

MESSAGE

PRESIDENT POLK.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States.

In resuming your labors in the service of the people, it is a subject of congratulation that there has been no period in our past history, when all the elements of national prosperity have been so fully developed.

Our devoted and sincere acknowledgments are due to the gracious Giver of all good, for the numberless blessings which our beloved country enjoys.

It is a source of high satisfaction to know that the relations of the United States with all other nations, with a single exception, are of the most amicable character.

In adhering to this wise policy, a preliminary and paramount duty obviously consists in the protection of our national interests from encroachment or sacrifice, and our national honor from reproach.

The existing war with Mexico was neither desired nor provoked by the United States. On the contrary, all honorable means were resorted to avert it.

It is a source of National pride and exultation that the great body of our people have thrown no such obstacles in the way of the government in prosecuting the war successfully, but have shown themselves to be eminently patriotic and devoted to vindicate their country's honor and interests at any sacrifice.

The wrongs which we have suffered from Mexico almost ever since she became an independent Power, and the patient endurance with which we have borne them, are without a parallel in the history of modern civilized nations.

It was hoped that these outrages would cease, that Mexico would be restrained by the laws which regulate the conduct of civilized nations in their intercourse with each other.

though the treaty so clearly defines the rights and duties of the respective parties that it is impossible to misunderstand or mistake them.

In his message to Congress in February, 1837, he presented them to the consideration of that body, and declared that "the length of time since some of the injuries have been committed, the repeated and unwearied applications for redress, the wanton character of some of the outrages upon the property and persons of our citizens, upon the flag and flag of the United States, independent of recent insults to this government and people by the late extraordinary Mexican minister, would justify in the eyes of all nations immediate war."

He declared that war should not be used as a remedy "by just and generous nations confiding in their strength for injuries committed, if it can be honorably avoided," and added, "it has occurred to me that, considering the present embarrassed condition of this country, we should act with both wisdom and moderation, by giving to Mexico one more opportunity to atone for the past, before we take redress into our own hands."

To this end I recommend that an act be passed authorizing redress, and the use of the naval force of the United States, by the Executive, against Mexico, to enforce them, in the event of a refusal by the Mexican government, to come to an amicable adjustment of the matters in controversy between us, upon another demand thereof, made from our board of our vessels of war on the coast of Mexico.

The Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, in their report, say: "After such a demand, should prompt justice be refused by the Mexican government, we may appeal to all nations not only for the equity and moderation with which we shall have acted towards a sister republic, but for the necessity which will be compelled us to seek redress for our wrongs, either by actual war or by reprisals.

The Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives made a similar recommendation. In their report, they say that they "fully concur with the President that simple cause exists for taking redress into our hands, and believe that we should be just in the opinion of other nations for taking such a step. But they are willing to try the experiment of another demand, made in the most solemn form, upon the justice of the Mexican government, before any further proceedings are adopted."

No difference of opinion upon the subject believed to have existed in Congress at that time. The Executive and Legislative departments concurred; and yet such has been our forbearance, and desire to preserve peace with Mexico, that the wrongs of which we then complained, and which gave rise to these solemn proceedings, not only remain unredressed to this day, but additional causes of complaint, or an aggravated character, have ever since been accumulating.

Shortly after these proceedings, a special messenger was despatched to Mexico, to make a final demand for redress; and on the twentieth of July, 1837, that demand was made. The reply of the Mexican government bears date on the 29th of the same month, and contains assurances of the "anxious wish" of the Mexican government "not to delay the moment of that final and equitable adjustment which is to terminate the existing difficulties between the two governments;" that "nothing should be left undone which may contribute to the most speedy and equitable determination of the subject, which have so seriously engaged the attention of the American government;" that the "Mexican government would adopt, as the only guide for its conduct, the plainest principles of public right, the sacred obligations imposed by international law, and the religious faith of treaties;" and that "whatever reason and justice may dictate respecting each case will be done."

The assurance was further given, that the decision of the Mexican government upon each cause of complaint, for which redress has been demanded, should be communicated to the government of the United States by the Mexican minister at Washington.

These solemn assurances, in answer to our demand for redress, were disregarded. By making them, however, Mexico obtained further delay. President Van Buren, in his annual message to Congress of the 6th of December, 1837, states, that "although the larger number" of our demands for redress, and "many of them aggravated cases of personal wrongs, have been now for years before the Mexican government, and some of the causes of national complaint, and those of the most offensive character, admitted or immediate, simple, and satisfactory replies, it is only within a few days past that any specific communication in answer to our last demand, made five months ago, has been received from the Mexican minister," and that "for not one of our public complaints has satisfaction been given or offered; that but one of the cases of personal wrong has been favorably considered, and that but four cases of both descriptions, out of all those formally presented, and earnestly pressed, have as yet been decided upon by the Mexican government."

render an amicable settlement of them the more embarrassing. Such measures of redress under similar provocations, committed by any of the powerful nations of Europe, would not be considered by the United States, unless not to be despised. The national honor, and the preservation of the national character throughout the world, as well as our own self-respect, and the protection due to our own citizens, would have rendered such a resort indispensable.

The history of no civilized nation in modern times has presented within so brief a period so many wanton attacks upon the honor of its flag, and upon the property and persons of its citizens, as had at that time been borne by the United States from the Mexican authorities and people. But Mexico was a sister republic on the North American continent, occupying a territory contiguous to our own, and was in a feeble and distracted condition; and these considerations, it is presumed, induced Congress to forbear still longer.

Instead of taking redress into our own hands, a new negotiation was entered upon, with fair promises on the part of Mexico, but with the real purpose, as the event has proved, of indefinitely postponing the reparation which we demanded, and which was so justly due. This negotiation, after more than a year's delay, resulted in the convention of the 11th of April, 1839, "for the adjustment of claims of citizens of the United States of North America upon the government of the Mexican republic." The joint board of Commissioners created by this convention to examine and decide upon these claims was not organized until the month of August, 1840, and under the terms of the convention they were to terminate their duties within 18 months from that time.

Four of the eighteen months were consumed in preliminary discussions on frivolous and dilatory points raised by the Mexican commissioners; and it was not until the month of December, 1840, that they commenced the examination of the claims of our citizens upon Mexico. Fourteen months only remained to examine and decide upon these numerous and complicated cases. In the month of February, 1842, the term of the commission expired, leaving many claims undetermined for years to come. A Mexican citizen was allowed by the board, and by the empire authorized by the convention to decide in case of disagreement between the Mexican and American commissioners, amounting to \$2,200,129 26.

There were pending before the empire when the commission expired additional claims which had been examined and awarded by the American commissioners, and had not been allowed by the Mexican commissioners, amounting to \$928,827 88 cents, upon which he did not decide, alleging that his authority had ceased with the termination of the joint commission. Besides these claims, there were others of American citizens amounting to \$2,326,526 05 cts., which had been submitted to the board, and upon which they had not time to decide before their final adjournment.

The sum of \$2,028,129 26 cents, which had been awarded to the claimants, was liquidated and ascertained debt due by Mexico, about which there could be no dispute, and which she was bound to pay according to the terms of the convention. Soon after the final awards for this amount had been made, the Mexican government asked for a postponement of the time of making the payments, as it would be inconvenient to make the payments at the time stipulated. In the spirit of forbearing kindness towards a sister republic, which Mexico had so long abused, the United States promptly complied with her request.

A second Convention was accordingly concluded between the two governments on the thirtieth of January, 1843, which upon its face declares, "that this new arrangement is entered into for the accommodation of Mexico." By the terms of this convention all the interest due on the awards which had been made in favor of the claimants upon the convention of the 11th of April, 1839, was to be paid to them on the 30th of April, 1843, and "the principal of the said awards, and the interest accruing thereon," was stipulated to be paid in five years, in equal instalments every three months.

Notwithstanding this new convention was entered into at the request of Mexico, and for the purpose of relieving her from embarrassment, the claimants have only received the interest due on the 30th of April, 1843, and three of the twenty instalments. Although the payment of the principal was stipulated, and confessedly due by Mexico to our citizens as indemnity for acknowledged acts of outrage and wrong, was secured by treaty, the obligations of which are ever held sacred by all just nations, yet Mexico has violated this solemn engagement by failing and refusing to make the payment.

The two instalments due in April and July, 1844, under the peculiar circumstances connected with them, were being assumed by the United States and discharged, to the great regret, but they are still due by Mexico. But this is not all of which we have just cause of complaint. To provide a remedy for the claimants whose cases were not decided by the joint commission under the convention of April 11th, 1839, it was expressly stipulated by the 6th article of the convention of the 30th January, 1844, that "a new convention should be entered into for the settlement of all the claims of the government and citizens of the United States against the republic of Mexico which were not finally decided by the late commission, and of all claims of the government and citizens of Mexico against the United States."

In conformity with this stipulation, a third convention was concluded and signed at the city of Mexico, on the 20th of November, 1843, by plenipotentiaries of the two governments, by which provision was made for ascertaining and paying these claims. In January, 1844, this convention was ratified by the Senate of the United States with two amendments, which were manifestly reasonable in their character. Upon a reference to the amendments proposed to the government of Mexico, the same evasions, difficulties and delays were interposed, which have so long marked the policy of that government towards the United States. It has not even yet decided whether it would or would not accede to them, although the subject has been repeatedly pressed upon its consideration.

Since long since have constituted a state of actual war between the two countries. In long suffering Mexico to violate her most solemn treaty obligations, to 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 consequences 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 the circumstances, are the justified resort of the 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.

It is to be regretted that the history of Texas is so obscure, and that the history of the principal events of that revolution is so obscure. 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 her 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 independent of the general government and that of the other States, as is Pennsylvania and 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 of 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 general 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. Advantages were offered to induce them to leave their own country and 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 holy 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 connection with the Mexican nation was 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.

authority over that territory, it cannot but be surprising to find Mr. de Bocuengra" (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 such 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 succor are given to Mexican rebels. The whole current of Mr. de Bocuengra's remarks runs in the same directions as if the Independence of Texas had not been acknowledged."

It has been acknowledged—it was acknowledged in 1837 against the rearmament and protest of Mexico; and most of the acts of any importance, of which Mr. de Bocuengra 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 as 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 10 years before Mexico commenced the present war against the United States. Texas has 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.

After 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. (Concluded next week.)

Letter from Monterey.

There is a rumor of a painful nature here, viz: that a Catholic priest has been arrested by the orders of Gen. Taylor for attempting to excite the Catholic portion of our army to mutiny and desertion. Who the priest can be I do not know. The President appointed Fathers Rye and McElroy both Catholic Priests, to be chaplains. Father McElroy I saw and conversed with in the Cathedral at Matamoras, and Father Rye, I saw riding out day before yesterday here. I know of no other Catholic priest who can preach in English. That there is truth in the report I am well satisfied, although the matter is shrouded in mystery. I had the pleasure of making Father Rye's acquaintance last summer met him frequently at Camargo, and formed a most favorable opinion of him. In all the sermons I have heard him deliver, he had urged upon his auditors the fact that they were American soldiers; that our army was not there to war against the religion of the Mexicans, and that now an American soldier's duty was faithfully to obey the orders of his officers, &c. and much more of a like import. But who can be the priest against whom this charge is made? Why so much mystery? No matter who it may be, there is but one punishment for such an offence, and it will be inflicted.

I am informed that the "great unknown Priest" has urged desertion on about a score of our men, and that one of the number told Col. Garland of it, who instantly took measures for the arrest of the culprit. It is also said that he was immediately taken before Gen. Taylor, who at first intended to inflict summary punishment, but concluded to lay the whole matter before a Board of officers. It is further said that Gen. Twiggs is now investigating the matter. Yours most truly, E. P. R.

FROM MONTEZUMA.—On Wednesday the 11th Nov. the Tennessee Cavalry, numbering 900 men and horses, under the command of Colonel Thomas, marched through the streets of our city, from their encampment on the river, to a new encampment four or five miles south of this place, on the San Fernando road. This Regiment was considered the flower of Tennessee, when first assembled at Memphis Tennessee, and was mentioned in the prints as being one of the finest corps ever assembled in that State. It left Memphis on the 27th of August last, marched by Little Rock, Fulton, Washington, (Texas,) La Grange, Victoria, San Antonio, Corpus Christi, to Matamoras, arriving on the banks of the Rio Grande on the 7th November, after a march of near 1400 miles in the midst of the hottest summer, for four months. They are a fine looking set of young men, and bear a flag, the gift of the young ladies of Tennessee, whose motto is a guarantee for their good conduct viz: "None but the brave Deserve the fair."



THE AMERICAN.

Saturday, December 12, 1846.

V. B. PALMER, Esq., at his Real Estate and Coal Office, corner of 3d and Chestnut Streets, Philadelphia, is authorized to act as Agent, and receipt for all monies due this office, for subscription or advertising. Also, at his Office No. 180 Nassau Street, New York. And S. E. Corner of Baltimore and Calvert sts., Baltimore.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.—This document is of great length, and is principally taken up in the discussion of the war with Mexico. The President meets the opponents of the war and his measures, with strong and powerful arguments, showing that every thing was done to avoid it that was consistent with our honor. We are not able to lay before our readers but a part of the message this week. The remainder will be given in our next. The President asks for a loan of 19 millions, required for the service until the 30th of June, 1848, about one half to be used during the year 1847. The President recommends that the tariff of 1846 should remain as it is, with the exception of war duties to be laid on sundry free articles. He also recommends the modification of the Sub-Treasury law.

SUNBURY AND ERIE RAIL ROAD.—We understand that it is proposed to hold a convention of the friends of this great improvement, at Philadelphia, about the 1st of this or beginning of next month. We heartily approve of the proposition, and hope those interested will act upon it with spirit. The advantages this route possesses for securing the trade of the West, both at Pittsburgh and Erie, ought to be fairly and fully presented to the citizens of our metropolis, before they blindly and foolishly embark in the mad project of making a rail road over the worst part of the Alleghenies, which can never accomplish the object proposed. The great length of the President's message prevents our directing attention to this subject as fully as we intended, but we hope our friends at Erie and along the route if they approve of the proposed convention, will name the day for its assembling, and take the initiative step.

SALTILLO has been taken, without opposition, by our forces. The next conflict will most probably be at San Luis Potosi. CANAL COMMERCE AND TOLLS.—The Pittsburgh Advertiser has published tables of the article sent from and received in that city by the canal. The tolls upon them exhibit an apparent decrease of over \$10,000, compared with last year. This is only apparent. Owing to a change in the drawback system the sum collected actually netted the State some \$30,000 more than in 1845.

THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—The Regents of the Smithsonian Institute have voted the sum of \$20,000 for the nucleus of the Library. A resolution was passed fixing the salary of the secretary at \$3,500 per annum, with an addition of \$50 for house rent should it be necessary, until a permanent residence be provided in the buildings to be erected.

IRON IN TENNESSEE.—The first iron manufactured in Tennessee, has been made at the Tennessee Valley Works, about fifty miles from the mouth of the Cumberland. The articles have been pronounced by competent judges, to be of very superior quality. These works have been built upon an enlarged scale, combining all the advantages such establishments can possess.

THE ARRESTED MEXICAN PRIEST.—We publish this week, the rumor that a Mexican priest was seized and imprisoned by Gen. Taylor, for exciting our troops to desert. We since learn that the General sent him under an escort to Matamoras, but that he escaped on the route. We hear an ill character of him, for 'tis said he was a renegade from Texas, where he had been robber and a murderer.

VOLUNTEERS.—The New Orleans Times as we have again the gay sight of recruiting parties with rifle and drum, parading our streets. These are the "Avengers," "Tigers," "Tampico Bers," "North Guards," "Eagle Guards," "Captains TONK, FREELAND, PECKELL—all bid for brave fellows to enroll under their several standards. The enlisting was not very brisk yesterday, but as the steam is continued, few will augment. We shall have soon plenty picked men to choose from, to exhibit in Mexico the chivalry of the gallant sugar State. So, the who wish to participate in a stirring and fit campaign, had better be brisk.

LATE AND INTERESTING FROM CALIFORNIA Letters from the Pacific to the 27th of Aug have been received by the New York Herald. They confirm the accounts of Com. Stock having possession of the principal towns in California, on the Pacific. In one month he routed and dispersed all the armed Mexicans, double numbers of his men, ended the war in that quarter, regulated the civil government, and fixed the future laws of California. He was, at accounts, preparing for sea, to protect our commerce in the Pacific. The Union gives some extracts from the Mexican papers. The "Diar" says: "The loss of the Californias is colossal," although it afterwards threatens to take from us. Castro confesses, they were lost from Mexico when he wrote his despatch on the 27th of August. He admits that "a chain of events prevented (him) from preserving it any longer." The "Diar" admits that "it has fallen," "deplorable its loss," and its only hope is, if they may recover it and avenge its loss.