

Mexico, and her success prevented by these influences from abroad." In the same dispatch the Secretary of State affirms that "since eighteen hundred and thirty-seven 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 succor are given to Mexican rebels. The whole current of Mr. de Boanegra's remarks runs in the same current 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 Boanegra complains, flow necessarily from that recognition. He speaks of Texas as being still "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 her 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 the 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 Neches, 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 boundary between the two countries in a note addressed to the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, under date of the 28th 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 desist, should they be found there, or any other place north of the Rio Bravo, and within the territory claimed by the United 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 other authority than their own." As late as the 8th 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 22nd 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 Neches and the Rio Grande.—The Republic of Texas always claimed this river as her western boundary, and in her treaty made with Santa Anna, 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 Neches. 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 Neches. 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 Neches, 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 Neches 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 Neches, and being at 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, by 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 Neches. 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 Neches 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 Neches 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 Neches and the Rio Grande. Her refuted 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 restore Mexican authority over the whole territory—not to the Neches only, but to the Sabine. In view of the proclaimed enemies 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 Neches, as early as August, 1845, without complaint from any quarter. Had the Neches 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 threatened invasion of Mexico. In that message I informed Congress that the moment the terms of annexation offered by the United States were accepted, 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 Neches and the Del Norte," or 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 the 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 favor 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 toward 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 General Taylor. He encamped at that place in August, 1845, and the army remained in 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 30th of January, 1846. Before these orders were issued, the dispatch 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 dispatch of our consul residing in the city of Mexico—the former bearing date on the 17th and the latter on the 15th 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 General Government of General Herrera. It was also well known that but little hope could be entertained of a different result from General 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 U. 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 U. States, were openly threatened. These were the circumstances existing, when it was deemed proper to order the army under the command of General 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 U. States was afterward manifested from the whole tenor of the note of the Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs to our minister, bearing date on the 12th 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, proceeded 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 the only recourse of the Mexican Government."

It appears, also, that on the 4th of April following, Gen. 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 Gen. Paredes had pledged to the army and people of Mexico during the military revolution which had brought him into power. On the 12th of April, 1846, Gen. Paredes addressed a letter to the Commander on that frontier, in which he sta-

ted 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. While occupying his position on the east bank of the Rio Grande, within the limits of Texas, then, recently admitted as one 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 whom she had solemnly agreed to receive, she consummated her long course of outrage against our country by commencing an offensive war and shedding the blood of our citizens on our own soil.

The United States never attempted to acquire Texas by conquest. On the contrary, at an early period after the people of Texas had achieved their independence, they sought to be annexed to the United States. At a general election in September, 1836, they decided with great unanimity in favor of "annexation;" and in November following the Congress of the Republic authorized the appointment of a minister to bear their request to this Government. The Government, however, having remained neutral between Texas and Mexico during the war between them, and considering it due to the honor of our country, and our fair fame among the nations of the earth, that we should not at this early period consent to annexation, nor until it should be manifest to the whole world that the reconquest of Texas by Mexico was impossible, refused to accede to the overtures made by Texas. On the 12th of April, 1844, and after more than seven years had elapsed since Texas had established her independence, a treaty was concluded for the annexation of that Republic to the United States, which was rejected by the Senate. Finally, on the first of March, 1845, Congress passed a joint resolution for annexing her to the United States, upon certain preliminary conditions to which her assent was required. The solemnities which characterized the deliberations and conduct of the government and people of Texas on the deeply interesting questions presented by these resolutions, are known to the world. The Congress, the Executive, and the people of Texas, in a Convention elected for that purpose, accepted with great unanimity the proposed terms of annexation; and thus consummated on her part the great act of restoring to our Federal Union a vast territory which had been ceded to Spain by the Florida treaty more than a quarter of a century before.

After the joint resolution for the annexation of Texas to the United States had been passed by our Congress, the Mexican Minister at Washington addressed a note to the Secretary of State, bearing date on the 6th of March, 1845, protesting against it as "an act of aggression, the most unjust which can be found recorded in the annals of modern history; namely, that of despoiling a friendly nation, like Mexico, of a considerable portion of her territory;" and protesting against the resolution of annexation, as being an act "whereby the province of Texas, an integral portion of the Mexican territory, is agreed and admitted into the American Union;" and he announced, that, as a consequence, his mission to the United States had terminated, and demanded his passports, which were granted. It was upon the absurd pretext, made by Mexico, (herself indebted for her independence to a successful revolution), that the Republic of Texas still continued to be, notwithstanding all that had passed, a province of Mexico, that this step was taken by the Mexican Minister.

Every honorable effort has been used by me to avoid the war which followed, but all have proved vain. All our attempts to preserve peace have been met by insult and resistance on the part of Mexico. My efforts to this end commenced in the note of the Secretary of State of the 10th of March, 1845, in answer to that of the Mexican Minister. While declining to reopen a discussion which had already been exhausted, and proving again what was known to the whole world, that Texas had long since achieved her independence, the Secretary of State expressed the regret of this Government that Mexico should have taken offence at the resolution of annexation passed by Congress, and gave assurance that our "most strenuous efforts shall be devoted to the amicable adjustment of every cause of complaint between the two Governments, and to the cultivation of the kindest and most friendly relations between the sister Republics."

That I have acted in the spirit of this assurance, will appear from the events which have since occurred. Notwithstanding Mexico had abruptly terminated all diplomatic intercourse with the United States, and ought, therefore, to have been the first to ask for its resumption, yet, waiting all ceremony, I embraced the earliest favorable opportunity to ascertain from the Mexican Government whether they would receive an envoy from the United States entrusted with full power to adjust all the questions in dispute between the two Governments. In September, 1845, I believed the propitious moment for such an overture had arrived. Texas, by the enthusiastic and almost unanimous will of her people, had pronounced in favor of annexation. Mexico herself had agreed to acknowledge the independence of Texas, subject to a condition, it is true, which she had no right to impose and no power to enforce. The last lingering hope of Mexico, if she still could have retained any, that Texas would ever again become one of her provinces, must have been abandoned.

The consul of the United States at the city of Mexico was, therefore, instructed by the Secretary of State on the 15th of September, 1845, to make the inquiry of the Mexican Government. The inquiry was made, and on the 15th of October, 1845, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Mexican Government, in a note addressed to our consul, gave a favorable response, requesting, at the same time, that our naval force might be withdrawn from Vera Cruz while negotiations should be pending. Upon the receipt of this note, our naval force was promptly withdrawn from Vera Cruz. A minister was immediately appointed, and departed to Mexico. Every thing bore a promising aspect for a speedy and peaceful adjustment of all our difficulties. At the date of my annual message to Congress, in December last, no doubt was entertained but that he would be received by the Mexican Government, and the hope was cherished that all causes of misunderstanding between the two countries would be speedily removed. In the confident hope that such would be the result of his mission, I informed Congress that I forbore at that time to recommend such ulterior measures of redress for the wrongs and injuries we had so long borne, as it would have been proper to make, had no such negotiation been instituted.

To my surprise and regret, the Mexican Government, though solemnly pledged to do so, upon the arrival of our minister in Mexico, refused to receive and accredit him. When he reached Vera Cruz, on the 30th of November,

1845, he found that the aspect of affairs had undergone an unhappy change. The government of General Herrera, who was at that time President of the Republic, was tottering to its fall. General Paredes (a military leader) had manifested his determination to overthrow the government of Herrera, by a military revolution; and one of the principal means which he employed to effect his purpose, and render the government of Herrera odious to the army and people of Mexico, was by loudly condemning its determination to receive a minister of peace from the United States, alleging that it was the intention of Herrera, by a treaty with the United States, to dismember the territory of Mexico, by ceding away the department of Texas. The government of Herrera is believed to have been well disposed to a pacific adjustment of existing difficulties; but, probably alarmed for its own security, and in order to ward off the danger of the revolution led by Paredes, violated its solemn agreement, and refused to receive or accredit our minister; and this, although informed that he had been invested with full power to adjust all questions in dispute between the two governments.

Among the frivolous pretexts for this refusal, the principal one was, that our minister had not gone upon a special mission, confined to the question of Texas alone, leaving all the outrages upon our flag and our citizens undressed. The Mexican government well knew that both our national honor and the protection due to our citizens imperatively required that the two questions of boundary and indemnity should be treated together, as naturally and inseparably blended, and they ought to have seen that this course was best calculated to enable the United States to extend to them the most liberal justice. On the thirtieth of December, 1845, General Herrera resigned the presidency, and yielded up the government to General Paredes without a struggle. Thus a revolution was accomplished solely by the army commanded by Paredes, and the supreme power in Mexico passed into the hands of a military usurper, who was known to be bitterly hostile to the United States.

Although the prospect of a pacific adjustment with the new government was unpromising, from the known hostility of its head to the United States, yet, determined that nothing should be left undone on our part to restore friendly relations between the two countries, our minister was instructed to present his credentials to the new government, and ask to be accredited by it in the diplomatic character in which he had been commissioned. These instructions he executed by his note of the first of March, 1846, addressed to the Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs, but his request was insultingly refused by the minister in his answer of the twelfth of the same month. No alternative remained for our minister but to demand his passports, and return to the United States.

Thus was the extraordinary spectacle presented to the civilized world, of a government, in violation of its own express agreement, having twice rejected a minister of peace, invested with full powers to adjust all the existing differences between the two countries in a manner just and honorable to both. I am not aware that modern history presents a parallel case, in which, in time of peace, one nation has refused even to hear propositions from another for terminating existing difficulties between them.

Scarcely a hope of adjusting our difficulties, even at a remote day, or of preserving peace with Mexico, could be cherished while Paredes remained at the head of the government. He had acquired the supreme power by a military revolution, and upon the most solemn pledges to wage war against the United States, and to reconquer Texas, which he claimed as a revolted province of Mexico. He had denounced as guilty of treason all those Mexicans who considered Texas as no longer constituting a part of the territory of Mexico, and who were friendly to the cause of peace. The duration of the war which he waged against the United States was indefinite, because the end which he proposed, of the reconquest of Texas, was hopeless. Besides, there was good reason to believe, from all his conduct, that it was his intention to convert the republic of Mexico into a monarchy, and to call a foreign European prince to the throne. Preparatory to this end, he had, during his short rule, destroyed the liberty of the press, tolerating that portion of it only which openly advocated the establishment of a monarchy. The better to secure the success of his ultimate designs, he had, by an arbitrary decree, convoked a Congress—not to be elected by the free voice of the people, but to be chosen in a manner to make them subservient to his will, and to give him absolute control over their deliberations.

Under all these circumstances, it was believed that any revolution in Mexico, founded upon opposition to the ambitious projects of Paredes, would tend to promote the cause of peace, as well as prevent any attempted European interference in the affairs of the North American continent—both objects of deep interest to the United States. Any such foreign interference, if attempted, must have been resisted by the United States. My views upon that subject were fully communicated to Congress in my last annual message. In any event, it was certain that no change whatever in the government of Mexico who would deprive Paredes of power, could be for the worse, so far as the United States were concerned, while it was highly probable, that any change must be for the better.

This was the state of affairs existing when Congress, on the thirteenth of May last, recognized the existence of the war which had been commenced by the government of Paredes; and it became an object of much importance, with a view to a speedy settlement of our difficulties and the restoration of an honorable peace, that Paredes should not retain power in Mexico.

Before that time there were symptoms of a revolution in Mexico, favored, as it was under-