

The aspect of the field of battle on the following morning told the story. Along the front of the Mexican position lay the bodies of General Castrillon and several other officers and some fifty soldiers. In the wood on the Mexican right and about the camp there were some additional bodies, making perhaps a hundred dead in all. On the left of the position over the prairie, "as far," says a Mexican eye-witness, "as the eye could reach, I observed to right and left two lines of corpses—all our men." But the chief scene of destruction was in the rear of the camp, where a gully led down toward the lagoon and marsh which, in Santa Anna's opinion, made his position so advantageous. "There were an infinite number of dead," says the same witness, "piled one upon the other, till they might have served as a bridge."¹ The unfortunate fugitives had tumbled headlong into the water and mud, and had been shot like rabbits.

Houston officially reported the Mexican loss as six hundred and thirty killed, two hundred and eight wounded, and seven hundred and thirty prisoners,² against a Texan loss of two killed and twenty-three wounded. The destruction of Vince's Bridge had served to cut off the retreat of many fugitives, and, in fact, not more than about forty of Santa Anna's entire force ultimately escaped. It is amusing to note that in the lists of Mexican killed, wounded, and captured there were three generals and twenty-one colonels or lieutenant-colonels, for a force of eleven hundred and fifty men.³

The completeness and rapidity of this victory inevitably recalled the exploits of Cortés against the ancestors of the same poor docile Indians who formed the rank and file of Santa Anna's army. The reasons why these swift and sweeping victories were possible were the same in both cases.

¹ Caro, *Verdadera Idea*, 44.

² Yoakum, II, 501. The figures of the Mexican loss are certainly exaggerated, for Santa Anna had not more than eleven hundred and fifty men in all. Houston's report as to the number of his prisoners is very likely exact, the error consisting in an overestimate of those who were killed in a pursuit which extended about eight miles, namely, to Vince's Bridge.

³ General Cos, who had in effect violated his parole, was one of the prisoners. For details as to his capture, see Brown, II, 41.

The Mexican Indian had never been a fighting man. He could be cruel and blood-thirsty when roused. His endurance and patience made him admirable in marching under adverse conditions, and his Spanish officers could lead him or drive him into battle, or even hold him steady under severe fire. But he never learned to shoot straight, and he never learned to withstand a determined rush by men of the warlike races either of Europe or America. He feared and ran from the Apache, just as he fled from the Spaniard, or as he fled from the descendants of Germans and Irish and English when they came roaring over the breastwork at San Jacinto and knocked him on the head with their clubbed rifles. He could not fight for himself any more than he could colonize or govern. He never did either if he could help it; and he was perfectly willing, as a rule, to leave these uncongenial duties to the descendants of his Spanish masters. It was only here and there that an exceptional man like Guerrero served to make more conspicuous the weakness and inefficiency of his race.

The morning after the battle, when the heat of the pursuit had died away and the full measure of their triumph had become so apparent to the Texans that their antipathy to the Mexicans had turned into pity, a party of men were scouting over the prairie to pick up escaping Mexicans. About eight or ten miles from the battle-field they saw the head and shoulders of a man above the tall sedge grass. When he caught sight of his pursuers he lay down, evidently hoping to escape observation, but they galloped up to him and ordered him to get up. As he lay still, one of them said, "Boys, I'll make him move," levelling his gun at the same time. "Don't shoot," said the others; and getting down from his horse, one of them gave the prostrate form a kick, saying: "Get up, damn you!" The man slowly rose and addressed his captors in Spanish, which one of them spoke imperfectly. They understood him to say that he was not an officer, and that he belonged to the cavalry. He was roughly dressed, but wore a fine shirt and good shoes. As he rode into camp behind one of the Texans, the

Mexican prisoners saluted, exclaiming, "*El presidente!*" It was Santa Anna.¹

His captors took him at once to Houston, who was wounded in the ankle, and was sitting under a tree. It was manifest that Santa Anna's life, now he was recognized, was in imminent danger; but Houston had enough control over his men to protect the prisoner for the moment.

With a single eye to his own safety, Santa Anna at once proposed to enter into negotiations for his liberation, upon the basis of the recognition by Mexico of Texan independence; but Houston declined to go into that business at all, and said that all such matters must be referred to the Texan government. He did, however, demand as a preliminary that Santa Anna should send an order to his second in command, directing him to evacuate Texas; and Santa Anna, without hesitation, dictated the following despatch, addressed to General Filisola:²

"YOUR EXCELLENCY:

"The small division under my immediate command having had an unfortunate encounter yesterday afternoon, I find myself a prisoner of war in the hands of the enemy, who have extended to me all possible consideration. Under these circumstances I recommend your Excellency to order General Gaona to march back to Béjar and await orders, as your Excellency will also do with the troops which are under your immediate command; at the same time warning General Urrea to retire with his division to Victoria; since I have agreed with General Houston upon an armistice pending certain negotiations which may put an end to the war forever."³

The touch about an armistice, added near the end of this hasty and agitated letter, was untrue. No agreement of the kind had been made.

But long before Filisola received this letter he had made

¹ The various conflicting accounts of Santa Anna's capture are collected in *Tex. Hist. Quar.*, V, 92-95.

² The private secretary's account of the circumstances attending the preparation of this paper will be found in Caro, *Verdadera Idea*, 44 et seq.

³ The correct Spanish text is given in Santa Anna's *Manifiesto*, 87, and in Filisola, II, 481, with one important misprint—*comunicaciones* for *consideraciones*. A fac-simile of the original duplicate of the order is in Yoakum, II, 148; but the English translation there given is inaccurate.

up his mind to retire from the position he was holding at Thompson's Ferry. The news of the disaster at San Jacinto reached him on Saturday, two days after the battle, through Colonel García, who commanded the escort of a hundred men which Cos had left with his supply-train near Harrisburg. García's report was that Santa Anna was either dead or a prisoner, and that while reports of the Texan strength varied, some of the prisoners put it as high as twenty-five hundred men.

At this time the line of the Brazos River was held by three detachments of Mexican troops. Urrea was at Brazoria with the main part of his force, not quite a thousand in number. At Columbia, about eight miles farther up, he had about two hundred men more, under Colonel Salas. Filisola himself was at the Old Fort, about thirty miles above Columbia, with some fourteen hundred men, made up of the remnants of the brigades of Ramírez and Tolsa, and of the detachment under Gaona, who had finally joined the main body after unexplained delays. Not only was the army thus divided, but the position at the Old Fort was, in Filisola's opinion, a very weak one. His first move, therefore, was to concentrate all the troops within reach, for which purpose he ordered Urrea and Salas to march at once to Mrs. Powell's farm, which was situated in an open prairie, about twelve miles (five leagues) west of the river, and equidistant from the Old Fort and Columbia.

On Sunday, the twenty-fifth, the concentration was completed, the entire force amounting, according to the official returns, to twenty-five hundred and seventy-three men. In addition, there was a garrison of a thousand men at Béjar, and small detachments at Copano, Goliad, Matagorda, and other points; so that the total Mexican force in Texas at this time was officially given at four thousand and seventy-eight.¹ This showed a loss of over thirty per cent since the opening of the campaign. Moreover, the condition of the troops and their equipment, according to the usually pessimistic Filisola, was very bad. The men's clothes were in

¹ Filisola, II, 475.

rags; they had no shoes, and no shelter; there were no surgeons and no medical stores; and if they were wounded or fell ill they could have no spiritual help, since there was not a priest to say mass. There were immense numbers of women following the army, besides teamsters and muleteers, so that the number of persons to be fed was double the fighting force. The number of mules was excessive, and both horses and mules were in wretched condition. But what was worst of all was the lack of provisions. Since they had left Monclova the army had been on short allowance, for the inhabitants had fled, and this cotton-growing country was a desert, and there was little prospect of getting any supply by water.¹

Strategic conditions could only be guessed at. It was then quite unknown to the Mexican officers what Houston's force had been at the time of the battle, what losses he had sustained, and what reinforcements he might receive. It was fifty miles in a straight line from Mrs. Powell's to the San Jacinto, with a large river, the Brazos, to be crossed on the way. If the army ever got to the scene of the late battle, there was no certainty that they would find the Texans.

"The state of the enemy," writes Filisola, "was very different. He was in his own country. He was in possession of three steamboats and several small schooners, with which he could make raids with impunity, from Galveston or Culebra Island,² up the rivers on our right flank or rear and could also put in peril our detachments at Copano, Goliad and Matagorda."³

Filisola, therefore, summoned a council of war the moment he reached Mrs. Powell's, and the conclusion was reached to continue the retreat at least beyond the Colorado.⁴ All this time nothing had been heard of Santa Anna.

¹ Filisola to Secretary of War, May 14, 1836; *Defensa*, 46-56.

² In Matagorda Bay.

³ Filisola, II, 478.

⁴ This was Filisola's report to the War Department at the time.—(*Defensa*, 50.) Subsequently Urrea announced loudly that he had opposed the retreat from the Brazos River and had favored an advance. Filisola asserted that all Urrea had then said was that he was sorry the army had to retreat, but had full confidence in the experience and skill of the second in command; and

On Tuesday, the twenty-seventh of March, the whole force started for Victoria, on the Guadalupe River. For a week Filisola struggled on in the midst of torrents of rain—the soil turning to liquid mud in which his mules sank up to their packs, the road strewn with men, guns, ammunition, and provisions—until at length, on the second of May, he reached the Colorado.¹

It was only on the twenty-eighth of April, during this miserable march, that Filisola was overtaken by Santa Anna's orders. The answer Filisola sent was intended for Houston's reading. He reported that he had concentrated his forces as soon as he had heard of the battle of San Jacinto, and had retired from the Brazos so as to be better able to take the initiative against the enemy; but that in view of Santa Anna's letter, and the circumstances therein disclosed, and of his (Filisola's) desire to give a proof of his affection for the commander-in-chief and the other prisoners, he had determined to cross the Colorado and cease hostilities in spite of his responsibility to the government; but that he must be assured that all the prisoners were treated with entire respect. And he added that the prisoners he held (being chiefly those spared at Goliad) were well cared for.

Three days after crossing the Colorado Filisola received further orders from Santa Anna directing him to withdraw to Monterey, leaving in all Texas only four hundred men, at Béxar, with a couple of guns, to protect the sick and wounded. Filisola then fell back as far as Goliad, where he halted for several days before resuming his march for the Rio Grande; but in the middle of June he was superseded, under orders from Mexico, by General Urrea.

Meantime, even Béxar was being evacuated. On the twenty-fourth of May the Mexican troops marched out, after setting fire to the Alamo. The church, being of solid masonry, would not burn, but the old convent was almost completely destroyed. "All the single walls were levelled, the fosse

Filisola called the other officers who were present, Gaona, Sesma, Tolsa, Woll, and Ampudia, to witness.—(*Defensa*, 25, 34.)

¹ Filisola (*Defensa*, 50-54) gives a most graphic account of this march.

filled up, and the pickets torn up and burned. All the artillery and ammunition that could not be carried off were thrown in the river."¹ Ten or fifteen years afterward it was difficult to trace the outlines of the walls and ditch; but the church was restored, to remain a venerated relic for many future generations.

While the remnants of the Mexican army were thus withdrawing beyond the Rio Grande Santa Anna was busy negotiating with the Texans. President Burnet had arrived from Galveston at the San Jacinto battlefield on the steamer *Yellowstone* on the fifth of May, 1836, two weeks after the battle, and he took up the discussion, Houston leaving shortly afterward to go to New Orleans for surgical treatment.²

The first difficulty the Texan officials had to contend with was the very natural feeling in the army and throughout the country that the massacres at the Alamo and at Goliad ought not to go unpunished.

"What will my countrymen do," wrote one Texan when he heard of Santa Anna's capture, "in the way of reprisal for outrages committed by this monster? What ought they to do? . . . What does not the killing of Grant and his men, taken by surprise and unable to fight, and the wanton murder of King and his dozen, after they could fight no longer, and that worst of outrageous atrocities, the massacre at Goliad, in violation of pledged faith and solemn stipulation, deserve? I will not say retaliation, but a just vengeance on the author of these enormities."³

This feeling was not confined to private individuals, but was shared by some of President Burnet's immediate entourage. Two of his cabinet—Lamar and Potter—were strongly opposed to the idea of showing any leniency. They believed that Santa Anna should be treated as a murderer, and they urged that he be brought before a court-martial and shot.⁴

¹ Reminiscences of Dr. Bernard (an eye-witness), in *Comp. Hist.*, I, 634.

² He left Galveston on the eleventh, and reached New Orleans, on the *Flora*, May 22, 1836.—(*Tex. Hist. Quar.*, XII, 251.)

³ Reminiscences of Dr. Bernard, May 6, 1836; *Comp. Hist.*, I, 631.

⁴ See Lamar's views, at some length, in Brown, II, 56-61.

General Cos also was the object of great hostility. He had been released at Béxar in the previous December, on a promise which was, in effect, that he would not bear arms again against Texas, and he might be justly considered in the light of one who had deliberately broken his parole.¹

Nevertheless the Texan government, with commendable self-restraint and a wise regard for the opinion of other countries, ultimately decided that both Santa Anna and Cos, as well as the rest of the prisoners, must be treated with every consideration. On the fifth of May it was thought best to remove the chief prisoners to Galveston, probably because there was a doubt as to their safety in the midst of the army; but Galveston offered no accommodations, and accordingly Santa Anna and the Texan Cabinet sailed amicably together to Velasco. On the fourteenth of May, 1836, shortly after arriving at Velasco, Santa Anna and Burnet signed two "treaties"—one public and the other secret—which the Texan authorities hoped would result in securing their independence.²

By the public treaty Santa Anna agreed that he would not take up arms himself, nor exercise his influence to cause them to be taken up, against the people of Texas "during the present war of independence"; that all hostilities should cease; that the Mexican troops should evacuate Texas, going beyond the Rio Grande; and that all private property, "including horses, cattle, negro slaves or indentured persons" ("*gente contratada*"), captured by or who had taken refuge with the Mexican army, should be restored. It was further stipulated that there should be an exchange of prisoners, the surplus remaining in the hands of the Texans to be kindly treated, and that Santa Anna should be sent back to Vera Cruz.

In the secret treaty Santa Anna further promised to ar-

¹ The Mexican authorities were very anxious in regard to Santa Anna. Reiterated orders were sent to Filisola by the War Office to do his utmost to secure the President's liberation, and to do nothing to endanger his life.—(Filisola, II, 499, 501, 506.)

² The English text of these treaties will be found in Yoakum, II, 526, and elsewhere. The Spanish text is in Santa Anna's *Manifiesto*, 94-96.

range matters with the Mexican Cabinet so that a Texan mission would be received, Texan independence acknowledged, and the boundaries between Mexico and Texas established, "the territory of the latter not to go beyond the Rio Bravo del Norte." It was also declared that, as Santa Anna's return to Mexico was "indispensable for effecting his solemn engagements," the government of Texas would provide for his immediate embarkation for Vera Cruz.

Whether Santa Anna could have brought about peace on the terms proposed, if he had tried to do so, must remain the merest conjecture, for he never did try. In fact, according to his own published statement, he never meant to try, and all his written and verbal assurances were part of an elaborate and successful effort on his part to save his life and secure his liberty by throwing dust in the eyes of the Texans.¹

The Mexican authorities seem to have anticipated some attempt at treachery on his part, for on May 20, 1836, the moment Santa Anna's capture was known in the capital, Congress passed a law directing the government to take measures to "excite the patriotism" of the people, to recruit the army, and to secure the liberty of the President; but in doing so they were to pay no attention to "any stipulations with the enemy which the President while imprisoned has made or may make, which stipulations shall be regarded as null, void and of no effect."²

The Mexican authorities also lost no time in bringing this action officially to the attention of the government of the United States. On July 9, 1836, the Mexican minister in Washington wrote officially to the Secretary of State, to give notice that no agreements made by Santa Anna would be regarded as binding upon his government.³

In spite of the treaties, his life at this moment was still in very serious danger. He had embarked on the Texan schooner *Invincible*, to sail for Vera Cruz, and had written

¹ Santa Anna's *Manifiesto*, 29-42.

² Dublan y Lozano, III, 162.

³ Gorostiza to Forsyth, July 9, 1836; Sen. Doc. 1, 24 Cong., 2 sess., 36.

and published a farewell to the Texan army,¹ when the steamship *Ocean*, with two hundred and fifty American volunteers on board, very inopportunately arrived at Velasco. These warriors were not at all satisfied with the arrangements which had been made by the government, and they forbade the sailing of the *Invincible*. In this they were supported by many of those already in Texas who had previously demanded Santa Anna's execution. The government was too weak to prevent Santa Anna's being seized and carried ashore, but after a great deal of effort it managed to prevent his being shot. The favorite plan was to carry him off to Goliad and execute him there; but Austin, who returned to Texas about the first of July, and Houston, who returned late in the same month, were active and earnest in protesting against this policy of retaliation.

At Austin's suggestion Santa Anna, on July 4, wrote a letter to President Jackson, enclosing copies of the two treaties, and begging him to use his influence to have them carried out, and to aid in putting Texas in a strong and independent position.² Jackson replied on September 4, from his home in Tennessee, to the effect that the government of the United States would always gladly do all it could "to restore peace between contending nations or remove the causes of misunderstanding"; that it never could interfere with the policy of other powers, and that in this case the United States was forbidden from considering the treaties to which Santa Anna referred by reason of the notification made by the Mexican government.

"Under these circumstances," continued the writer, "it will be manifest to you that good faith to Mexico, as well as the general principle to which I have adverted as forming the basis of our inter-

¹ This strange document was as follows:

"My friends! I know that you are valiant in war and generous after it; rely always on my friendship and you will never regret the consideration you have shown me. Upon my returning to the land of my birth, thanks to your kindness, accept this sincere farewell from your grateful

ANTONIO LOPEZ DE SANTA ANNA.

VELASCO, June 1, 1836."

² See Spanish text in Santa Anna's *Manifiesto*, 102; English translation in Sen. Doc. 84, 24 Cong., 2 sess., 3.

course with all foreign powers, make it impossible for me to take any steps like that you have anticipated. If, however, Mexico should signify her willingness to avail herself of our good offices in bringing about the desirable result you have described, nothing could give me more pleasure than to devote my best services to it."¹

This rather cool reply was not of itself particularly useful to Santa Anna; but the fact that he was in correspondence with General Jackson, and was asking him to join in securing the independence of Texas, was a fact which was made known at once, and which doubtless had a great influence in calming the public mind. Nevertheless, the unfortunate prisoner during all that summer was carried about from place to place, put in irons on one occasion, and otherwise ill-treated; but time was on his side, and the intercession of the most influential men in Texas finally prevailed. On the twenty-fifth of November he sailed from Texas, not for Vera Cruz, but for New Orleans, accompanied by his faithful friend Colonel Almonte.

Travelling slowly up the Mississippi and Ohio, and in a private carriage from Wheeling, they reached Washington in January, 1837, when Santa Anna called upon Jackson, then in very feeble health, and had a confidential interview with him. What passed between them was not important. Santa Anna says they had very little conversation, that the subject of their exchange of letters was touched on, and that Jackson said he had sent copies to Gorostiza, the Mexican minister in Washington.² In an undated memorandum Jackson, on his part, wrote that Santa Anna had proposed a cession of Texas to the United States "for a fair consideration." To this rather belated proposal Jackson appears to have replied, first, that the United States could not act in the matter without knowing the disposition of the Texans; second, that until the independence of Texas was acknowledged (a matter then under consideration by Congress) the United States could not "hold any correspondence with her

¹ Sen. Doc. 84, 24 Cong., 2 sess., 5.

² Santa Anna's *Manifesto*, 77. These copies were handed to Gorostiza on Sept. 23, 1836.—(Sen. Doc. 1, 24 Cong., 2 sess., 84.)

as a nation"; third, that until Mexico, through the regular diplomatic channels, was ready to make some proposition "we cannot speak to Texas"; and, fourth, that if it suited Mexico to cede Texas and Northern California to the United States, this might be made the means of securing permanent tranquillity, "which has been like to have been interrupted by the civil war in Texas."¹

Santa Anna spent six days in Washington without accomplishing anything further. The government offered him a passage to Vera Cruz, and he was landed at his native city about the first of March, 1837. He returned at once to Manga de Clavo, which he had left over fifteen months before, and busied himself in writing a long report to the Secretary of War, and a tortuous and impassioned manifesto to the people of Mexico, in which he defended his course at the battle of San Jacinto and after.

¹ Jackson MSS., in Library of Congress. See *Amer. Hist. Review*, XII, 808. Jackson told the Texan agents in Washington, on Feb. 1, 1837, "that he had conversed freely with Santa Anna in regard to extending the present open Southwestern line so as to include Texas and that their views and wishes were in entire accordance."—(Wharton to Austin, Feb. 2, 1837; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, I, 180.)