

open recognition of foreign trade by the local Spanish officials. From the very beginning of the nineteenth century foreign vessels—American, English, and Russian—had visited the coast from time to time and had conducted a contraband business which seems to have reached considerable proportions.¹ For some years the governors preserved an attitude of hostility to such violations of law, and even refused to countenance the sale of anything to foreign ships except when they put into California ports in distress. But after the outbreak of the revolution, the successive governors, at first more or less privately, and then quite openly and under the plea of necessity,² permitted trade to be carried on. Duties were collected on all exports and imports according to a tariff devised by the governor without any legal authority; but otherwise there was practically no obstacle thrown in the way of trade after 1816,³ and as many as nine or ten trading craft came to the coast each year laden with goods to be exchanged for hides and tallow.

When foreign trade began to be permitted, another cherished Spanish colonial regulation was also disregarded. Foreigners were allowed to settle in the country. It was expected, as a matter of course, that they should be baptized into the Catholic Church, but otherwise there seems to have been no restriction upon them. Most of those who came before 1825 were deserters from ships, beach-combers of a type which Stevenson has since made familiar to literature. But three or four American and as many British traders who settled thus early furnished a rather more respectable and stable element.

In 1825 there were probably well over thirty-five hundred Mexicans or other immigrants in the country, and, in spite of the continued high death-rate among the mission Indians, a resident native population of about twenty thousand.

¹ *Ibid.*, 23, 32; Richman, 189-207.

² Bancroft, *Hist. of California*, II, 211, 278.

³ *Ibid.*, 419. After the Spanish colonial system was overthrown and the legal prohibition against foreign commerce was removed, restrictions of a vexatious kind were imposed in the interest of the Mexican customs. But this was not until after 1825.

Agriculture continued the chief business of the people, for the permitted importation of foreign goods checked even the crude manufactures which the missionaries had tried to establish. In the absence of an adequate foreign market, the production of wheat had not materially increased. Nature unassisted had, however, multiplied the cattle and the sheep prodigiously.

The government, like that of New Mexico, was a paternal despotism, the governor being only hampered by the ability of the friars to evade his edicts and to make their remonstrances felt. And like New Mexico, the community had neither lawyers nor doctors, nor any but the most primitive of schools.

The customary communication between the Californias and the rest of Mexico was by water, but repeated efforts had been made from 1773 to 1777 to establish an overland route,¹ and for this purpose the governor of the *Provincias Internas*, by an order of March 20, 1780, decreed the establishment of two missions on the Colorado River. The Indians, however, were hostile and the officer commanding the expedition was injudicious. The result was a sudden attack in which all the friars and nearly all the rest of the party were killed;² and no further attempts were made to create establishments on the Colorado.³

The fluctuating line of settlements west of New Mexico proper, therefore, ran irregularly through northern Chihuahua and Sonora to the Gulf of Mexico, although a presidio and two or three small missions lay beyond the present international boundary line at Tucson and its vicinity, in what is now Arizona. To the northward was a vast and un-

¹ Richman, 115, 98-102, 123. Sixty or seventy years later this trail, or so much of it as led from California to New Mexico, was much used and became well marked.

² Bancroft, *Hist. of Arizona and New Mexico*, 396; *Hist. of California*, I, 353-371. Richman, 133-136.

³ The project of an overland route was discussed again in 1796, but nothing was done; and again a fruitless effort to open communication was made in 1822.—(Richman, 237, 458. See also, in this same connection, W. E. Dunn's "Missionary Activities Among the Eastern Apaches," *Tex. Hist. Quar.*, XV, 186-200.)

inhabited and unnamed region from which the states of Utah and Nevada and Arizona have since been carved. It had been occasionally traversed before 1825, but it had never been explored. In strictness, it seems to have been neither under the jurisdiction of California nor of New Mexico, but in current speech the territory of California and New Mexico would always be understood to include all of Mexico that lay between Texas and the Pacific Ocean.

The remaining frontier province of Mexico on the north was Texas, first visited by the Spaniards, as we have seen, in the sixteenth century, and finally occupied by them in 1716.¹

The Texan missions were under the Franciscans, and in all essential respects resembled those in California. The Indians were treated as children, were duly taught the Christian doctrine, were required to do some small amount of field labor, and were rudely clothed and fed. But the effort to turn the wild tribes of Texas into God-fearing peasants was very far from successful. They were very different from the indolent and timid Californians. So long as knives or blankets were to be got, or when the fiercer Apaches and Comanches were on the war-path, members of the weaker tribes would assemble round the missions and were quite ready to promise anything that was asked of them. But in the long run, to labor and to pray with monotonous regularity proved to be beyond their power. They seem even to have exhibited a positive aversion to the simple rite of baptism. They could only be kept from running away by the employment of the secular arm, and the presidial soldiers who acted as a guard were not very earnest or very efficient when it came to chasing runaway Indians.

A few settlers who were neither soldiers nor priests came from time to time into Texas, but they were not much encouraged, and their numbers always remained small.

¹ See pages 3-7 above. See also, as to the motives for the occupation of Texas, Bolton's "Spanish Occupation of Texas, 1519-1690," *S. W. Hist. Quar.*, XVI, 1-26.

In 1762 all interest in the colonization of Texas on the part of the government of New Spain ceased. Louisiana was ceded to the Spanish crown, and for some years the existence of expensive missions and military posts was barely tolerated by the authorities of New Spain. A disastrous attempt to establish a mission among the Lipan Apaches and a disastrous attack on a Comanche village served to emphasize the dangers to which the Mexican priests and soldiers were constantly exposed. It was thought that if the Texan establishments were not to be destroyed by Indians, they would have to be either abandoned or strongly reinforced, and the government decided on the policy of abandonment. Nobody believed that Mexican colonists could keep their own roofs over their heads. Accordingly the presidio of El Pilar, east of the Sabine, and a presidio more recently built at Orcoquisac, on the Trinity River, were evacuated. The friars had to follow suit, and for some years there were few white men in Texas east of Béxar (now San Antonio) and La Bahía (now Goliad). A few exceptionally enterprising Mexicans returned in 1779 to the site of the old Nacogdoches mission, where they succeeded in maintaining themselves against the Indians.¹

What the population of Texas was about this time it is hard to say, but probably the number of Mexican or Spanish settlers was not far from twenty-five hundred, of whom nearly a half were in and near Béxar. In 1792 the population was said to be about three thousand. About Béxar there were still several missions in existence, but in a moribund condition. Most of the converts had fled. "The few still left under the padres' care," says Bancroft, "were vicious, lazy, tainted with syphilitic diseases, and were with great difficulty induced to gain a precarious living by cultivating their maize patches and tending their reduced herds. Nowhere in America had missionary work been so complete a failure."²

¹ See Herbert E. Bolton, "Spanish Abandonment and Re-occupation of East Texas, 1773-1779," in *Tex. Hist. Quar.*, IX, 67-137.

² Bancroft, *North Mex. States and Texas*, I, 667.

So far as the government of New Spain was concerned, Texas had almost ceased to exist. In spite of its agricultural possibilities, it was difficult for settlers to continue in the country after the government gave up the task of trying to restrain the Indians, who seem to have long preserved bitter recollections of the way in which they had been treated by the presidial soldiers. "The barbarous use which the friars made of the religio-military force," says a Mexican author who visited Béxar in 1828, "was the origin among the natives, not only of hatred to the Spanish name but also of reprisals of which the Texans have been and are victims."¹ But the Indians were shrewd enough not to carry their hostilities too far, and especially at seed-time and harvest the Comanches protected the farm hands near Béxar.² These poor inhabitants lived a hand-to-mouth existence, but slowly multiplied. There was even some trifling immigration, partly from Mexico and partly from Louisiana, and four or five families of English descent managed somehow to establish themselves near Nacogdoches. The inhabitants had little trade, even contraband. They had no manufactures, no ambitions, and few wants. No one kept statistics, and no traveller visited their country.

The cession of Louisiana to the United States at once changed the whole situation and brought with it, in a new and much more serious form, the danger of foreign encroachment. Forty or fifty years before, Louis XV would have had little difficulty in restraining his creole subjects from excursions into the Spanish dominions, but the arm of the government at Washington was not long, and the backwoodsmen who had won Kentucky and Tennessee and were already across the Mississippi were not the men to respect an imaginary boundary line.

Even before the cession of Louisiana the authorities of New Spain had had a foretaste of what they might expect. In October, 1800, a certain Philip Nolan with some twenty men, mostly Anglo-Americans, left Natchez, crossed Louisiana into Texas, and began collecting wild horses somewhere

¹ Berlandier y Chovel, *Diario de Viage*, 116.

² *Ibid.*, 121.

on the Brazos River. He had a passport from the governor of Louisiana, but this gave him no authority to enter Texas. In the spring of 1801 his party was attacked by a strong Spanish force that had been sent out to capture them. Nolan himself was killed and the rest were made prisoners. After a time one was hanged, some escaped, and some were sent to fortresses in different parts of Mexico, where they suffered a long captivity.¹

There is some rather vague evidence to show that Nolan had a notion of building a fort among the Indians, and ultimately using that as a base for conquering Texas. This is, however, very inconclusive. Ostensibly he went to get horses, and to trade with the Texan Indians. No doubt he had been told by the United States authorities, and notably by the commanding officer, General Wilkinson, to collect all the information he could, but his expedition was absurdly inadequate to accomplish any wider purpose. The whole affair was unimportant, except to the unfortunate men who were concerned in it; but it attracted attention then and afterward, as it was very erroneously believed that the government of the United States had in some underhand way promoted the expedition.

More serious causes of alarm were discoverable when the disagreements between the United States and Spain brought the two countries to the very verge of war. On both sides of the frontier, as has been already related, all available military forces were assembled and actual hostilities were narrowly averted. Neither party, however, was really anxious to fight, and that storm passed over.²

In preparation for possible hostilities the Spanish government in 1804 had gone so far as to begin collecting in the Peninsula a body of troops which was destined to occupy Texas. The objects which were proposed were stated to be

¹ Nolan was a confidential agent of General Wilkinson, and for a time acted as his go-between with the Spanish authorities at New Orleans, where he was popular. "*Garçon charmant, et dont je fais le plus grand cas,*" was Carondelet's description of him in 1797.—(Clark's *Proofs of the Corruption of Wilkinson*, App. 102.)

² See above, p. 14.

three, namely: to defend the frontier against any aggression from the United States, to protect the country from Indian raids, and to found a community which should be skilled in the use of fire-arms and at the same time skilled in agriculture or the various handicrafts. The Spanish statesmen evidently had their eye on the American frontiersman, and they expected, by paternal methods, to match him in a colony of subsidized settlers. They therefore proposed that the troops destined for Texas should be all married men who had some trades of their own—farmers, carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, and the like; and, in addition, some poor but respectable families and a "multitude" of foundlings were to be added, making in all about five thousand souls.¹ War with England and the day of Trafalgar put an end to this benevolent project.

When the Mexican revolution broke out Texas was not, like New Mexico and California, so remote from the seat of war as to be left on one side. On the contrary, Texas soon became the scene of a good deal of serious fighting, in which adventurers from across the border bore an active part. Filibusters from east of the Sabine and pirates from the tropical seas were at all times ready to take advantage of any opportunities that the varying phases of the contest might afford.

The first conspicuous movement was in the summer of 1812, when a body of men, originally recruited among the loose characters of the neutral ground,² marched into Texas under the command of Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara, who had been a follower of Hidalgo's. Many of the men were American citizens who were probably animated by various motives, among which a love of adventure and the prospect of a share in the plunder of Mexico must have been conspicuous. Among them was a former officer of the United States army, Lieutenant Augustus Magee. This little force, which at first only numbered one hundred and fifty-eight, marched through Texas from end to end, being constantly recruited from Louisiana as it proceeded, and in October

¹ Filisola, *Guerra de Tèjas*, I, 47.

² See above, p. 14.

captured the important position of La Bahía (Goliad). The royalist forces, under Salcedo, the governor of Texas, and Herrera, the governor of Nuevo Leon, then laid siege to La Bahía, but after four months of ill success fell back toward Béxar (San Antonio). The insurgents followed, and on March 29, 1813, utterly defeated the royalists. As the prisoners were mostly local militia they were generally allowed the option of joining the insurgents—as many of them did—or of returning home. The fourteen principal officers who had been captured, including the two governors, were, however, put in jail, where they were treated rather as malefactors than as prisoners of war, and were presently brought before a court-martial composed chiefly of personal enemies of the two governors.¹ All the fourteen were condemned to death. The sentence, however, was not carried out because the men from the United States, who were the backbone of Gutiérrez's forces, protested forcibly against any such barbarous proceedings. Gutiérrez pretended to accede to the wishes of the Americans and sent off the unlucky fourteen under an escort of seventy men, upon pretext of taking them to Matagorda Bay and so shipping them to Spain, but no sooner were they fairly out of Béxar than their throats were all cut by their escort.

Gutiérrez tried first to evade responsibility for this piece of savagery, and then to excuse it on the ground of the cruelties which these very Spaniards had committed. The more respectable of the Americans, however, had had enough of Mexican warfare and left for home. What happened after this is not quite clear, but at any rate Gutiérrez was deposed and Alvarez de Toledo, an ex-officer of the Spanish navy, was put in his place.

In August, 1813, Toledo had under his command over three thousand men, of whom about eight hundred and fifty were Americans, seventeen hundred were Mexicans, and five or six hundred were allies from various unsubdued Indian tribes. With this motley force he engaged a body of Spanish

¹ Filisola, *Guerra de Tèjas*, I, 56. See an account of the two governors in Coues's edition of *Pike's Travels*, II, 697-704.

troops near Béxar, west of the River Medina. The result was a total defeat of the insurgents after a stubborn fight. As usual, all the prisoners were shot the same day.

As soon as the inhabitants of Béxar learned of the royalist victory they attempted to get away, preferring, as they said, to beg their food in Louisiana, or even among the Indian tribes, rather than face the victorious forces. Nevertheless, few escaped, and the worst anticipations were fully justified by the treatment of those who were caught. Both in Béxar and La Bahía a number were put to death, and those who were permitted to live—women as well as men—were subjected to the most shocking cruelties.¹ From Béxar a detachment was marched to Nacogdoches, murdering, plundering, and burning as it moved; and once more the authority of the King of Spain was enforced, more or less imperfectly, from the Rio Grande to the Sabine.²

The island of Galveston, however, was soon lost to the crown. In 1816 it was occupied by a band calling themselves revolutionists, originally organized by one Luis de Aury and afterward commanded by Jean Lafitte, whose legendary exploits as "the pirate of the Gulf" were long commemorated in the juvenile romance of the nineteenth century. Aury and Lafitte were furnished with letters of marque from the revolutionary governments of Mexico and the South American states. These "privateers," many of which were said to be owned by citizens of the United States, were often engaged in the slave trade and were generally manned by crews too careless to discriminate between the flags of Spain and other nations. It soon became impossible to tolerate their depredations. The United States brig *Enterprise*, Captain Kearney, visited Galveston early in 1821, and the mere

¹ Filisola, who confirms the above, calls the Spanish commander, Arredondo, "un azote de la humanidad y el verdadero tipo de la más salvaje tiranía de que puede avergonzarse la especie humana" (a scourge of humanity and a genuine type of the most savage tyranny which mankind can blush for).—(*Guerra de Téjas*, I, 75.)

² Elizondo commanded the fifteen hundred men who marched to and occupied Nacogdoches. He is said to have left small garrisons at Nacogdoches, at the "old fort of the Adaes," on the Colorado River, and on Matagorda (San Bernardo) Bay.—(*Ibid.*, 76.) But it is not likely that he crossed the Sabine.

show of force served to break up that establishment forever.¹

During its piratical revolutionary period this port served as a base for a most gallant and ill-fated expedition against the royal authority in New Spain. On November 24, 1816, when the Mexican revolution was almost at its lowest ebb, Francisco Xavier Mina, a young Spanish gentleman who had made a great reputation as a successful guerilla chief during the French occupation, and who had been proscribed by the reactionary government of Ferdinand VII, arrived at Galveston, accompanied by a cosmopolitan party of adventurous followers—Spaniards, Italians, English, and Americans. After some four months spent in preparation he sailed away toward Mexico, landed in the present state of Tamaulipas, and with a force which grew like a snowball, he made his way into the interior, and joined, near Guajuato, one of the rough bands that were still holding out against the government. For a time he carried on successfully an irregular warfare, but he was taken prisoner at last, in November, 1817, was exultingly shot by his captors, and later became one of the heroes of the Mexican Pantheon.²

The neighborhood of Galveston was the scene of another picturesque adventure. A French colony, composed of old soldiers of the Empire, headed by General Charles Lallemand, came to Texas in the spring of 1818 and established themselves on the Trinity River. The site they selected was to be known as the Champ d'Asile, and, according to the plans published in Paris, was to have been a very complete town.³

The French settlers had not thought it necessary to ask permission to enter the country, and as soon as the Spanish

¹ Yoakum, I, 180-197, 202; Bancroft, *North Mex. States and Texas*, II, 34-43; *Amer. St. Papers, For. Rel.*, IV, 134, 138; *State Papers and Pub. Docs. of the U. S.* (3d ed., Boston, 1819), XI, 359, 386.

² See Robinson's *Mina's Expedition* for details. By the law of July 19, 1823, Mina and others were declared to be "beneméritos de la patria en grado herbóico," and their names were ordered inscribed in letters of gold in the legislative chambers.—(Dublan y Lozano, I, 660.)

³ The project excited much interest in France and was helped by the remnant of the Bonapartists. Béranger, in some verses entitled *Le Champ*

government heard of the intrusion they sent a force of soldiers to drive the Napoleonic invaders out. The colonists, warlike as they had once been, knew when they were beaten. They did not wait to be attacked, but retreated to the coast, where some of them probably joined Lafitte, some went to Mexico to join the revolutionists, and some found their way to New Orleans. Lallemand himself remained for several years in the United States, but returned to France after the establishment of the monarchy of July, was reinstated in the army, and died in 1838.¹

In a less ostentatious way a small body of German adventurers also came to Texas from New Orleans in the course of the year 1821. They landed near Copano and managed to get as far as Goliad, where they were all made prisoners.²

These were both peaceful though ignorant and illegal attempts at settlement, but one purely filibustering expedition remains to be noticed. In 1819 James Long, who had been a surgeon in the United States army, fitted out, more or less openly, an expedition at Natchez.³ His intention was to establish Texas as an independent republic, and he appealed with so much success to the love of adventure

d'Asile, pictured the French leader explaining to the natives the reasons for his settling among them:

*"Un chef de bannis courageux,
Implorant un lointain asile,
A des sauvages ombrageux
Disait: 'L'Europe nous exile.
Heureux enfants de ces forêts,
De nos maux apprenez l'histoire:
Sauvages! nous sommes Français
Prenez pitié de notre gloire,"*

and so forth.

¹ The anonymous work, *Le Champ d'Asile* (Paris, 1819), and Hartmann and Millard's *Le Texas* (Paris, 1819), are the principal sources of information concerning this foolish undertaking. See also "The Napoleonic Exiles in America," by Jesse S. Reeves, in *Johns Hopkins Univ. Studies in History*, ser. XXIII, Nos. 9 and 10, where an account of the antecedents of the principal men concerned and the origin of their plans will be found.

² *German-American Annals*, N. S., VI, 329.

³ Long had married a niece of Gen. Wilkinson, and thus seems, like Nolan, Burr, and Pike, to have come under the influence of that indefatigable plotter. After his marriage Long left the army and was first a planter and then a merchant, and apparently not very successful in either capacity. See Foote's *Texas*, I, 201-203.

of the people of the Southwest that by the time he reached Nacogdoches his force had grown from seventy-five to three hundred men. Their procedure was very characteristic. The first thing they did was to organize a complete civil government, the next was to publish a newspaper.¹

Long's republic had lasted less than four months when a detachment of the Spanish army attacked and utterly dispersed them.² Long himself was not discouraged. He escaped by way of Galveston to New Orleans, and in 1821 again led an expedition—this time under the auspices of certain Mexican revolutionists—against Texas. He landed at the mouth of the San Antonio River about the first of October, 1821, but was easily captured. As Mexico had now gained her independence, he was not shot at the time; yet he did not escape with his life, for a few months later he was killed in the city of Mexico.³

By the time that Mexican independence was fairly achieved, Texas was almost depopulated. The Spanish troops and the horse Indians between them had very nearly succeeded in destroying every semblance of cultivation and civilized life. A few destitute people still lingered about Béxar and La Bahía, and some few in and near what had once been Nacogdoches. Otherwise the country was deserted. Its wide and fertile expanse lay in the sight of all men, a huge and tempting prize for whosoever, Mexican or foreigner, was skilful enough or bold enough to take it.

¹ The first number appeared Aug. 14, 1819. See *Tex. Hist. Quar.*, VI, 162; VII, 242.

² Poinsett, on his first visit to Mexico, was able to get Iturbide's government to release some of Long's men who were still held as prisoners.—(*Notes on Mexico*, 122.) One of these prisoners was Benjamin R. Milam, who afterward played a conspicuous part in Texas. An interesting letter from him to Poinsett, dated Dec. 5, 1822, in which he complains of some of the ruffians who were his comrades, is preserved among the *Poinsett MSS.*

³ The accounts differ as to circumstances of his death. Bancroft thinks the most probable version is that he tried to enter the barracks of Los Gallos, and, being refused, struck the sentinel, who straightway shot him.—(*Bancroft, North Mex. States and Texas*, II, 51.)