

Relations to adopt the very unusual course of sending to the diplomatic corps resident in Mexico a circular setting forth the Mexican grievances. He complained that meetings had been held in the presence of American authorities, with the avowed purpose of assisting "the adventurers of Texas," that volunteers had been recruited and armed in the United States, and that "no other voice was heard but that of war with Mexico and of aid to Texas." The Mexican government, he said, had protested against such conduct, believing that the government of the United States "would cause its citizens to return to their duty"; but in spite of these protests "the aggressions made upon the territory of the republic were tolerated," contrary to the principles of the law of nations and the treaties between the two countries.¹

Thompson, the American minister, at once replied by a circular expressing his astonishment and regret at the "extraordinary proceeding" of the Mexican government, denying any violation of treaties or the law of nations, and asserting that, on the contrary, the conduct of the United States had been "uniformly kind and forbearing." With respect to public meetings, Thompson had, of course, no difficulty in showing that the government of the United States could not interfere, and that the practice of both Great Britain and the United States was entirely opposed to restrictions upon freedom of speech. In the very week, he said, in which a meeting in favor of Texas, complained of by Bocanegra, was held in New Orleans another was held there in favor of a repeal of the Irish Union; while in Great Britain anti-slavery meetings were constantly held, "denouncing a large portion of our people and our institutions in language which, in comparison with that used in the public meetings toward Mexico, is the language of compliment."

The question as to enlistments in the United States was a more troublesome one to answer. Thompson asserted that

¹ See text, page 5 of *Official Correspondence* between the United States and Mexico from May 12 to Sept. 10, 1842, in vol. 117 of *Political Pamphlets—American*, in Library of Congress. This pamphlet was printed and circulated by the Mexican legation in Washington.

the United States government had used "all the means in its power to prevent this," and had done what was required by the obligations of the law of nations and what good faith demanded. He showed that the laws of the United States only prohibited armed and organized expeditions; that emigration was not prohibited, and that if men left the country armed, and even if they announced their intention of joining the armies of Texas, the American government could not interfere so long as they did not constitute an organized military body.¹

Bocanegra, on July 6, 1842, sent another, and this time a very long, circular to the diplomatic corps, as a rejoinder to Thompson. The Mexican government, he said, did not deny the legality of public meetings to discuss domestic affairs, or even to criticise the policy of foreign nations. What it did object to were meetings for "the sole purpose of exciting citizens to arm and leave their country in order to usurp the territory and rights of a friendly nation." He admitted also that citizens of the United States might freely emigrate, but he asserted that this rule did not apply where the emigrants were armed and supplied with all the munitions of war—incorporated often into military companies regularly organized—with the never-concealed purpose of warring against a neighboring nation, and with a public promise of sharing the booty with the first usurpers.²

Before sending out his circulars Bocanegra had addressed two communications directly to Webster, which were dated, respectively, the twelfth and the thirty-first of May, 1842.³ The first of these reached Washington on the twenty-ninth of June, and a week later Webster, with the cordial approbation of the President,⁴ sent a reply, in which he refused to

¹ *Official Correspondence*, 7. Thompson in private did not take Bocanegra very seriously, and thought his utterances "gasconnade and intended for Mexico." And he very truly added that "whoever is at the head of this Government holds his power so insecurely that the Foreign Relations even of this country are conducted mainly with a view to domestick poleticks. . . . Much is to be pardoned to the petulance of conscious weakness."—(Thompson to Webster, June 20, 1842; *State Dept. MSS.*)

² *Official Correspondence*, 19. ³ *Ibid.*, 2, 4; Webster's *Works*, VI, 442, 457.

⁴ *Letters and Times of the Tylers*, II, 258.

admit the slightest particle of justification for the Mexican complaints.

"M. de Bocanegra," said Webster, "would seem to represent, that, from 1835 to the present time, citizens of the United States, if not their Government, have been aiding rebels in Texas in arms against the lawful authority of Mexico. This is not a little extraordinary. Mexico may have chosen to consider, and may still choose to consider, Texas as having been at all times, since 1835, and as still continuing, a rebellious province; but the world has been obliged to take a very different view of the matter."

Texas, he continued, had shown as many signs of independence as Mexico, and quite as much stability of government. The United States had fairly endeavored to fulfil all neutral obligations; both Texas and Mexico stood on the same footing of friendly nations; and the transactions complained of by Bocanegra were only the natural consequences of the political relations existing between Texas and the United States. The American government encouraged trade, of course. To supply contraband of war was not contrary to international or municipal law, nor was emigration from the United States. The United States always had and always would pay attention to any violation of neutral duties. But it would not interfere with commerce or with free speech. And Webster closed with a stern note of warning.

"M. de Bocanegra," he said, "is pleased to say, that, if war actually existed between the two countries, proceedings more hostile, on the part of the United States, could not have taken place, than have taken place, nor could the insurgents of Texas have obtained more effectual co-operation than they have obtained. This opinion, however hazardous to the discernment and just estimate of things of those who avow it, is yet abstract and theoretical, and, so far, harmless. The efficiency of American hostility to Mexico has never been tried; the government has no desire to try it. It would not disturb the peace for the sake of showing how erroneously M. de Bocanegra has reasoned; while, on the other hand, it trusts that a just hope may be entertained that Mexico will not inconsiderately and needlessly hasten into an experiment by which the truth or fallacy of his sentiments may be brought to an actual ascertainment. . . . If the peace of the two coun-

tries is to be disturbed, the responsibility will devolve on Mexico. She must be answerable for consequences. The United States, let it be again repeated, desire peace. . . . Yet no fear of a different state of things can be allowed to interrupt its course of equal and exact justice to all nations, nor to jostle it out of the constitutional orbit in which it revolves."¹

Webster, a few days later, had an opportunity of still further emphasizing the attitude of the American government. The day after despatching the letter just referred to, Bocanegra's second letter, together with copies of his first circular to the diplomatic corps and a copy of Thompson's rejoinder, were received. Webster's instructions to Thompson upon this were lucid but warlike.

"You will write a note," he said, "to M. de Bocanegra, in which you will say, that the Secretary of State of the United States, on the 9th of July, received his letter of the 31st of May; that the President of the United States considers the language and tone of that letter derogatory to the character of the United States, and highly offensive, as it imputes to their government a direct breach of faith; and that he directs that no other answer be given to it, than the declaration, that the conduct of the government of the United States, in regard to the war between Mexico and Texas, having been always hitherto governed by a strict and impartial regard to its neutral obligations, will not be changed or altered in any respect or in any degree. If for this the government of Mexico shall see fit to change the relations at present existing between the two countries, the responsibility remains with herself."²

Bocanegra was completely cowed by this outburst. Acknowledging receipt of Webster's views, he roared as gently as any sucking dove. He relied, he said, on Mr. Webster's assurance that the strictest neutrality was maintained in the existing contest between Mexico and Texas, and that he would leave without remark "the harshness of some of the expressions found in the instructions of his Excellency, Mr. Webster";³ and here ended this correspondence.

Another letter of Webster's was occasioned by the last of

¹ Webster to Thompson, July 8, 1842; Webster's *Works*, VI, 445-457.

² Webster to Thompson, July 13, 1842; *ibid.*, 459.

³ *Official Correspondence*, 38.

the Mexican efforts to invade Texas, made in the month of September, 1842, when General Woll captured San Antonio by surprise, and carried away as prisoners the district judge, members of the bar, and other people of note in that part of Texas. President Houston, about four weeks later, caused identical notes to be sent to the American and British representatives in Texas, calling attention to the character of the warfare waged by Mexico. During the nearly seven years which had elapsed since the establishment of the independence of the republic, Mexico, he said, "although uniformly asserting the ability and determination to resubjugate the country, has never made a formidable effort to do so"; the three incursions made during the year 1842 "were petty marauding parties sent for the purpose of pillaging and harassing the weak and isolated settlements on our Western border . . . murdering the inhabitants in cold blood, or forcing them away into a loathsome, and too often fatal captivity"; and the Mexican government was exciting "the murderous tribes of hostile Indians who reside along our Northern border." He therefore called upon the United States and Great Britain to interpose their authority, and to require Mexico either to make peace or, if she continued to make war, to do so according to the rules established and recognized by civilized nations.¹

The subject was brought to the attention of Webster, first by a despatch from Eve, the American representative in Texas, and next by verbal and written communications from Van Zandt, the Texan minister, who had been accredited in the summer of 1842, but had only arrived at his post in the beginning of December.² Webster told Van Zandt that he had said to General Almonte, the Mexican minister,³ two or three times, in "unequivocal yet respectful terms," that Mexico must cease the predatory warfare which she

¹ Waples to Van Zandt, Oct. 20, 1842; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, I, 609-611. Lester's *Sam Houston and His Republic*, 163.

² Van Zandt to Terrell, Dec. 7, 1842; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, I, 613.

³ Almonte, who had been on Santa Anna's staff at San Jacinto, and had shared his leader's subsequent captivity, had come to Washington as minister from Mexico in the autumn of 1842.

had lately pursued against Texas. And on January 31, 1843, he sent instructions to Thompson upon the subject, forwarding at the same time a long letter from Van Zandt.

"This department," said Webster, "entirely concurs in the opinion of Mr. Van Zandt, that practices such as these are not justifiable or sanctioned by the modern law of nations. You will take occasion to converse with the Mexican Secretary, in a friendly manner, and represent to him how greatly it would contribute to the advantage as well as the honor of Mexico, to abstain altogether from predatory incursions, and other similar modes of warfare. Mexico has an undoubted right to resubjugate Texas, if she can, so far as other States are concerned, by the common and lawful means of war. But other States are interested—and especially the United States, a near neighbor to both parties, are interested—not only in the restoration of peace between them, but also in the manner in which the war shall be conducted, if it shall continue."¹

Thompson did not have much success in his attempt to induce the Mexican government to modify its methods of making war. He reported that, in obedience to Webster's instructions, he had verbally presented the views of the American government to Bocanegra.

"He replied, (very much excited), that Mexico did not regard Texas as an independent power, but as a rebellious province; and that prisoners taken were not entitled to any of the privileges of prisoners of war, but that they were rebels, and would be so treated; and that no suggestions on the subject from other governments would be received or listened to."²

But Bocanegra's excitement and defiant attitude were due not so much to the presentation of the subject of Thompson's instructions as to the fact that he was just then dealing with the prisoners of the Mier expedition, and also that he was still vexed at a very absurd affair which had brought American and Mexican officers into collision on the distant shores of California.

Bocanegra had only himself to blame for the origin of the

¹ Webster to Thompson, Jan. 31, 1843; H. R. Doc. 271, 28 Cong., 1 sess., 69.

² Thompson to Webster, March 14, 1843; *ibid.*, 71.

latter affair. His circulars to the diplomatic corps in the spring and summer of 1842 had been published by him in full in the Mexican newspapers, and in the course of time had reached John Parrott, the American consul at Mazatlan. On June 22, 1842, Parrott sent a copy of a Mexican newspaper, containing some of Bocanegra's eloquent prose, to Commodore Jones, of the United States navy, who was then in command of a small squadron on the west coast of South America, and at the same time expressed the opinion that diplomatic relations might soon be broken off, as the American minister had been "forcing very hard our claims on this country."¹

Parrott's letter was received by Jones at Callao during the first week in September, and the same vessel brought him the first news he had had from the United States since he left there the previous December.² He knew nothing of any trouble with Mexico, but he was well aware that the relations between the United States and Great Britain were threatening, and he had been keeping an eye upon the British squadron, which was also lying at Callao, and which was slightly superior in force to his own.

It so happened that by the same mail which brought him Parrott's letter Jones received a cutting from a Boston newspaper, reporting that Mexico was about to cede California to Great Britain in payment of the British debt. This, of course, was a mere blunder, based on the proposal made by Mexico to give bondholders grants of land in payment for their bonds; but the sudden departure of the British squadron from Callao within twenty-four hours after Jones's re-

¹ Parrott to Jones, June 22, 1842; H. R. Doc. 166, 27 Cong., 3 sess., 86. Parrott was not alone in thinking war likely. At about the same time President Tyler told the Texan minister in Washington that "he did not see how a war between the United States and Mexico could be avoided."—(Reily to Jones, July 11, 1842; *Tex. Dip. Corr.*, I, 567.) Webster thought Bocanegra's circulars so extraordinary that they must have been prompted by some other reason than that which appeared on their face—probably to find a way to avoid paying the awards of the arbitrators.—(Webster to Thompson, July 9, 1842; *Webster's Private Corr.*, II, 136.)

² All the news he received was unofficial. He had not had "a scrip of a pen" from the Navy Department since his sailing orders of Dec. 10, 1841.—(Jones to Upshur, Sept. 13, 1842; H. R. Doc. 166, 27 Cong., 3 sess., 68.)

ceipt of the Boston and Mexican newspapers and the letter from Parrott, gave him food for thought.

After consulting the American minister in Chili Jones concluded that it was his duty to take steps to forestall any attempt by Great Britain to take possession of California; and to take possession of it himself in behalf of the United States if, as he thought likely, Mexico and the United States were by this time actually at war. On Wednesday afternoon, the seventh of September, therefore, Jones set sail from Callao with two of his vessels, the frigate *United States* and the sloop of war *Cyane*, both relics of the War of 1812. At daybreak on Wednesday, the nineteenth of October, the two ships were close to Monterey, and a Mexican bark was boarded, the master of which professed ignorance of any trouble between Mexico and the United States. That same afternoon the vessels anchored in the bay, as close to the "castle" of Monterey as the depth of water would allow. There was no British squadron in the harbor, and no sign of anything but profound peace.

At first nobody paid any attention to the American ships, and Jones impatiently waited for some communication from the shore. At length two Mexican officers came off, who also denied having heard of any difficulties between Mexico and the United States. The ship *Fame*, of Boston, which was at anchor near by, was visited, but her people knew nothing definite. However, they had recently come from the Sandwich Islands, and there they had heard rumors of war, and also a report that England was to take possession of Upper California and guarantee Lower California to Mexico.

What was Jones to do? Up to this point his acts had been above criticism. He was fully justified, with the information he possessed, in going to California with his ships, prepared to act according to the facts he discovered on arrival; but he was evidently bound, before he acted, to be very sure what the facts actually were. Unfortunately for him, the abundant leisure of a six weeks' passage from Callao had permitted him to prepare elaborate plans for a *coup de*

théâtre. In the first place, he had composed a proclamation which he could not willingly let die. Also he had issued an address to his crews, enjoining in moving terms the duty of moderation in the hour of victory. He must have felt that it would have been a tame ending indeed if, upon arrival, there was to be no war with anybody.

In this frame of mind, the very absence of definite information and the assertions of the people from the shore that they knew of no difficulties seemed to Jones suspicious—especially as he saw, or thought he saw, some stir on shore near the fort. He imagined that there was “trepidation manifest in the deportment” of the men who came off from the village, which he interpreted as due to an endeavor to conceal the facts. Upon these trifles he came to the decision, after he had been an hour at anchor, to send one of his captains on shore with a solemn written demand for the surrender of the place “in the name of the United States of America, and with the earnest desire to avoid the sacrifice of human life and the horrors of war.” Nobody on shore, however, had the slightest idea of sacrificing their lives or of doing anything but surrender as fast as possible. The little castle of Monterey was in the usual condition of Mexican forts. Its eleven guns could not be fired; there was no ammunition; there were only twenty-nine soldiers in the place, and the Mexicans were only too eager to accede to Jones’s demand before harm came of it—a good deal to Jones’s surprise, and perhaps to his annoyance.

On Thursday morning, as soon as his landing party was in possession of the fort, Jones issued to “the inhabitants of the two Californias” a high-flown proclamation, which he had carefully prepared while at sea. “Although I come in arms, . . .” the proclamation ran, “I come not to spread desolation among California’s peaceful inhabitants. It is against the armed enemies of my country, banded and arrayed under the flag of Mexico, that war and its dread consequences will be enforced,” and so on.¹

This ridiculous paper threw a touch of absurdity over the

¹ H. R. Doc. 166, 27 Cong., 3 sess., 79.

whole proceeding, which Jones himself probably never quite appreciated; but it very soon began to dawn upon him that, although it was very proper to visit the coast of California, he had been extremely imprudent in taking actual possession of Mexican territory without any more knowledge than that which he possessed. On the evening he arrived, and on the next day, he had a good deal of conversation with Thomas O. Larkin, an American shopkeeper, who had been living for ten years in Monterey. Larkin, who was a sensible man, assured the commodore that the rumors of war between Mexico and the United States and of the cession of California to Great Britain were quite unfounded. He thought there were late advices to that effect on shore, and after some coming and going he succeeded in finding in the village a newspaper from the city of Mexico, of a date as recent as August 4, and a private letter from Mazatlan as late as August 22, which satisfied Jones upon these points. On the following afternoon, Friday, October 21, Jones therefore re-embarked the landing party, which had been in possession of the fort since the previous morning, hauled down the American flag, and hoisted and saluted the Mexican. Two days before, in his proclamation to the inhabitants, he had declared that “those stars and stripes, infallible emblems of civil liberty, . . . henceforth and forever will give protection and security to you, to your children, and to unborn countless thousands.”

Jones’s absurdities, however, were more than matched by the absurdities of General Micheltorena, of the Mexican army, who had recently come to California with a command of about three hundred men. This warrior, when he received an account of the seizure of Monterey, was encamped with his men about twenty miles north of Los Angeles, having left that place two days before on his way to Monterey. He at once wrote letters to the various Mexican commandants in different parts of California, to the effect that he could not “fly to the assistance of Monterey,” for he could not think of leaving Los Angeles undefended. He did not fear an attack, but he thought that all the inhabitants ought

to participate in the pleasure of victory, and therefore he directed that the patriotism of all who were able to bear arms should be "excited" by threats of losing their property and being declared unworthy of the name of Mexicans, and enemies to the country, if they failed in their duty. To the commandant at Santa Barbara he wrote that he was about to establish his head-quarters at Los Angeles, and wished all the arms and ammunition then at San Pedro sent to him.¹

It is doubtful whether Micheltorena's men left their camp at all; and if they did, they marched *away* from their enemy—that is, back to Los Angeles. But at any rate it is certain that on the very next day he received a letter from Commodore Jones, who announced that he had withdrawn his forces from Monterey. Micheltorena at once replied, stating that he would now suspend the hostile march he had undertaken; that some further satisfaction than a mere salute was necessary to satisfy "the multitude of persons now surrounding me"; and that he wished a conference with Jones at Los Angeles or San Pedro.²

In Micheltorena's official report his own energy and the valor of his troops were loudly proclaimed. He declared that on the morning after receiving news of Jones's seizure of Monterey he had started with his troops to attack the invaders. "We thus marched for two hours during which my soul was wrapt in ecstasies at the flattering prospect of a speedy and certain victory," when another messenger had brought news of the evacuation of Monterey by the American forces, and he had immediately written an insulting letter to Jones, a copy of which he enclosed. He also said that he expected shortly to induce Jones to sign an agreement containing an apology and a promise of indemnity.³ It is perhaps unnecessary to say that Jones refused to sign any agreement, on the correct ground that this was a matter for the two governments to adjust.

¹ Micheltorena to Vallejo, H. R. Doc. 166, 27 Cong., 3 sess., 26; same to Alvarado, *ibid.*, 25; same to Arguello, *ibid.*, 24. All the above are dated Oct. 25, 1842.

² Micheltorena to Jones, Oct. 26, 1842; *ibid.*, 35.

³ Micheltorena to Mendivil, Nov., 1842; *ibid.*, 18.

The Mexican government caused Micheltorena's report to be published in the *Diario del Gobierno* of December 14, and on December 19 Bocanegra wrote to the American minister calling attention to the seizure of Monterey, "the greatest outrage that can be committed against an independent and sovereign nation," and demanding reparation and satisfaction, besides indemnity for losses.¹ Thompson replied, acknowledging receipt of Bocanegra's note.

"The surprise and regret of your Excellency cannot have exceeded what has been experienced by the undersigned, who takes great pleasure in assuring your Excellency that these acts of the American commander were wholly unauthorized by any orders from his government and that the fullest disclaimer to that effect will be promptly made by the government of the undersigned, with whatever other reparation is due to the honor of Mexico, and which is not incompatible with that of the United States."

But Thompson also pointed out that the Mexican government was in a measure to blame, inasmuch as the harsh and menacing tone of Bocanegra's papers, published in the previous spring, at a time when the United States was believed to be on the verge of war with Great Britain, might well have furnished additional ground for the opinion on which Commodore Jones acted. He stated also that the letter which Micheltorena represented himself as having written to Commodore Jones had never been received by the latter, and undoubtedly had never been really sent, and he expressed the opinion that Micheltorena's coarse and abusive language deserved rebuke.² Thompson's communication was enough for the Mexican government, in whose ears Webster's vigorous language was still ringing; and on January 7, 1843, the *Diario del Gobierno* officially announced that everything had been satisfactorily settled.³

¹ *Ibid.*, 9 *et seq.*

² *Ibid.*, 12. Thompson's note was based upon information verbally given by one of Commodore Jones's officers, who passed through Mexico at this time with despatches for the Navy Department.

³ *Ibid.*, 16.

Rumors of these events arrived in Washington in January, 1843, during the expiring session of the Whig Congress. Webster at once wrote to Thompson, without waiting for official information, instructing him to state to the Mexican government that Commodore Jones had no warrant from the American government for his proceeding, and that the President exceedingly regretted the occurrence. This was followed by a somewhat acrimonious discussion between Webster and General Almonte, the Mexican minister. Almonte thought that an apology and expression of regret from the United States for this unprecedented outrage ("*in-audito atentado*") was not sufficient, and that the United States should promise that Jones would be "exemplarily" punished. The President and Webster, however, both agreed that Almonte went too far when he asked for punishment, and Webster wrote that while Jones was no doubt mistaken, he had not intended any affront to the government of Mexico, and that "some allowance may be properly extended toward acts of indiscretion in a quarter so very remote." Almonte replied, not very temperately, that the promise in regard to Jones's punishment was too vague; but Webster suggested to the President that no further answer should be given to Almonte except by sending the correspondence to Congress.¹

In Congress a resolution had been adopted on the second of February, on the initiative of ex-President Adams, calling for information as to the authority or instructions under which Commodore Jones had invaded the territories of the Mexican republic; and accordingly, on February 18, the President sent a message stating that Jones's proceedings were "entirely of his own authority, and not in consequence of any orders or instructions, of any kind, given to him by the government of the United States. For that proceeding he has been recalled." The opponents of the administration used some violent language, and tried to prove that Jones's act was part of a plan to stir up difficulties with Mexico and to annex California; but the evidence was too

¹ *Ibid.*, 3-8.

strong for them. There can be no doubt that the President's statement was exactly true. It need only be added that Jones was not punished further than by being relieved from his command. He returned home pursuant to orders, in the latter part of 1844, and was then informed by the Secretary of the Navy that his zeal in the service of his country and his devotion to what he had deemed his duty entitled him to anything but censure. In later years he again commanded the Pacific squadron.¹

With this incident Webster's dealings with Mexico came to an end. On the eighth of May, 1843, he resigned the office of Secretary of State, which he had held for a little more than two years. The great task of settling the controversies with Great Britain, with the single exception of the dispute over Oregon, had now been completely finished. The Senate, by a nearly unanimous vote, had consented to the ratification of the treaty of Washington, and the House of Commons in England had voted down a vicious protest from Lord Palmerston. But, on the other hand, Mexican affairs were in a much worse condition than when Webster took office. Under Van Buren's administration the relations of the United States with that country had been put upon a footing which was correct even if not exactly friendly. But since the Whigs came in, threats of war on both sides had been uttered, and in spite of efforts made by the ministers of both countries feeling was steadily becoming embittered. It is not to be supposed, however, that this increased ill-feeling was due to anything done or omitted by the Whig administration. On the contrary, the whole course of events can be traced, with a certainty quite unusual in history, to the preposterous attempt of the Texans to invade New Mexico.

Webster's departure from the cabinet was due, of course, to the fact that he had never been in full sympathy with the President or the other members of the administration.

¹ Bancroft, *Hist. of California*, IV, 330-350, gives a number of details concerning Jones and his seizure of Monterey—largely derived from personal recollections of old inhabitants—which supplement the official reports.

In particular, he stood alone in opposing the policy of annexing Texas. However, he and President Tyler parted with mutual and evidently sincere expressions of confidence and good-will.

CHAPTER XXI

EFFORTS AT MEDIATION

GENERAL HOUSTON, as we have seen, had begun his second term as President of Texas in December, 1841, and had immediately reversed the policy of his predecessor in regard to finance. He had also adopted a foreign policy which was in many respects different, for Houston was a man who believed in the gods of things as they are, and he clearly perceived the utter inability of Texas to maintain itself permanently in its detached condition. Indeed, he went so far as habitually to exaggerate the possibility of Mexican invasion. His first desire had been for annexation to the United States; but he was quite prepared, when that seemed to be impracticable, to adopt any other measure which might put Texas in a position to exist and prosper. The only other measure which could give Texas the security she so sorely needed was peace with Mexico. The policy of President Lamar, as has been seen, was strongly against annexation, and it had also been generally aggressive; but some ineffectual efforts had been made to bring about peace, both by means of direct negotiation with Mexico and through the good offices of the United States and other foreign nations. And in order to get a clear apprehension of the problems with which Texas was faced at the end of the year 1841 it is necessary to go back for a period of nearly three years and examine into what had been attempted in that regard.

The first serious effort to open negotiations, after the repudiation of the agreements made with Santa Anna while he remained a prisoner in Texas, was in the spring of 1839. About that time President Lamar received a curiously distorted report that Santa Anna had placed himself at the