the threatened Mexican invasion.

But Mexico herself has never placed the war which she has waged upon the ground that our army occupied the intermediate territory between the Rio Grande. Her related pretension that Texas was not in fact an independent state, but a rebellious province, was obstinately persevered in; and her avowed purpose in commencing a war with the United States was to reconquer Texas, and to restore Mexican authority over the whole territory—not to the Nueces only, but to the Sabine. In view of the proclaimed menaces of Mexico to this effect, I deemed it my duty as a measure of precaution and defence, to order our army to occupy a position on our frontier as a military post, from which our troops could best resist and repel any attempted invasion which Mexico might make.

Our army had occupied a position at Corpus Christi, west of the Nueces, as early as August, 1845, without complaint from any quarter. Had the Nueces been regarded as the true western boundary of Texas, that boundary had been passed by our army many months before it advanced to the eastern bank of the Rio Grande.—In my annual message of December last, I informed Congress, that upon the invitation of both the Congress and Convention of Texas, I had deemed it proper to order a strong squadron to the coasts of Mexico, and to concentrate an efficient military force on the western frontier of Texas, to protect and defend the inhabitants against the menaced invasion of Mexico. In that message I informed Congress that the moment the terms of annexation offered by the United States were accepted by Texas, the latter became so far a part of our own country as to make it our duty to afford such protection and defence; and that for that purpose our squadron had been ordered to the Gulf, and our army to take a position between the Nueces and the Rio Grande, and to repel any invasion of the Texan territory which might be attempted by the Mexican forces.

It was deemed proper to issue this order, because, soon after the President of

Texas, in April, 1845, had issued his proclamation convening Congress of that Republic, for the purpose of submitting to that body the terms of annexation proposed by the United States, the government of Mexico made serious threats of invading the Texan territory. These threats became more imposing as it became more apparent, in the progress of the question that the people of Texas would decide in favour of accepting the terms of annexation; and finally, they had assumed such a formidable character, as induced both the Congress and Convention of Texas to request that a military force should be sent by the United States into her territory, for the purpose of protecting and defending her against the threatened invasion. It would have been a violation of good faith towards the people of Texas to have refused to afford the aid which they desired against a threatened invasion, to which they had been exposed by their free determination to annex themselves to our Union, in compliance with the overture made to them by the joint resolution of our Congress.

Accordingly a portion of the army was ordered to advance into Texas. Corpus Christi was the position selected by Gen. Taylor. He encamped at that place in August, 1845, and the army remained at that position until the 11th of March, 1846, when it moved westward, and on the 28th of that month reached the east bank of the Rio Grande opposite to Matamoros. This movement was made in pursuance of orders from the War Department, issued on the 13th of January, 1846. Before these orders were issued, the despatch of our Minister in Mexico, transmitting the decision of the Council of Government of Mexico, advising that he should not be received, and also the despatch of our consul residing in the city of Mexico—the former bearing date on the seventh, and the latter on the 18th of December, 1845, copies of both of which accompanied my message to Congress of the 11th of May last—were received at the Department of State. These communications rendered it highly probable, if not absolutely certain, that our minister would not be received by the Government of General Herrera. It was also well known that but little hope could be entertained of a different result from Gen. Paredes in case the revolutionary movement which he was prosecuting should prove successful, as was highly probable. The partisans of Paredes, as our minister in the despatch referred to, states, breathed the fiercest hostility against the United States, denounced the proposed negotiation as treason, and openly called upon the troops and the people to put down the government of Herrera by force. The reconquest of Texas, and war with the United States, were openly threatened. These were the circumstances existing, when it was deemed proper to order the army under the command of Gen. Taylor to advance to the western frontier of Texas, and occupy a position on or near the Rio Grande.

The apprehensions of a contemplated Mexican invasion have been since fully justified by the event. The determination of Mexico to rush into hostilities with the United States was afterwards manifested from the whole tenor of the note of the Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs to our minister, bearing date on the 12th day of March, 1846. Paredes had then revolutionized the government, and his minister, after referring to the resolution for the annexation of Texas, which had been adopted by our Congress in March, 1845, proceeds to declare that "a fact such as this, or to speak with greater exactness, so notable an act of usurpation, created an imperious necessity that Mexico, for her own honor, should repel it with proper firmness and dignity. The Supreme Government had beforehand declared that it would look upon such an act as a CASUS BELLI; and as a consequence of this declaration, negotiation was, by its very nature, at an end, and war was the only resource of the Mexican government."

It appears also, that on the 4th of April following, General Paredes, through his minister of war, issued orders to the Mexican general in command on the Texan frontier to "attack our army" by every means which war permits. To this General Paredes had been pledged to the army and people of Mexico during the military revolution which had brought him into power. On the 18th of April, 1846, Gen. Paredes addressed a letter to the commander on the frontier, in which he stated to him "at the present date I suppose you at the head of that valiant army, either fighting already, or preparing for the operations of a campaign; and supposing you already on the theatre of operations, and with all the forces assembled, it is indispensable that hostilities be commenced, yourself taking the initiative against the enemy."

The movement of our army to the Rio Grande was made by the commanding general under positive orders to abstain from all aggressive acts towards Mexico or Mexican citizens, and to regard the relations between the two countries as peaceful, unless Mexico should declare war or commit acts of hostility indicative of a state of war; and these orders he faithfully executed.—Whilst occupying his position on the east side of the Rio Grande, within the limits of the States of our Union, the commanding general of the Mexican forces, who, in pursuance of the orders of his government, had collected a large army on the opposite shore of the Rio Grande, crossed the river, invaded our territory and commenced hostilities by attacking our forces.

Thus, after all the injuries which we had received and borne from Mexico, and after she had insultingly rejected a minister sent to her on a mission of peace, and