

conduct of the settlers which could be tortured into anything like disloyalty was the Fredonian disturbance in 1826, which was the work of only fifteen or twenty men and was "opposed by ninety-nine hundredths of the settlers and which was quieted by their zeal and patriotism." They had indeed united with "the heroic and patriotic General Santa Anna," to vindicate liberty and the Constitution. It would have been easy at that time to declare and battle for independence. Why had they not done so?

"Because in the honest sincerity of our hearts, we assure you, and we call Almighty God to witness the truth of the assertion, we did not then, and we do not now, wish for independence. No! there is not an Anglo-American in Texas whose heart does not beat high for the prosperity of Mexico; who does not cordially and devoutly wish that all parts of her territory may remain united to the end of time."

The law of 1830, said the memorial, was destruction to the prospects of Texas. Experience had shown that native Mexicans would not settle in it, nor would "Europeans of the right description," and all hope of the growth and prosperity of the country depended therefore on people from the United States, against whom alone the door was closed.

The convention then, having adopted the measures above referred to, agreed to send two delegates to Saltillo and the city of Mexico to present the several memorials to the federal and state governments; but for some reason the persons selected prudently found themselves "unable to go." And finally the convention appointed a central committee, whose duty it was to correspond with the subordinate local committees, to inform them concerning objects of general interest, and in case of emergency to call another general meeting.<sup>1</sup>

For some reason, not now very clearly apparent, the central committee thought it wise to summon a new convention. "The suddenness with which the [first] convention had been convoked and the non-attendance of a number

<sup>1</sup> See Journal of the Convention in Gammel's *Laws of Texas*, I, 477-503; and Brown, I, 197-213.

of the delegates" is the reason generally assigned;<sup>1</sup> but the complete and final success of Santa Anna and the disappearance of Bustamante's government may also have been facts that influenced the decision.<sup>2</sup>

On the first day of March, 1833, the elections for the new convention were duly held, and the delegates met again at San Felipe, on the first of April, the day of the inauguration of Santa Anna and Gómez Farias as President and Vice-President of the republic. During the thirteen days which the sessions of this convention lasted, the members adopted a tentative Constitution for the proposed new state, a resolution condemning the African slave trade, and an address to the Mexican Congress.<sup>3</sup>

The proposed Constitution followed the general lines of such instruments in the United States. Its opening sentences proclaimed the inviolable right of citizens to trial by jury and to the writ of *habeas corpus*; it promised security against unreasonable searches and seizures; it prohibited general warrants; and it declared that no man should be deprived of life, liberty, or property but by due process of law. These were the fundamental privileges which many generations of Englishmen and their descendants had enjoyed; but they rested on conceptions of law and governmental powers, which were not readily comprehensible in Mexico.

The address to the Mexican Congress, which was in fact the most important work of the convention, was admirable in tone. In clear, straightforward, and perfectly respectful language it set forth the evil results of the existing political situation, and the reasons for the proposed remedy. It began by referring to the federal law of May 7, 1824,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kennedy, II, 18.

<sup>2</sup> About Nov. 1, 1833, Santa Anna addressed an official letter to President Jackson announcing that Heaven had crowned with success the efforts of the defenders of federal institutions and that the revolution was "entirely extinguished."—(H. R. Doc. 351, 25 Cong., 2 sess., 689. See Jackson's reply dated Feb. 8, 1834, in *ibid.*, 116.)

<sup>3</sup> The text of this Constitution will be found in Edward's *Hist. of Texas*, 196-205; and of the address in Yoakum's *Hist. of Texas*, I, 469-482.

<sup>4</sup> Dublan y Lozano, I, 706.

adopted by the constituent Congress, which provided that Coahuila and Texas should form one state and also that "so soon as Texas shall be in a condition to figure as a state by itself, it shall inform Congress thereof for its decision" ("*participará al Congreso general para su resolución*"). That time, the memorialists asserted, had now come; the union with Coahuila had been a mere temporary expedient; the two parts of the state were not a geographical unit, and their respective interests and the character of their populations were different. Coahuila was an inland region, adapted to mining and grazing. Texas was on the seaboard, with good harbors and a fertile soil, and was therefore fitted for commerce and agriculture. To the fact of the distance of Texas from the capital of the state, and the lack of interest felt by the people of Coahuila in her affairs, were due the impotence of the local government. The Indians massacred and robbed the oldest settlements. There was virtually no government, and it was only the "redeeming spirit" of the people which prevented complete anarchy. The judicial system was inadequate to the preservation of order, the protection of property, or the redress of wrongs.

For these and other reasons, the address asserted, the political connection with Coahuila was daily becoming more odious to the people, who, although mainly of foreign origin, were pledged by every moral and religious principle and by every sentiment of honor, to dedicate their energies to the advancement of their adopted country. A system which should redress grievances and remove causes of complaint would best secure the permanent attachment of such a population; and such a system could only be established by admitting Texas to the equal sisterhood of states.

A committee was appointed to lay this address and an account of the proceedings before the Mexican authorities, and thereupon the convention adjourned and the members went peaceably to their homes.

A few months earlier the purely Mexican population of Béjar had drawn up a separate petition to the state legislature, which set forth their view of the evils from which

Texas was suffering, and the nature of the remedies to be applied.<sup>1</sup> Owing, it was said, to the want of paternal protection from the government during the past hundred and forty years, the wretched settlements made in Texas had either disappeared or were suffering all sorts of evils. Numbers of the inhabitants had been killed by the Indians, and not a few by famine and pestilence, a result due to the indifference and apathy of the authorities. In the past eleven years ninety-seven men had been thus killed in the neighborhood of Béjar, Goliad and Gonzales alone, without counting the soldiers who had perished in the field. These soldiers also had been neglected. During the past year they had not received a twentieth part of what was due them, and half of them had necessarily been discharged, so that there were not left seventy men under arms in all Texas. Another evil was that there was not and never had been any judicial organization, nor were there any public schools.

As to legislation, the law of colonization was said to be confused and inadequate, while the law of April 6, 1830, forbidding North American immigration, had simply resulted in keeping out the best elements. North American settlers had redeemed the deserts, and given such an impulse to agriculture and other arts as the country had never seen; and these same people would afford the most efficacious, prompt, and economical means of destroying the hostile Indians. The outrageous conduct of Colonel Bradburn in arresting state officials at Anáhuac, and the injurious effect of the tariff were also dwelt upon. But the source of all the sufferings of Texas was traced to the want of a government in touch with the necessities of the people; and a change of the capital from Saltillo to a point farther north was suggested. It was also said that Texas was entitled to a larger representation in the state legislature. But the more thorough and logical remedy of making Texas into a separate state was not proposed; and indeed such a

<sup>1</sup> *Representación del Ayuntamiento de Béjar*, Dec. 19, 1832; *Filisola*, I, 273-293. Copies were sent to all the other ayuntamientos of Texas.

suggestion would have been contrary to the spirit of this document. The ayuntamiento of Béxar was calling upon a paternal government to come and help them. The American settlers in their conventions at San Felipe were begging to be allowed to help themselves. There was a world of significance in the different attitude of the two races.

The representation from Béxar, which concurred with the San Felipe memorial as to matters of fact and only differed in respect to the remedy proposed, being made in form by an official body, although it was in fact the expression of the views of all the assembled inhabitants of Béxar,<sup>1</sup> was not objected to; but the two conventions at San Felipe were highly disapproved of by the Mexican officials. They considered such assemblages contrary to law, and "derogatory to the supreme government," and in fact they were never able to understand very clearly what was meant by a convention or a committee.<sup>2</sup> They felt convinced, however, that the proceedings of the American colonists bore some character which did not appear on the surface. The real object, it was argued, could not be to secure statehood, for the people were too few, too poor, and too ignorant to constitute a separate state, and their efforts could only excite the derision and hatred of the rest of the country; nor could they wish to have Texas made into a territory, for that implied a military government; and still less could it be supposed that they were aiming at independence, for that required a supply of men, arms, and money, which the colonists did not possess. The only reasonable conclusion appeared to be that either the cabinet at Washington or the Southern states of the Union, under the lead of South Carolina, were secretly intriguing to annex the rich territory of Texas. This conclusion was thought to be supported by the fact that Butler, then the United States chargé d'affaires in Mexico, had visited Texas in June,

<sup>1</sup> Filisola, I, 272.

<sup>2</sup> The governor of Coahuila and Texas directed the jefe político to give the ayuntamiento of San Felipe to understand that the government viewed the recent proceedings with high displeasure, and he desired to know the true meaning of the word "convention."—(Brown, I, 220.)

1832, with no ostensible object but to see the country; whereas his presence, it was contended, must have determined the revolutionary movements which broke out just at that time.<sup>1</sup>

It would no doubt have surprised the leaders of the nullification movement in South Carolina to be told that while they were preparing to resist the execution of the laws of the United States in November, 1832, they were engaged at the same moment in intrigues in Texas. There is, of course, no evidence whatever that there was any such stuff in their thoughts. That Colonel Butler may have busied himself in secretly encouraging revolutionary movements, is more possible. There appears to be no evidence to show that he did; but, on the other hand, there was nothing in his character to prove that he did not.<sup>2</sup>

Three months after the adjournment of the second San Felipe convention—that is to say, on July 18, 1833—the indefatigable Austin arrived in the city of Mexico bearing with him the address of the convention to the federal authorities. He had no reason to anticipate an unfriendly reception, for the new administration had been supported by the Texan insurgents and was known to be liberal and open-minded. Santa Anna himself was not at that time

<sup>1</sup> Músquiz, jefe político of Béxar, to the governor of Coahuila and Texas, March 11, 1833; Filisola, I, 310-315.

<sup>2</sup> On July 26, 1831, the State Department granted Butler leave of absence to "make a visit to the north of Mexico," where he desired to go on account of his health.—(Brent to Butler; H. R. Doc. 351, 25 Cong., 2 sess., 81.) He did not leave the city of Mexico that year, but on Jan. 2, 1832, he wrote a private letter to President Jackson, in which he stated that he expected, in a few days, "to make a journey north with General Mason."—(*Jackson MSS.*, Library of Congress.) He remained, however, in the capital until after the eighth of March, and he was absent until about the twentieth of June.—(H. R. Doc. 351, 25 Cong., 2 sess., 437. Butler to Jackson, June 20, 1832; *Jackson MSS.*) "General Mason" with whom he travelled, was John Thomson Mason, agent for the Galveston Bay and Texas Land Company, and later accused of rather unsavory dealings with the legislature of Coahuila and Texas concerning certain fraudulent land grants of 1834. Mason was in Saltillo on May 11, and at the hacienda del Cojo, Tamaulipas, May 30, 1832, and reached New York in July. See article on "John Thomson Mason," by Kate Mason Rowland, in *Tex. Hist. Quar.*, XI, 167-170. Whether Butler actually went with Mason into Texas does not appear, but it is quite probable that he did, as there was time enough to go at least to Béxar and be back in the city of Mexico by the twentieth of June.

taking any active part in the administration, but either lived retired at his hacienda or occupied himself in suppressing the military mutinies that were breaking out as usual from time to time; and when Austin reached the capital Santa Anna had just left it, with the special authority of Congress, to march against General Arista, who was conducting a revolutionary campaign that was believed to be more or less collusive. The duties of the presidential office were being discharged by the Vice-President, Gómez Farias.<sup>1</sup>

Farias and his followers were in the full tide of their reforming zeal when Austin presented his plea for Texan statehood. He no doubt expected that an appeal for greater individual freedom for citizens of the republic would receive favorable consideration from philosophers and radicals; but theory was one thing and autonomy for foreign settlers another, and Austin's mission was a complete failure. In the first place, there was a technical difficulty in the way. The federal Constitution, which was adopted October 4, 1824, and therefore five months after the law which united Texas with Coahuila, provided that a new state could only be created out of part of an existing one by a three-fourths vote in each of the houses of Congress, ratified by three-fourths of the state legislatures.<sup>2</sup>

But, in addition, there was never any disposition on the part of the federal authorities to modify the legislation of the Bustamante government respecting Texas. The tariff and the laws relative to slavery were maintained. No assurances were given as to continued freedom from military control. And there was no willingness even to consider separate statehood. The proposals that looked so fair in Texas bore a very different aspect in the capital. Granting that separate statehood might benefit the Texan colonists, it was by no means so clear that Mexico would benefit by building up a strong and well-organized state,

<sup>1</sup> See proclamation of July 5, 1833; *Dublan y Lozano*, II, 536. Arista was defeated and surrendered at Guanajuato on Oct. 8, 1833.

<sup>2</sup> Constitution, Art. 50, subd. vii.

composed of hardy men of foreign race and alien tongue who were hostile, by all their traditions, to the ideals and aspirations of the Mexican people.

The federal authorities therefore expressed themselves as thinking that the time had not yet come when Texas could properly be erected into an independent state, but promised to recommend to the legislature of Coahuila and Texas the enactment of various measures for the relief of the colonists. In one respect only did Austin gain any positive success. He persuaded Congress to repeal the obnoxious provisions of the law of April 6, 1830, which forbade immigration from the United States,<sup>1</sup> and with this small favor in his baggage he set out from Mexico on the tenth of December, 1833.

He had only got as far as Saltillo on his journey home when he was arrested under orders from the federal government, and was taken back to Mexico and locked up in the old prison of the Inquisition. Following the usual custom in cases of serious crime, he was not permitted to communicate with any one, nor was he informed of the charges against him. What these were never clearly appeared, but the chief offence seems to have been his sending what he himself admitted later to be "an imprudent and perhaps an intemperate letter" to the people of Béxar. In this he had been rash enough to advise them to form a state government without waiting for Congress to act, for he said if the people did not take matters into their own hands Texas was ruined forever.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Law of Nov. 25, 1833; *Dublan y Lozano*, II, 637. The repeal was not to take effect for six months. The government was authorized to expend all sums of money necessary to colonize the uninhabited districts ("puntos valdrios") of the country, and to take whatever measures it considered conducive to the security, progress, and stability of the colonies it might establish. As no colonies were established under this act there was never any occasion to exercise the magnificently vague powers thus conferred on the executive.

<sup>2</sup> Austin's diary from Dec. 10, 1833, to April 29, 1834, is printed in *Tex. Hist. Quar.*, II, 183-210. It is interesting not only as giving some account of Mexican conditions at the time, both in prison and out, but it also reveals Austin's attitude toward Texan independence. He was honestly trying to continue the existing Mexican connection, great as the difficulties were. See also *Tex. Hist. Quar.*, XIV, 155-163.

The charges, whatever they may have been, were never pressed, and Austin, after eight months' imprisonment, was finally released from jail as the result of important political changes in Mexico. His friends in the United States had tried to help him by getting the State Department to interfere; but Butler, the American chargé d'affaires, wrote that Austin was faring better than he deserved in prison, that he was the bitterest foe to the United States, and that he had prevented the Mexican government's agreeing to a sale of Texas; and so Austin got no help from that quarter.<sup>1</sup>

For over a year the radicals, under Gómez Farias, had had things pretty much their own way and had "hustled" Mexico to an extent which was not at all approved by a large proportion of the influential classes. Many matters of importance had been taken in hand. A detailed census was decreed,<sup>2</sup> a national library was established,<sup>3</sup> and the usury laws were abolished.<sup>4</sup> A complete system of public education for the federal district and the territories, under the control of a government board headed by the Vice-President of the republic, was enacted and the old University of Mexico and the Colegio de Santa Maria de Todos Santos were abolished.<sup>5</sup>

Taking the control of education out of the hands of the clergy was a bold step of itself, but the party in power went further and undertook a far-reaching reform of the church. Tithes were abolished,<sup>6</sup> all statutes under which monastic vows could be enforced were repealed,<sup>7</sup> sales of church property were subjected to government regulation,<sup>8</sup> and the missions in California were secularized.<sup>9</sup>

The army also was to be reformed. The number of regiments and battalions was reduced. The number of generals of division was cut down to eight, and the number of brigadiers to twelve.<sup>10</sup> The engineer corps was remodelled.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> McLane to Butler, May 26, 1834; H. R. Doc. 351, 25 Cong., 2 sess., 141. Butler to McLane, July 13, 1834; *State Dept. MSS.*

<sup>2</sup> Dublin y Lozano, II, 582.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 575.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 577.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 641, 689.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 657.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 580.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 600.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 564, 571, 563.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 635.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 601.

The military school at Chapultepec was established.<sup>1</sup> And penalties were imposed upon officers and regiments who "pronounced."<sup>2</sup>

Wise and liberal as the policy of Gómez Farias and his followers may have been, their haste in putting it into effect was bound to wreck the whole scheme. Nothing but discontent and revolution could come of an attempt to reform in a single year the two strongest institutions in the country—the army and the church; and it is not surprising to find risings everywhere to the cry of "*Fueros y religión!*" (privileges and religion). In some places the cry was "*Fueros, religión y Santa Anna!*" for it was pretty generally believed that the President of the republic was not at all favorable to curtailing the privileges of the soldiery or the clergy. It was even hinted that Santa Anna himself had instigated some of these insurrections, and he certainly put them all down with rather suspicious ease.

At length, on April 24, 1834, Santa Anna saw that his time had come, and he suddenly reassumed the duties of the presidential office. The Vice-President retired from the post of authority with his hands—to use the energetic expression of a Mexican historian—clean of blood and money,<sup>3</sup> and the way was made easier for Santa Anna to attain, what was probably his real object all along, the possession of a purely dictatorial power. There were, however, some difficulties still in the way. The old party of the Escoceses, and the Moderates generally, believed that changes had gone far enough for the present, although they were in favor of carrying out those reforms which were in process of execution. The church and the army, however, did not approve of this programme, and on May 23, 1834, a reactionary plan was formally proclaimed at Cuernavaca

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 603.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 547, 599, etc.

<sup>3</sup> "*Dejó el poder dictatorial con las manos limpias de sangre y de dinero.*"—(Rivera, *Historia de Jalapa*, III, 227.) The author discusses at some length the question whether Farias should not have seized and imprisoned Santa Anna as an obstacle to reform, whether he was not wanting in firmness in failing to put out of action those who were opposed to the social changes in question, and whether he was not too scrupulous about the Constitution—retreating in the face of childish obstacles and leaving the field open to the reactionaries.

which was very quickly approved by the greater part of the country.

Briefly, the plan of Cuernavaca declared against all proscriptive laws, all religious reforms, and all toleration of "Masonic sects"; pronounced all laws void which were contrary to these views; called upon Santa Anna to uphold the constitutional safeguards; and demanded that the deputies who had passed the obnoxious laws should be dismissed "until the nation represented anew shall be reorganized according to the Constitution and in a manner conducive to her happiness."<sup>1</sup>

This meant, in plain words, that the reactionaries wished Santa Anna to dissolve Congress, to amend the Constitution, and meanwhile to rule as a dictator; and this he did as rapidly as circumstances would allow. He exercised dictatorship without a Congress, without a council of government, without state legislatures, and even without ministers; and at first without any opposition or obstacle. The governors of most of the states were dismissed, and even many ayuntamientos, the vacant places being filled by supporters of the plan of Cuernavaca.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, by the month of July, 1834, a wide-spread but never very vigorous revolt against reaction had broken out. In Puebla, and especially in the northern and eastern states—San Luis, Zacatecas, Jalisco, Nuevo Leon, and Coahuila—there was very serious discontent and troops were sent to reduce the nearer towns to obedience. The garrisons of Tampico and Matamoros having "pronounced," any idea of a movement against Texas was necessarily abandoned for the time being; while Coahuila seized the opportunity to indulge in a small civil war of its own over the question whether Saltillo or Monclova should be the capital of the state.

After a long siege, the city of Puebla surrendered and the force of the revolt against Santa Anna was thereby broken. By a manifesto dated October 15, 1834, he announced that

<sup>1</sup> Text in *México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 341.

<sup>2</sup> Rivera, *Historia de Jalapa*, III, 198, 202.

he was determined to sustain article 171 of the Constitution, which declared that no amendment could ever be made in reference to the state religion, the form of government, the liberty of the press, and the division of powers between the federal and state authorities. Never, said a circular of the Department of Relations, never could the President forget that the federal system was the work of his hands, never would he permit the fundamental bases of the Constitution to be overthrown; all he desired was that the Congress to be chosen in the autumn of 1834 should have power to deal with such constitutional changes as experience had shown were desirable.<sup>1</sup>

Busy as Santa Anna was during the summer and autumn of 1834, he did not overlook the troublesome question of Texas. One of his first steps after he reassumed the office of President was to relieve Austin from his rigorous imprisonment in the cells of the Inquisition. Austin, however, was too important and too valuable an intermediary in Texan affairs to be allowed to go back at once, and he was detained in Mexico, upon one pretext or another, until the middle of the following year.<sup>2</sup>

Santa Anna was apparently very uncertain as to the proper course to be pursued in reference to Texas. The notion of subsidizing native Mexicans to colonize the frontier had been revived by Farias in February,<sup>3</sup> but this attempt had proved no more fortunate than its predecessors, for no Mexicans could be hired to go as colonists either to Texas or to the Californias. Santa Anna, however, under pretence of making preparations to establish the colonists contemplated by this decree, sent his aid, Colonel Almonte, who spoke English fluently, to report on the condition of Texas.<sup>4</sup> He also devoted a good deal of time to hearing

<sup>1</sup> Rivera, *Historia de Jalapa*, III, 218. The conservatives, "the sensible and pious," were much alarmed by this circular.—(*México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 349.)

<sup>2</sup> He left Mexico by sea about July 1, 1835, remained a short time in New Orleans, and sailed thence in August, reaching Texas Sept. 1, 1835.

<sup>3</sup> See text of decree in Filisola, *Guerra de Tégas*, II, 39-43.

<sup>4</sup> The text of his report, or so much of it as was published, is in *ibid.*, 535-570.

Austin's opinions, and to settling the disputes between the Monclova and Saltillo factions, which had given rise to a condition almost of anarchy in Coahuila. In the course of these conversations Santa Anna posed as the friend of the colonists, and succeeded in making Austin regard him as thoroughly well disposed toward Texas, and as determined to remedy the evils which had been complained of.<sup>1</sup> Even as late as December 2, 1834, Austin wrote that everything was now changed, that continued union with Coahuila was the object to be sought, and that Santa Anna intended to sustain the federal system if any constitutional changes were to be made.<sup>2</sup>

It was quite true that there had been some changes for the better. The state legislature had shown very considerable liberality. New municipalities had been established.<sup>3</sup> Additional representation was allotted to Texas in the state legislature, and the use of English in transacting public business was allowed.<sup>4</sup> The sale of public lands at auction was provided for, either to Mexicans or foreigners; and the act expressly declared that "no person shall be molested on account of his political or religious opinions, provided he does not disturb public order."<sup>5</sup> A further act authorized the governor to distribute four hundred sitios of land under such rules and regulations as he might establish, and this became the origin of a great scandal.<sup>6</sup>

Another measure which might have had important results if it had ever been carried into effect was an act which created a superior judicial court in Texas, and established for it a sort of English common-law procedure, including trial by jury in civil cases.<sup>7</sup> Thomas J. Chambers, an American lawyer who had lived some time in Mexico, was

<sup>1</sup> Austin to Perry, Aug. 25, 1834; Edward, 211.

<sup>2</sup> Yoakum, I, 326.

<sup>3</sup> *Laws and Decrees of Coahuila and Texas*, 242, 274.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 245. Law of March 18, 1834.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 247. Law of March 26, 1834. This act repeals all former laws relating to public lands, and provides that there shall be no more contracts for colonization; those previously executed, however, to be "religiously complied with."

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 270. Law of April 19, 1834.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 254. Law of April 17, 1834.

appointed judge under this statute; but unfortunately the state of Coahuila and Texas never had money enough to pay the expenses of opening a court in Texas, any more than it had ever found the money to carry out any act of government except the issuance of grants of land; and in the complicated controversies which now involved both Coahuila and Texas it became all the more difficult to accomplish anything which required the spending of money.

The rather inexpensive concessions which the legislature made to the inhabitants of Texas were by no means enough to remove either the causes of complaint or the prevalent distrust of the intentions of the Mexican government. In October, 1834, even the Mexican inhabitants of Texas became excited and alarmed, and the jefe político of Béxar, adopting for this occasion American methods, sent out a call for a convention, to meet on November 15; and at the same time issued a fiery proclamation urging Texas to declare herself independent.<sup>1</sup> The central committee appointed by the convention of March was, however, still in existence, and it succeeded in putting a stop to this premature effort. In a very temperate address, issued in November, 1834, the committee seriously warned the people against violent and reckless measures. The federal Constitution of 1824, it was said, was still in force; a separate state government could lawfully be established under it, and none but constitutional means ought to be resorted to for that end; the existing Mexican government and President Santa Anna entertained the most friendly feelings toward Texas; any attempt to effect forcibly a separation from Coahuila would invite fresh difficulties and prolong Austin's imprisonment, and perhaps endanger his life; Texas was prospering, thanks to excellent crops and a large immigration; and, in short, if the people of Texas would but be patient their grievances would be remedied in the end.<sup>2</sup>

These cautious counsels undoubtedly represented the views of the best men in Texas. "My advice to Texas," said Austin, "is what it has always been—remain quiet—

<sup>1</sup> Text in Edward's *Hist. of Texas*, 222-224.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 225-231.

populate the country—improve your farms—and discountenance all revolutionary men and principles.”<sup>1</sup> But these were not the sentiments of all of the people, and perhaps not of a majority. No doubt the well-to-do, the farmers, the people with property and families, deprecated hasty action; but there can be no question that a large proportion of the inhabitants of Texas, including many of Mexican descent, were by this time strongly inclined to instant and radical action. The conservatives, however, were well organized and well advised, and they were able, through the whole of the year 1834, to prevent any revolutionary measures whatever.

Meanwhile the population of Texas was steadily growing in numbers, notwithstanding the restrictions of the law of April 6, 1830. As Mexico had wholly abandoned the attempt to guard the frontiers, “innumerable” immigrants from the United States had continued to pour in, even during the three years and a half that the prohibition against American immigrants was in force. But if the law had not affected the quantity, it was believed to have operated against the quality of the immigration. Men of means and men who were peaceable and industrious naturally hesitated to settle, with their families, in Texas when their very first step involved a plain violation of the law. On the other hand, the door was left wide open to “adventurers, malefactors, and the dregs of the people,” who had nothing to lose.<sup>2</sup> The result, therefore, of passing this law and not enforcing it effectually was, as is usually the case where prohibitive laws are unsupported by an efficient and honest police, that conditions were aggravated; for while immigration from the United States was not checked, the conservative element was replaced by the adventurous.

The wealth of Texas had likewise increased as the farmers had extended the area under cultivation, improved their buildings, and increased the number of their cattle and

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Jan. 16, 1834, in *Tex. Hist. Quar.*, XIII, 266. And see letter of March 3, 1835, *ibid.*, 270.

<sup>2</sup> Address of the Ayuntamiento of Béxar, Dec. 19, 1832; Filisola, *Guerra de Tèjas*, I, 278.

slaves. In Austin's colony alone it was estimated that the exports of cotton for the year 1833 amounted to nearly two million pounds. There were thirty cotton-gins in operation, two saw-mills, and several water-mills.<sup>1</sup> There were practically no manufactures in the country, because everything came in from New Orleans free of duty; and in San Felipe and Brazoria there were good country stores which were so well supplied with clothing and the necessaries of life, and which offered their goods at such low prices, that the Mexicans came from Béxar, and even from as far as Monclova, to deal with them. There was a small steamboat trading on the Brazos River, and others were expected to be built. All the settlements as far as Nacogdoches were prospering in like manner.<sup>2</sup>

It was, in short, a thriving frontier community of a type perfectly familiar in the annals of the Western states of the American Union, still poor and inhabited by a population scanty in numbers, but of an intensely hopeful, not to say sanguine, disposition.

<sup>1</sup> Austin to Filisola, May 24, 1833; *ibid.*, 351.

<sup>2</sup> Report of Almonte; *ibid.*, II, 555-568.