

before, by which they declared that the boundary of the republic on the south and west was marked by the Rio Grande.¹ It seems to have been Lamar's idea that, having once asserted title to this extensive territory, the republic of Texas ought to proceed to enforce the claim without any regard to its basis in truth or justice. Both of the houses of Congress, however, failed to pass bills laid before them to appropriate money for such an expedition. Lamar, nevertheless, was determined to go on with the project in spite of its not being authorized by law; and in the early summer of 1841, after considerable preparations, a party of about three hundred and fifty men was got together.

The ostensible object of this party was to carry on trade with the people of New Mexico in precisely the same manner as trade was carried on by caravans from St. Louis, and there actually were a large number of wagons in the caravan, which belonged to private individuals, who formed the nucleus of the party. In addition to these traders, there were about two hundred and seventy volunteers, under the command of "General" Hugh McLeod, who were nominally intended as an escort to protect the traders and their wagons from Indian attacks; and there were three commissioners from the government of Texas—Colonel Cooke, Doctor Brenham, and Mr. José Antonio Navarro, whose mission it was to treat with the people of New Mexico, and to offer to that territory the blessings of Texan government.² Finally, there were two or three travellers, one of whom, Mr. George W. Kendall, was one of the editors of the New Orleans *Picayune*.

It was well understood in Texas, before the expedition started, that its real purpose was not that of a mere commercial enterprise. It was known that the people of New Mexico were very much dissatisfied with the exactions of their governor, Manuel Armijo, who was a sort of Turkish pasha, and had for some years been commander-in-chief, legislature, custom-house collector, auditor, treasurer, judge,

¹ Act of Dec. 19, 1836; *Laws of the Rep. of Texas*, I, 133.

² Roberts to Cooke and others, June 15, 1841; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, II, 737 et seq.

and court of appeals—exercising a perfectly irresponsible and despotic authority.¹ President Lamar and his friends believed that if a strong party of Texans showed themselves in New Mexico the inhabitants would gladly revolt and put themselves under the protection of the Texan government. They did not, however, reflect that grumbling at a governor of their own race and language was a very different thing from welcoming alien rulers and that the people of New Mexico might possibly be familiar with the fable of King Log and King Stork. Under these impressions, therefore, the Texan government committed the same blunder that the Spaniards had committed in sending their absurdly inadequate expedition to Mexico in 1829, and again exemplified the truth of the military maxim that no expedition should be sent into a foreign country, no matter how dissatisfied the inhabitants may be with their own government, which is not fully adequate, of itself, to the object proposed.

Not only was the expedition inadequate in size, but it turned out also to be inadequately equipped for the hardships of the journey. The fact was that nobody knew anything about the country to be traversed. Apart from the latitude and longitude of Santa Fe, they had no notion of where they were going. A Mexican who accompanied them had been a trapper on the head-waters of the Red River, and had been in New Mexico, but he was utterly lost long before he reached the Mexican settlements.

Toward the latter part of June, 1841, the expedition set out a month after it ought to have started, but for some weeks no great hardship was felt, although from time to time they encountered Indians who were always ready to cut off stragglers, and to drive off cattle and horses. Buffalo were plenty, and water and grass were abundant. But as the summer passed, and the slow procession drew its weary length past the head-waters of the Texan rivers, conditions changed. By the eleventh of August provisions began to run short. The country was arid and mountainous, and

¹ Gregg's *Commerce of the Prairies*, I, 226-233.

no game was to be found. It was determined, therefore, to send ahead three men under the lead of one Howland, a member of a well-known family of New Bedford, Massachusetts, who had formerly been in New Mexico and spoke Spanish. These men, steering by compass, reached the Mexican settlements early in September, and were at once arrested. They, however, made their escape, and endeavored to find their way back to the main party, but were recaptured, and all three were presently shot.

Meantime, the main body of the Texans was painfully pushing its way northwestward, under ever-increasing difficulties for want of food and water both for the men and the animals. By the beginning of September the situation had become so acute that the best mounted and most vigorous men, ninety in number, were sent ahead under the command of Colonel Cooke, and after suffering extreme hardships they reached the little village of Anton Chico, on the Pecos River. A few days later they surrendered to Governor Armijo.

The remaining Texans had continued in camp until September 17, when they were found by some Mexican guides who had been sent back by the advance party, and at once resumed their march toward Santa Fe. When they reached the borders of the Mexican settlements, at a place called the Laguna Colorada, somewhere, it would seem, not far from what is now Fort Bascom, they were met by a body of Mexicans. The Texans were in no condition to fight.

"Out of more than two hundred men, it was now found that the Texans could muster but about ninety who were really fit for active service, and these would have been obliged to act on foot entirely, as their horses had been either run off in the stampede on the Palo Duro, or kept so closely within the lines that they could not obtain grass enough to sustain their strength. Many of the men who had lost their horses, weak and dispirited from long marches and want of food, had secretly thrown away their arms to lighten themselves upon the road, and, in the mean time, that subordination, without which all efforts are useless, was in a measure lost. In this desperate condition, unable to hear a word concerning the fate of either Colonel Cooke or of two small parties they had sent out, and with the promise of

good treatment and that their personal effects would be returned to them, a surrender was made."¹

The Mexican forces had thus captured every one of the Texans who had reached Mexican territory without striking a blow or firing a shot. Governor Armijo, however, in reporting the event to the national authorities, did not fail to represent that he had gained two great victories over the Texan invaders. The bells in the city of Mexico were duly pealed, and salutes were fired to commemorate Armijo's triumphs at Anton Chico and the Laguna Colorada. "We congratulate the whole nation," wrote the *Diario de Gobierno*, "with the greatest satisfaction and the most lively joy upon this fortunate event; and we also offer congratulations to his Excellency the President, General Antonio López de Santa Anna, *benemérito de la patria*, whose administration seems to be destined by Providence to win for this country the completest glory and the most important triumphs, and insure its nationality and independence."²

The question now was what disposition should be made of the surviving prisoners, and Armijo decided to send them to the capital and to place them, as it was called, at the disposition of the supreme government. The prisoners, therefore, started from the village of San Miguel, now a station on the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, just south of Las Vegas, on October 17, 1841, upon their long march to the city of Mexico. A week before Santa Anna had taken the oath of office as provisional President under the Bases of Tacubaya.

So long as the prisoners remained in the power of Governor Armijo and his men they were treated with great cruelty, and those who were unable to keep up with the rest were mercilessly shot and their bodies abandoned by the way-side. Early in November, however, they reached El Paso, and passed out of the jurisdiction of New Mexico, and thenceforth had more humane treatment as they toiled along to the south. The policy of the Mexican authorities

¹ Kendall's *Santa Fé Expedition*, I, 369.

² *México á través de los Siglos*, IV, 476.

evidently was to exhibit the prisoners in all the principal towns between El Paso and the capital, and they were taken through the streets of Chihuahua, Zacatecas, San Luis, Guanajuato, Querétaro, and other minor points—living proofs of the success of Santa Anna's armies—reaching the suburbs of Mexico during the first week in February, 1842. Apart from the hardships necessarily incidental to such a march, small-pox broke out among the men and some died and many suffered severely on this account.

Upon their arrival at the capital those who were citizens or subjects of some other country than Texas at once appealed to their respective ministers, and through diplomatic intervention most of them were released in time, but with more or less reluctance and unwillingness, by the Mexican government. The rest who could not claim such protection lingered for some time in military prisons; but finally, on June 16, 1842, almost all of the prisoners obtained their release on the occasion of Santa Anna's saint's day.¹ The one who was longest detained was Navarro, one of the Texan commissioners, who, having been born at Béxar, and having taken an active part in the formation of the Texan government, was especially singled out. He was imprisoned in the castle of San Juan de Ulúa until December, 1844, when he was allowed to reside in Vera Cruz, and from there he managed to escape early in the year 1845.²

The first news of this unfortunate expedition reached the United States about the end of the year 1841, and on January 14, 1842, caused some discussion in the House of Representatives. But the interest taken by the newspapers, especially in view of the fact that the editor of a leading journal was among the prisoners, was much greater than

¹ An account of the ceremony of the day and the general spirit of kindness manifested by the people to these unfortunate men will be found in Thompson's *Recollections of Mexico*, 92. Thompson also sent an account in an official despatch, dated June 20, 1842.—(*State Dept. MSS.*)

² The above account is taken from Kendall's *Santa Fé Expedition*, which not only appears to be a truthful history of events, but is also exceptional among works of this period, in possessing genuine literary merit. The official report of the Texan commissioners to their government, dated Nov. 9, 1841, written from *Allende* in the state of Chihuahua, is printed in *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, II, 777-783.

that evinced by Congress. The newspapers painted the sufferings of the prisoners in lurid colors, and the American government continued for some time to receive numbers of petitions from state legislatures and from individuals, begging for intervention on behalf of the captives—although it was evident that the United States government could do nothing officially on behalf of citizens of Texas. The American minister in Mexico did what he could, unofficially, to help them, and seems to have acted prudently and tactfully.

As might have been foreseen, if Lamar's government had been capable of foreseeing anything, the invasion of New Mexico inevitably led to a Mexican demonstration against Texas. Early in March, 1842, seven hundred men under General Vásquez, advanced upon San Antonio, and formally demanded a surrender of the place. There were only about one hundred Texan soldiers in the town, and they promptly retreated—leaving the Mexican force in possession. These troops remained two days, and departed on the morning of March 7, taking with them "all the valuables they could carry." At about the same time a small force took possession of Refugio and Goliad, and drove off a few cattle, but did no other harm.

The news of this invasion spread rapidly through Texas, and, of course, in a very exaggerated form. It was even believed that the new capital, Austin, on the Colorado River, was in danger of capture, and the militia was called out, under command of General Somervell, who, by the middle of March, 1842, had about thirty-five hundred men under his command. By that time it was ascertained that the Mexicans had already recrossed the Rio Grande.

President Houston, who had taken office the previous December upon his re-election to the presidency, was by no means so ready as his predecessor to engage in an offensive war. He was quite aware that an invading expedition needed to be strong, well-equipped, and well-disciplined; and he also was aware that the number of troops which Texas itself could supply, and the sum of money which its Treasury could furnish, were utterly inadequate to the object pro-

posed. He therefore instructed General Somervell to organize his troops and to await further orders. At the same time commissioners were sent to the United States to try to secure men, money, and munitions of war.

The news of the Mexican invasion of Texas reached Washington on March 24, 1842, through a New Orleans newspaper of the sixteenth of the month. Webster at once consulted the President on the subject of restraining the Indians along the frontier, and later assured the Texan representative in Washington that the United States would see to having the Indians kept within their proper territory.

"I feel satisfied," the minister reported, "that it will be done, and that Texas in her struggle can have the aid of all her gallant sons, both in the east and along the Red river line, since the United States will save their homes and property from the depredations of the savages. The Government here will likewise take means to defend the lives, liberty, and property of her citizens on Galveston Island."¹

This was a promise of pretty substantial help, but it may very well be doubted whether Webster went quite as far as was represented; although he certainly was, at that time, very bitter against Mexico.

So far as the public was concerned, the news of the invasion added fresh fuel to the flame which had already been kindled in the United States by accounts of the brutal treatment of the Santa Fe prisoners. Enthusiastic meetings in behalf of Texas were held in New Orleans, Mobile, Savannah, Louisville, Cincinnati, Philadelphia, New York, and elsewhere; committees were appointed to raise money; and a small number of "emigrants" were enlisted and started from New Orleans. The excitement, however, was short-lived. As soon as the further news came that the Mexican advance was not a real attempt to reconquer Texas, and was nothing more than a mere raid, enthusiasm throughout the United States cooled as quickly as it had flared up, and nothing further was heard upon the subject.²

¹ Reily to Jones, March 25, 1842; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, I, 546.

² See McMaster, VII, 307, for newspaper accounts of the feeling in the United States at this period.

The Mexican government, however, exhibited and undoubtedly felt great indignation at the conduct of the United States government in permitting such open expressions of sympathy with Texas, and such practical proofs of the sincerity of that feeling; and the Mexican Minister of Foreign Relations went so far as to threaten, in scarcely concealed language, a declaration of war against the United States—a threat which Webster, then the American Secretary of State, declared would not in the slightest degree change the conduct of his government.¹

Meanwhile, the Texan troops encamped at San Antonio were by no means pleased at President Houston's restraining them from an immediate advance into Mexico. When General Somervell, who was regarded as Houston's representative, arrived in the camp on March 18, the men refused to obey his orders; and he thereupon retired, leaving Burleson, the Vice-President of the republic, in command. Burleson had had experience before of the entire impossibility of enforcing any orders upon Texan volunteers of which these gentry did not approve, and after some efforts at organization he gave up the task, and disbanded his militia on the second of April. At the same time, he published an insubordinate letter, saying that if his orders had permitted him to cross the Rio Grande he would have inflicted a chastisement on the Mexicans which would have resulted in an honorable peace.

Houston, however, without money and without credit, was in reality doing his best to collect some sort of military force. The Texan navy was off the coast of Yucatan and it was ordered to return. The few volunteers who had come from the United States were collected at Corpus Christi, where they were to be organized and drilled, but under strict orders from the government to make no advance toward the frontier. The disastrous folly which had prompted the attempt to advance on Matamoros in 1835 had taught the Texan executive a lesson of prudence. "When there are means for a successful attack," ran the

¹ For this correspondence see the next chapter.

orders, "it shall be taken; and until then any attempt would be destructive to Texas."

At this time Matamoros was held by a considerable force of Mexican troops under the command of General Manuel Arista, a man who was more of a politician than a soldier, who had been alternately a supporter and an opponent of Santa Anna, but who was now again in favor.¹ If the Texans were to make any hopeful move against him they required a far more complete equipment than any of their forces had ever possessed. But to equip an army required money and Houston had none. He was at the end of his resources, and all he could do he did, by calling a special session of Congress, to meet on June 27, 1842. In a message sent in on that day the President advised that Congress should take suitable measures to counteract whatever steps Mexico might take to disturb the peace, prosperity, and settlement of the frontier. The volunteers from the United States, he said, had been sustained almost entirely by private contributions, which were now exhausted, and there was no sufficient appropriation for the support of the navy. In reply to a request from Congress for information the President on July 18 further reported that the American volunteers were mutinous and insubordinate, and that he despaired of their reformation, and believed it would be more politic for Texas to rely on her own militia and to discharge the foreign volunteers.²

Congress thereupon passed a foolish bill, authorizing the President to call for volunteers for the purpose of invading Mexico, and if the number responding to such call should be insufficient he was authorized to order out not exceeding one-third of the militia. He was also authorized to receive contributions of land, money, provisions, and equipments, and to hypothecate or sell not exceeding ten millions

¹ Arista was born at San Luis Potosí in 1802, and was a lieutenant in the Spanish army. For a time, while suffering under Santa Anna's displeasure, he lived at Cincinnati, Ohio. During Bustamante's second administration he was reinstated in the army and put in command of a force intended to relieve Vera Cruz, where he was taken prisoner by the French, but released after a short and easy captivity.

² Yoakum, II, 359.

of acres of the public lands for the purpose of raising a war fund. This was all very well on paper, but as there was no sale for the land, and probably no disposition on anybody's part, in Texas or out of Texas, to contribute a dollar for the purpose of invading Mexico, Congress, for all the good it did, might just as well have stayed at home. For these and other reasons the President vetoed the bill, and Congress shortly after adjourned without having taken any action.¹

In the meantime Arista was not altogether idle. At day-break on July 7 the volunteers encamped at Corpus Christi, then numbering less than two hundred men, were attacked by a force of Mexicans, who were rather easily repulsed. Two months later the Mexicans made another advance into Texas. On September 11, 1842, a force of about twelve hundred men, under the command of General Adrian Woll, entered San Antonio; and so little precaution had the Texans taken to watch the enemy's movements that the presiding judge of the district court, then sitting at San Antonio, together with the leading members of the bar, were captured—practically without resistance. About fifty-three men in all were thus made prisoners, and were marched off to the city of Mexico, probably with the idea of giving further ocular demonstration of the success of the Mexican arms.

Again the Texan militia were called out, under command of General Somervell, and responded in great numbers. The first of the advancing Texans met with misfortune. On September 13 they were attacked by General Woll's troops at the Salado Creek, and after an indecisive action the Mexicans fell back to San Antonio, taking with them some fifteen prisoners who had formed part of a small force of men under Captain Dawson, and who were captured before they had had an opportunity to join the main body.²

By this time the Texan militia were rapidly assembling, and would soon have outnumbered Woll's force. At day-

¹ *Ibid.*, 360.

² *Ibid.*, 361-366. E. W. Winkler, "The Béxar and Dawson Prisoners," *Tex. Hist. Quar.*, XIII, 292-324. The greater part of these prisoners were held in captivity until the spring of 1844.

break on September 18, 1842, he therefore set out in retreat, taking his prisoners with him. He was pursued by the Texan militia for thirty or forty miles, when the pursuit ceased, and he was permitted to recross the Rio Grande without molestation.

The assembling of the Texan forces near San Antonio was accompanied by the usual amount of intrigue and disorder. "From the time of the first assembling of the troops," says Yoakum, "until their departure, there was much confusion, arising out of a want of provisions and ammunition, but, above all, from the insubordination and ambitious pretensions of various persons in the army, who, feeling themselves competent to assume the direction of the entire force, and march them to victory over the whole of Mexico, were surprised and indignant that the command was not conferred on them."¹ There was also the usual amount of desertion by men who did not thoroughly approve of the course of their commanding officers, but ultimately, about the beginning of November, General Somervell, with some seven hundred and fifty men, started out to take the town of Laredo. The historian of the expedition casts severe ridicule on Somervell's cautious approach upon this undefended village, the inhabitants of which were perfectly friendly and ready to sell the Texans anything the latter were able to pay for.²

From Laredo Somervell marched his men down the Texan side of the river. On December 15, 1842, he crossed over and plundered the Mexican town of Guerrero and immediately recrossed to the Texan side. Finally, on December 19, 1842, he issued an order directing his troops to march in the direction of Gonzales, in Texas, where they were to be disbanded.

A considerable part of Somervell's men very indignantly refused to obey this order. They had supposed that they were to be marched into Mexico, and to Mexico they intended to go, whether General Somervell took them or not; and thereupon the Texan force was divided into two parties, one of which set off for Gonzales to be disbanded and the

¹ Yoakum, II, 368.

² Green, *Expedition against Mier*, 52-55.

other, consisting of about three hundred men, set off to carry on a private war of their own. Crossing the Rio Grande, they undertook to attack the town of Mier, which, like most small Mexican places, was built of flat-topped stone or adobe houses ranged around a principal square. Following the example set at San Antonio in 1835, the Texan forces assaulted the town on Christmas night, and working their way through the mud walls of the Mexican huts effected a lodgement on the square. The Mexican troops, however, were present in considerable force—probably more than fifteen hundred men—under the immediate command of General Pedro Ampudia. Some severe fighting took place on the afternoon of December 26, 1842, but at last the Texans surrendered, under a written assurance from the Mexican general that they should be treated "with the consideration which is in accordance with the magnanimous Mexican nation."

The Texan prisoners taken at Mier who were able to march numbered two hundred and twenty-six, and, as in the case of the Santa Fe and San Antonio prisoners, they were sent off under a strong guard toward the city of Mexico. Their route lay through Matamoros, Monterey, and Saltillo. Early on the morning of February 11, 1843, at a point one hundred miles south of Saltillo, the prisoners overpowered their guard, seized their horses, and started back on the road to Texas. Their conduct on the return march was as injudicious as their advance upon Mier. They abandoned the main line of travel in the hope of evading pursuit, and becoming lost among the mountains were compelled to kill their horses for food. What arms and ammunition they had many threw away. Five were known to have died of starvation in the mountains, four managed to reach Texas, three more were missing and supposed to have perished somewhere on the road, and the rest were retaken by the Mexican forces. When the recaptured prisoners were brought back to the scene of their escape they were met by an order from the government that they were to be decimated, and accordingly lots were

drawn and every tenth man was shot. The survivors were sent on toward the capital, where, like the other Texan prisoners, they were held for some months, either near Mexico or in the castle of Perote. Some of them managed to escape from that fortress and others were released from time to time; some died and all the rest were finally discharged on September 16, 1844, the anniversary of Mexican independence.¹

That all the recaptured prisoners were not shot appears to have been due, in some measure at least, to the unofficial intervention of Waddy Thompson, the American minister, who called at the Mexican Foreign Office and expressed the hope that all the privileges of prisoners of war would be extended to the Texans. Bocanegra, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, was much excited, and insisted that as they were not American citizens Mexico would listen to no suggestion upon the subject from any quarter.

"I rose from my seat," says Thompson, "and said: 'Then, sir, shoot them as soon as you choose, but let me tell you, that if you do you will at once involve in this war a much more powerful enemy than Texas,' and took my leave. An express was immediately sent, countermanding the order to shoot them all, and another order given that they should be decimated, which was executed. I afterwards received from some of the Texan prisoners, a heart-sickening account of the execution of those upon whom the lot fell. It was a cold-blooded and atrocious murder."²

The tragic circumstances attending the execution of these prisoners—who were not on parole, and were therefore thought to be justified in escaping if they could—created much sympathy for the men who had engaged in the foolish and insubordinate expedition above related. Its ill success served one good purpose at least, for it convinced the Texans that they were as incapable of invading Mexico as Mexico was incapable of subduing Texas.

¹ See Green's *Expedition against Mier*, which is the leading authority upon this subject. Bancroft, *North Mex. States and Texas*, II, 360-370, condenses Green's narrative, and gives a number of additional details from other sources.

² Thompson's *Recollections of Mexico*, 74.

One other foolish attempt at reprisals remains to be noticed. In the spring of 1843 a force of about two hundred Texans was assembled near Georgetown, on the Red River, under the command of a certain Major Jacob Snively, which was intended to proceed in the direction of Santa Fe and capture the goods of Mexican merchants trading with St. Louis. President Houston was so ill-advised as to furnish Snively with a sort of commission, very much like letters of marque and reprisal to a privateer, authorizing him to capture the enemy's property. Half the proceeds was to belong to the captors and half to the Texan government, and the Texan government was not to be put to any expense in the matter. Snively lay in wait in what is now southern Kansas, on the south side of the Arkansas River, for the caravan from St. Louis; but it was doubtful whether or not his camp was west of the one-hundredth meridian. If it was not, he was within the territory of the United States.

On June 30 the caravan reached the river, escorted by a detachment of United States dragoons and two field-pieces, under the command of Captain Philip St. George Cooke. Cooke, who seems to have been a rather peremptory officer, sent for Snively, told him he was encamped on territory of the United States, and that he and his force must give up their arms. This they did and the expedition was ignominiously dispersed. Upon the complaint of the Texan government a court of inquiry was appointed in the case of Captain Cooke, which found that the place where the Texan force was disarmed was within the territory of the United States, that there was nothing harsh or unbecoming in Cooke's conduct, and that he did not exceed his authority.¹

It had become apparent before this to the Texans that they could not obtain permanent peace with Mexico save with the help of some other nation. The United States might, if Congress were willing, secure peace by force of arms, and England, or France, or even the United States,

¹ An adequate account of this adventure will be found in the diplomatic correspondence published in Sen. Doc. 1, 28 Cong., 2 sess., 96-112.

or all three together, might persuade Mexico to accept their mediation. To one of these solutions—intervention by the United States or mediation by one or more foreign powers—the diplomatic efforts of Texas were necessarily addressed.¹

¹ Further details as to some of the subjects treated of in this chapter will be found in Mr. T. M. Marshall's article on "Diplomatic Relations of Texas and the United States, 1839-1843," *Tex. Hist. Quar.*, XV, 267-293.

CHAPTER XX

THE WHIGS AND MEXICO

In the preceding chapters the political history of Mexico and Texas has been traced down to the end of the year 1844; and it next becomes necessary to relate the course of events in the United States—so far, at least, as those events had any bearing upon the destinies of the two neighboring republics.

It will be remembered that President Van Buren's administration had very positively declined, in the summer of 1837, to give any consideration to the proposal for the annexation of Texas, and that Texas herself, in the course of the following year, had formally withdrawn the proposal. On December 9, 1838, Lamar had been inaugurated President of the infant republic, and had expressed himself, in his very finest language, as definitely opposed to reopening negotiations.¹ From the moment it became generally known that neither the United States nor Texas desired annexation the exciting subject lost its interest. Petitions ceased to be presented to the American Congress, debates turned on other matters, and the question of Texas played no part at all in the extremely active presidential campaign of 1840.

Van Buren was renominated by the Democratic convention, which met at Baltimore, May 5, 1840. The platform declared that Congress had no authority to interfere with slavery in the states; that all efforts of the abolitionists to induce Congress to act in this matter were alarming and

¹ "A long train of consequences of the most appalling character and magnitude have never failed to present themselves whenever I have entertained the subject, and forced upon my mind the unwelcome conviction that the step once taken, must produce a lasting regret, and ultimately prove as disastrous to our liberty and hopes as the triumphant sword of the enemy."